

Hemu Kalani

(A creative reconstruction of life and Times of great Martyr Hemu Kalani)

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Dr. Jetho Lalwani

Chapter- 1.

Advent of Freedom Movement in Sind

Life sacrificed for country is not enough

Sindhi's did not sacrifice life

Instead sacrificed own land.

-Krishin Rahi

15th August 1947 marks the Freedom of India. On this day India broke the bonds of centuries and breathed free again. This is the day to remember our freedom fighters who laid down their precious lives with utmost dedication for the freedom of country. Their only purpose was Freedom that we enjoy today with our heads held high. All this we owe to their selfless sacrifices.

(on right hand side is given Map of Sind.)

Indians have traditionally been good hosts. All those who came to India with the purpose of trade were welcomed with open heart. But the tragedy is that all those who came to trade and were welcomed abused our hospitality and slowly became our masters and enslaved us. 1748 was most unfortunate year in the History of our country. This year Portuguese from Europe entered our country with the purpose of trade. With passage of time they instigate fights among local petty Rulers. They were followed by Dutch and French traders. Britishers from England came and established their business empire. In competition all other European powers lost to Britishers.

Firstly British established a commercial enterprise as East India Company at Kolkotta. Thereafter with deceit and treachery and with the help of self seeking, greedy, opportunistic local chieftains they became masters and rulers of this country. Thus India was reduced to slavery. They were intoxicated with power and let loose the reign of oppression and rampant exploitation.

Extreme oppression creates a reaction which erupts fierce violence to end unmitigated oppression and humiliation. This phenomenon expressed itself in the year 1857. When Indians resolutely attempted to assert their independence and end the foreign rule. This in fact was a revolution and first war of Indian Independence which was termed as 'Mutiny' by then rulers. However the flame was extinguished with the help of Indian petty rulers of various sates who wanted to be on the right side of British to serve their selfish ends. In fact, the war against British domination had been going on from 1763 itself. It was upsurge by the followers of Shankaracharya, the sect of ascetics and that opposition continued for nearly 40 years. This was based in parts of Bengal and Bihar. But the uprising of 1857 was indeed a conflagration in comparison to the resistance that had been going on hitherto.

On 18th April 1857 Nana Saheb a leader of uprising wrote to King of France, "British rulers have deceitfully usurped the domains of Moghl Kings of Delhi, Rulers of south India and Mir's of Sind. We have resolved to uproot the oppressive, exploitative and unjust rule. This fight shall continue to the last drop of our blood and till the last fighter is alive."

(Photograph of Netaji Subhas Chnder Bose in Sind).

This had its impact on Sind too. Many in the Sind also sacrificed bravely their lives at the alter of freedom. The inheritors of ancient civilisation of India did not lag behind in this first war of independence.

The freedom struggle that followed in 20th century Sind acquitted itself and their dedication in every phase of movement can be etched in golden words when the History of that struggle is completely written. Thousands courted arrest, braved torture and bullets and attained martyrdom. Thus they proudly discharged their debt to their motherland.

Sind is known for its hospitality. Despite severe surveillance Sind harboured many revolutionaries at various times. Freedom movement continued unabated over ground and underground as well. This all had a telling affect on the colonial rulers.

(Photograph of Gandhiji while in Sind).

Many Sindhis actively supported AZAD HIND FOUJ established by Netaji Subhas Chander Bose during Second World War. Then Sindhi diaspora contributed not only financially were active aids of Netaji. Among them the name of Mr. Tejoomal based at Singapore and Indonesia stands out prominently. Sindhis were keen and committed supporters of the freedom struggle. They were prepared for any possible sacrifice.

In 1843 Sind was a sovereign state and in order to subdue Sindhi nation the British unjustly attacked Sind and brought it under their domination. Sindhi forces fought bravely, and in the battle many British soldiers had to die before Sindhi forces could be defeated. This bespeaks volumes about the valour of Sindhi Soldiers as they did not yield before the might of British army and they had to fight their way for every inch of the land in the battle. After the conquest when the British forces held a victory Parade, they had to face fierce stone pelting by local Hindu and Muslim Population of Hyderabad city. It is on record that Hosh Mohmed Sindhi fought valiantly as his sword continued to sway even after he was beheaded.

As mentioned earlier even during uprising of 1857 many stood up against British at Hyderabad, Shikarpur, Nawabshah, Khanghrah(latter named as Jacobabad). Many were tied to mouth of Canon and were blown away as an exemplary punishment. Many more were sentenced and were sent to far away islands of Andamans and Nicobar. In 1866 the Rana Ratan Singh a local ruler of Thar part of Sind was hanged. In 1880 Sadhu Hiranand started a magazine under the auspices of 'Sind Sewa.' In 1895 first political conference was held in Sind that proved to be quite successful in comparison to the earlier conferences held anywhere. In that meet many important resolutions about the strategy to gain the objective were passed.

Photograph of Lokmanya Tilak visiting Sind.

In 1905 Bengal was divided that marked the watershed in the History of freedom movement. It created a reaction all over India and Sind did not remain immune to this. Acharya Kripalani and Prof: Joharmal were swayed towards revolutionary movement whereas the revolutionary poet of time TolaramBalani spread the message across the country with his revolutionary songs.

At the same time Acharya Kripalani organised college students to challenge British principal. In 1908 VeermalBeghraj, Seth Chetumal and Goverdhan Sharma were imprisoned for leading the movement. In 1910 Bai Udharam, a Sind worki was jailed for harbouring revolutionaries.

(Photgraph Of Gandhiji while in Sind in1916 at Karachi)

During the movement of 'SilkenKerchief' also Sindhis were threatened and many searches were conducted at various places. Jalianawala Baug episode also evoked a fierce reaction in Sind. Thousands of Sindhis were imprisoned during non-co-operation movement during 1930-32. During quit India movement Sind did not lag behind and during uprising by Navy also it was a Sindhi Ali Ahmed Brohi who was among the main organisers. (Mr. Ali Ahmed Brohi after the partition emerged as a significant writer and journalist of Sindhi Language)

(Photgraph of Gandhiji with other leaders in Sind during 1916 visit at Karachi.)

Sind has traditionally been land of Sufi saints and martyrs. When Bhgatsingh and his companions were hanged for the cause of freedom of their motherland

in Sind also a young revolutionary Hemu Kalani followed in their footsteps and also sacrificed his life on the gallows.

(Photograph of Sardar Patel while being welcomed in Sind.)

Freedom of expression and anything about freedom movement was ruthlessly suppressed. Vishnu Sharma wrote a pamphlet on freedom movement and it was published by prominent political personality of Sukkur ViroomalBeghraj. For that 'Crime' Vishnu Sharma had to face imprisonment for five years and ViroomalBeghraj was sentenced for one year. In this way there names of prominent martyrs Harchandrai, MenghrajLulla, Datatrya, and HassaramPamnani come to mind.

Prof: Joharmal who was a prominent freedom fighter and inspired many students for this cause himself went to United States to be with revolutionaries fighting for the freedom Of India. Britishers on the other hand did not spare any coercive instrument to crush the movement. They employed their intelligence apparatus to gather and disrupt the movement and many a time at various places they resorted to whipping young volunteers and at places they did not hesitate to use bullets. But the freedom fighters continued their struggle underground through disguise and other means. Many revolutionaries found refuge in Sindhi homes thus not only freedom fighters endangered themselves but their family members also. They were helped in ample measure financially and logistically also.

(Photograph of Satyagrahis being welcomed at Shikarpur.)

During the movement of 1942 Sindhis of all classes, regions and irrespective of religion took to streets and youth embarked on the revolutionary path of practical action. In this background Hemu Kalani was hanged on 21st January 1943 under the charges that he had attempted to derail the train carrying British soldiers.

From the point of population in comparison with other provinces Sind was least populated but the proportion of Sindhi freedom fighters was more. India attained freedom on 15th August 1947 but this day also marked the partition of the country whereby the entire province was to become a part of Pakistan.

Page | 7 Thus Sindhi Hindus had to leave their homes and hearths, their properties, their comforts behind and lead the life as destitute refugees. ALL THIS SACRIFICE, SO THAT THE REST OF INDIANS LIVE IN FREEDOM WITH DIGNITY AND PROUDLY THEIR HEADS HELD HIGH.

It is gratifying that the martyrdom of HEMU KALANI did not go in vain and he is immortal even today.

Chapter-2

Birth- Family- Childhood and upbringing.

**Let those mothers smile
Who sing lullaby to children
There is no great service
Than to sacrifice lifthe country.**

- BEWAS

Sukkar (Sind) is a city situated on the bank of river Sindhu on the other side of an ancient city 'Lohri' now called Rohiri. Sukkur is also an ancient city. Initially it was a part of ' Bakhar' district but after the invasion of Nadir Shah it was merged with Shikarpur district. Old city of Sukkar is refered to as old Sukkar.

Sind is geographically divided in six parts. North is called 'Siro' central part is called ' Vicholo' 'Laar and Kohistan' comprise western ranges and on the west is 'Thar' desert and southern part.

Photograph of old Sukkar.

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Sukkar is a major port situated on the right side of river Sindhu (Indus). After Karachi and Hyderabad Sukkur is third important and beautiful city of Sind. Sukar word in Sindhi language itself means a prosperous and refined person. Thus this city is synonymous with material prosperity. This is a Historical city and its inhabitants are strong and healthy. Because of its beauty it is called “Sunharo Sukkar” (A beautiful city). This city is considered holy city also by both Hindu as well as Muslim communities. There are many temples of Jain and Buddhist sects who have inhabited this city in sizeable numbers apart from those who now follow Sikh religion.

Sukkar is divided into two separate parts new and old. New Sukkar is called “ Chapri” port also. British occupation of Sukkar goes back to 1838 AD. At time the total population of Sukkar comprised 8000 persons. 4000 persons being inhabitants of old Sukkar and rest 4000 comprising new Sukkar. In February 1839 British extended their power in other parts of Sind also. Their area of influence included apart from Sukkar, Bakhar, Thatta (Old capital of Sind) and went far as Karachi.

(Photographs of Scenes Of Sukkar.)

In Sukkar lies the important pilgrimage place of Sadhu Bela that is revered by Sindhi Hindus across the world. This is called ‘Vankhandi Ashram’ also. This is an island situated in the flowing Sindhi river and is in-between ‘shah Belo’ and ‘ Deen belo’ islands on two sides.

Hemu Kalani was born in this city that was rich in history, culture and diverse religious backgrounds. He was born on 23rd March 1923 in the middle class family of Kalani’s of modest means. Name of his mother was Jethibai and father was Pessumal. They were residents of old Sukkar in a non - descript dwelling. As usual celebrations and festivities as per norm of the times on the

birth of male child were followed. The birth of male child would be an occasion for celebration for the entire neighbourhood so was in the case of birth of Hemu.

Birth of Hemu brought a good fortune to his father Pessumal. He was awarded contract to build a strong jail at Sanghar. In those times the area around the northern Sind as Sukkar, Bukhar was hot bed of 'Hur' activity. They struck terror even into British Government. They were strong and well built and were capable of breaking the jails. Therefore the need of building the strong jail arose.* (Foot note- After partition of the country this movement though rooted in strong tribal loyalty is considered as a part of anti British freedom movement. The first short story of Sindhi Language written by Lalchand Amardinomal in 1913 'Hura Makhi a ja' refers to initial events of this movement. Translator) during those days the contracts for building and maintenance of bridges, embankments and other civil works used to be awarded directly by the authorities to contractors of their choice. In such a situation influence and good will played an important role. Apart from the construction activity the family owned brick kilns also. During that time Kalanis' were considered to be loyalist and trustworthy this fact also weighed with authorities while awarding the contract to Mr. Pessumal. Apart from Hemu Pessumal had had two sons Teckchand and Pokardas. He had one daughter also who was named Hardevi. All children were obedient, humble and wise. His brothers Dandumal Pahlumal, Mangharam and Ainshimal were uncles of Hemu. His uncles had built a big house for themselves in old Sukkar and had been a part of team to build famous Sukkar Barrage. They were awarded maintenance work also for the said barrage.

Hemu's grandfather Pahlumal was also a leading personality of his city of those times whereas his uncle Mangharam was attracted towards freedom movement, he was congress sympathiser and was known social worker. Hemu's maternal relatives were residing at Sukkur.

Hemu was a darling of his grandparents on both sides and in a way he was adored by his entire family particularly of his grandmother Gangabai. His mother religiously pious lady and cherished within her heart all humanistic values. She would serve poor and would recite passages from holy books and Gita everyday.

In this way apart from his parents his grandparents also played an important role in Humu's upbringing. In manner of those times the elders of the family

would relate the stories to the children of the family Hemu was also brought up on the stories from religious books, Hindu epics and tales of valour of heroes like Shivaji and Maharana Pratap. All this imbued Hemu with values of patriotism and valour. School teachers also played their part to inform about the freedom movement sweeping across the country and instil in him a sense of love for motherland and inspire for the sacrifice to be made in the movement for the freedom from British rule. The Sufi ethos of Sindhi way of life which espoused humanistic values was a backbone of his upbringing. All this inspired him to contribute his mite to the freedom movement. He inherited the dictum of Simple living and High thinking from the example of his father. Though being a well to do he lived a simple life and he became an example for Hemu.

Hemu was first born of his parents so he grew up with all love, affection and attention. He also displayed his respect and obedience to his parents and elders. He had a very sweet nature that would endear him to anyone with whom he came in contact. All this added to his warm acceptance by his elders, teachers and peers.

In the childhood itself he grew to be introvert and serious bent of mind though not aloof. He would play with friends of his age as any normal child at the same time he would devote sufficient time to studies, thus maintaining a fine balance. All these circumstances moulded his mind.

On the social level when the society was caught up in outdated religious rituals his family was attracted towards the teachings of 'Arya Samaj' that eschewed all such practices and they were considered as 'liberals' of their times. This fact should also be borne in mind unlike the Hindu society elsewhere which based on caste and creed the Hindu society of Sind has remained free from this factor which to great degree responsible for its ready acceptance of Sufi philosophy and teachings of Sikh Gurus. They embrace wide humanism in place of petty castes and creeds.

His primary education started in old Sukkar in a Municipal School of his neighbourhood that was situated opposite minaret of Massum Shah. For higher education he had to go to new Sukkar and seek education in Tilak High School where he studied up to Matriculation. He was a bright student and was consistently first ranker. He was favourite student of Headmaster of the School Mr. Lalwani who was mainly responsible to inspire and a guide him to freedom movement sweeping across the country. His uncle Mangharam was also an

active in congress party which was spearheading freedom movement. From he learnt how the British came to rule India by deceit and all instruments of oppression and suppression were let loose to crush freedom movement so that their exploitative regime may continue to enrich them and impoverish Indians who were treated and despised as worse than mere animals. He was also told of old Sanskrit saying 'motherland is better than heaven'. In this way he became conscious of human dignity and value of freedom and the need to fight for freedom.

Hemu not only excelled in scholastic sphere but he was noted sportsman of his city also. Initially for body building purpose he would be regular at gymnasium and wrestling pit (Akhaara) of his city but would play Indian outdoor games. Eventually he became the captain of his cricket team. He would lead his team to success even in regional tournaments conducted in various towns of Sind thus earning the name and fame for his team but also for his city and himself. He represented and led his team even at interprovincial level and thus visited many cities like Karachi, Hyderabad and even Lahore. It was difficult to conceive a cricket team in Sind without the presence of Hemu as a part of the team. In this way he earned many accolades and praise. At one time when his team appeared to be losing he dispatched a formidable batsman to pavilion with a near impossible catch with his left hand. He was declared the 'Man of the Match' for such a daring feat. He was awarded bat no 6 for his contribution. Such a bat was considered to be a sign of pride for any cricketer at that time.

There is a rhyme in Sindhi Language about the game that was often played by children all over in streets of Sind. It is Called " Eti- Dukkar." (A small pit is created and a small piece of finger shaped piece is kept on it and it is thrown far away by about 18 inches long staff. Thus many stages of the game begin)

" Eti Dakar, ghum saro Sukkar, Rohiri ji raand". (with Eti Dakkar may you move entire city of Sukkar and let it end it in Rohiri). Such vast used to expanse of this game for the children of the city. Hemu excelled in this game also in his childhood. In a way in all types of local outdoor games he was considered invincible. He was a good swimmer also. He would cross the mighty river Sindhu from one bank to another and return back all at once at one go.

Sukkar's Lansdowne Bridge is constructed in way that it does not rest on any pillar. It is a marvel of engineering feat and heavy traffic and many trains pass over it. An army cantonment was situated near this bridge where British

regiments were housed. This was an ideal route for water navigation of small and big vassels. This bridge was famous not only in Sind but abroad also. Due to heat as ice would melt at higher reaches the water level and speed of water would increase in the river Sindhu. Often one would find floating on the water uncontrolled uprooted trees from the higher ranges. Even in such a situation Hemu would nonchalantly jump into river and would try to jump over floating logs and trees. It is said that on one such occasion he suffered a snake bite on his right hand. His hand was quite swollen when he reached home. He was rushed to doctor and it was decided that immediate surgical procedure be started. As this procedure was thought to be painful it was thought that it would be necessary to render him unconscious, but Hemu instead decided to endure the pain of surgery than being rendered unconscious. Such was his capacity to bear pain. He did not even wince at the pain that he endured.

There was a bridge connecting town of Rohri and old Sukkar. In those times Sukkar used be an important centre of British Army and the cantonment was situated in that vicinity. As per normal practice that bridge was guarded at all the time. The bridge had rings at the bottom. Some time a swimmer would catch a ring to gain his breath. Once, Hemu also while crossing the bridge held on to the ring. He was challenged by the sentry to move away. He remained defiant in spite of stern warnings. Hemu remained defiant and unmoved by threats and held on. Sentry tried to intimidate him by hitting him with a threat to shoot him at last sentry tried to hit him with a leash but Hemu remained unmoved and held on his to the ring beneath the bridge. At last he released his grip and swam with torrent to reach the other side. His younger brother who was also present at the bank of the river, who shut his eyes fearing some thing untoward, he was greatly relieved to see before him safe and sound and smiling at him. He was fearless expert cyclist and was admired for his skill among his friends.

Such was courage and sense of defiance shown by Hemu even in his young age! He would not be overawed by British cavalry marching in the city whereas others would rush indoors in a panic and shopkeepers would pull down their shutters out of fear. He would rather encourage his friends to come in open and boldly watch the march by British soldiers. He would tell his friends, "See these are the people who have enslaved us. They are equipped with weapons but we need not fear them and their weapons." During his school days Kishin and Chetan were his intimate friends. They were with him all through his confidantes who were part of "Swaraj Sena Mandal" and its

activities. Besides them he had two close friends Hariram Tolani and Lachman Keswani*(Foot note- all have claimed being his friends and co- conspirators much after the freedom of India was achieved and there is no independent evidence to support such a claim). It is said that Sugun Ahuja a prominent Sindhi Poet was also a class mate of Hemu. Note:* (Mr. Sugun Ahuja was personally known to the translator and during all these years he never mentioned this fact to any of his friends)

Dr, Mangaram Kalani remained unmarried and devoted his life to service of poor masses and his brother who was working in Tilak School continued to inspire many young people for National cause of freedom movement.

Hemu used to celebrate all Hindu festivals small and big with enthusiasm and gusto. Particularly he used to celebrate Holi and Diwali. During holy he would drench his friends with colour and as a result he would also be fully drenched in myriad colours. As a child he would participate with women of his household and neighbourhood in their fun frolic activities and thus be centre of their attraction. Before Diwali Ram Lila would be his favourite pastime. Often after celebrations or play he would return late and he would be fondly fed by his mother with her own hands. Hanuman (God of strength) was regularly worshiped by him. As there was religious atmosphere at home he would recite Gita also regularly. This way his upbringing was in ideal household and he imbibed moral Values from his elders and teachers. His teachers instilled in him also a strong and keen sense of nationalism which led him to contribute to the freedom movement.

Initially he would organise and lead the procession of students who would march past the streets of the town singing patriotic songs and holding aloft the freedom flag. They would chant a jingle which could be roughly translated as under:

“Freedom flag (Tricolour)* flutters in the breeze

Enemies’ heart shakes with fear

Success awaits you young of the country

March ahead brave lions.”

(* In those days tricolour with spinning wheel in the centre used be Congress flag)

During all such activities he would forget food and thirst and would be tireless. His enthusiasm would be boundless. It was his mother who would fondly see that he eats his food properly. In fact it was her blessings that kept him vigorous and committed to his ideals.

Tilak High School was at the distance of four or five miles from old Sukkar where Hemu and his family resided. Hemu would often run to school or some times would used bicycle. School was established in the year 1913 by an organisation called “Dev Samaj”. His teacher Khanchand was also very much impressed by the work of Hemu and his dedication. He was invited as volunteer to render his services to Dev Samaj’s activities also. He was popular among his teachers and peers. He was considered as a loyal friend.

Hemu was voracious reader also and in choice of books he was guided by his teacher Khanchand who used to encourage him to read nationalist literature that inspired deeds of immense valour.

Gandhiji had observed “Value of books is more than those of diamonds. Diamonds have outward brilliance but books contain brilliance of wisdom.” Following this advice Hemu would delve in the books of History and those inspiring heroic deeds for love of country.

At that time many newspapers and periodicals were being published from Sukkar. ‘Sind Zamindar’ (Sind Landowners) Daily, ‘ Sansar Sind’ initially a daily subsequently changed to weekly, ‘ Dawate Islam’ weekly,’ Rukhsar’ Monthly, ‘Inqulab’ Daily and others. All these would carry the news of oppression let loose by British on Indian people and progress of freedom movement and exploits of revolutionaries. All these papers used to keep Hemu updated about the situation prevailing in the country and efforts of freedom fighters spread across the county.

Sukkar at that time was an active and important centre of freedom movement. Veeromal Beghraj was an ardent Gandhian follower of those times. His son Ramchand was also an active freedom fighter. In fact Sukkar had many notable persons of the freedom movement of that time that included persons like Prof: Tarachand Gajra and Mangharam Kalani who would organise public meetings and processions to create awareness and spread the message of freedom movement. Shri Hansraj ‘Wireless’, Swami Krishnanand organised underground movement for the freedom and were source of inspiration for many to actively participate in this great cause. In Sukkar many social

organisations were active. Hindu revivalist organisations were also activity propagating their ideology by bringing out books on the brave 'Hindu icons' and would some time stage plays on those themes on improvised platform.

Enactment of Ramlila and Raslila were regular features of Hindu festivals. All this contributed greatly to consciousness of freedom movement. Hemu was a part of this ethos of the city.

Mr. Chithram Vallicha was a practising advocate heeding the call of Gandhiji he abandoned his practice and established 'National Court' in the premises of Tilak Hall. There justice was meted out without any distinction of caste, creed or class. He was a part of contingent of famous 'Dandi March' (Salt Satyagrah) with Gandhiji. Subsequently on instructions of Gandhiji himself he came to Sind and led such a march in Sind. He was elected member of Sind Assembly from Sukkar Municipal constituency. He used to distribute literature of Gandhiji and freedom movement. He was also a source of inspiration for Hemu. Gandhiji's call of 'Quit India' and 'Do or die' was a clarion call for Hemu. The newspapers and periodicals of the time were full of activities by freedom fighters and their valiant deeds. In face of such an explosive situation British rulers had invoked a law 124-A under which a heavy crackdown was unleashed against all nationalist publications as a result of which many printing presses were closed and editors of the newspapers and periodicals were put behind the bars. In Calcutta 'Bangwasi' in Poona 'Kesri' and in Sukkur a pamphlet written by Hariram was proscribed.

Under this Law the News paper "HINDU" was banned and its editor imprisoned continuously for many days. They would seal the press and imprison the editor during the day and next day the same paper would be published from another press by another editor. Such was the scale of defiance and force of the freedom movement in Sind at such a crucial juncture! In the same period "Sukker Revolt case" was first of its kind witnessed in Sukkar. It was in this time that eminent freedom fighters of Sukkar Virumal, Chetumal and Gordhanlal were awarded rigorous imprisonment. Matters did not rest here during those times many young people and students were falsely implicated and were jailed without assigning any reason. This added fuel to fire raging in the young minds like Hemu and his close associates.

In broadcast from Berlin in 1942 Netaji Subash Chandra Bose declared "All my life I have dedicated to the country. Wherever I may live I shall continue to serve my country and countrymen to the last breath of my life. " YOU GIVE ME

BLOOD AND I WILL GIVE YOU LIBERTY” He declared. To achieve this purpose he established ‘Azad Hind Fouj’ (Indian liberation Army). He also established ‘Rani Jhansi’ regiment for women. All this enthused freedom fighters all over India and Sind was no exception. In this way all this became a great source of inspiration for Hemu and his comrades. They decided to risk everything for the country even their own lives.

At the same time nationally inspired poet Hundraj ‘Dukhayal’ a Gandhian would roam all over the Sind in cities as well in countryside singing inspiring songs on the beat of ‘Khanjri’ (Duff) and would propagate Gandhiji’s message and create consciousness about freedom movement among masses.

Whenever Hundraj Dukhayal visited Sukkar Hemu and his friends would be there. They would pick up his songs and sing them with other citizens and students during morning processions. Such a charged atmosphere was indeed a challenge to British Empire.

Photograph of Hemu at his home.

Snatches of some of the songs sung during those processions are as under:

To sacrifice life for the country is work of the brave
 Not to fear death that is destiny to accept as truth
 Leaving parents, wife would dedicate life for country
 Sacrificed his head fondly is thy name Bhagatsingh.

.....

This is my country, this is my country, and this is my country
 Sweeter than honey, Sweeter than raw sugar
 I would sacrifice my body and heart for you
 This is my country....

.....

Make your own Rule
Country is ours rulers alien
Don't want such rotten rule
Bring down this alien rule

.....

Jalianwala is school for fearless fighters
It is symbol of freedom of the country
During spring was mass murder of masses
Jalianwala you are drenched in blood of hundreds Martyers

.....

I heard the sound of your spinning wheel in hutments
Everyone was carrying on and making spools.

.....

I do not want anything made by foreigners
I want only a thing that is made in India

.....

Sister! Love Khadi
Sister! Khadi is our support
Wear simple good Khadi
Spinning a wheel be your craft

.....

Sister! Khadi is our weapon

Sister! Love khadi

...

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Throw gunpowder and bombs from air

We will steel our chests O! Oppressors

We will die but make our country free.

.....

Photograph of Hemu with family.

would lead such processions with his friends; he would burn costly foreign goods opposite Sadhu Bela. He would urge people to remove their black caps and wear white caps instead. (Gandhi caps). That was considered a mark of protest against rulers of the time.

He was obedient son of his parents and before moving out he would bow before them and seek their blessings. His mother would bless him thus:

“ May you remain happy and healthy. May you bring freedom and British may be vanquished.”

In this manner the freedom fighters were a determined lot and clear in their aim and clear about their role that they would free the country with support of the masses and create a new nation.

Hemu was mind and soul of Swaraj Seana Mandal and he was a conscious and alert revolutionary.

Hemu imbibed all these qualities from the atmosphere prevalent in the city at that time.

Chapter-3

Revolt Against Cruelty

“ It is befitting to sacrifice life for honour of the country
It is not honourable to ignore the sorrow of the country”

On the very pleasant morning when the gentle wind blows, birds chirp and flowers of many colours spread their fragrance in the garden. In the midst of such bewitching and a tranquil atmosphere on a distant tree a young man had tied a rope and was engaged practising how to face the pain of the gallows! After some time he closed his eyes loosened the rope and after some time resumed this practice again. He was undergoing this rigorous ordeal for the past many days.

One day when he was engaged in such an exercise a man passed from there. On seeing this he rushed in panic to save young man. After he removed the rope he escorted him to neighbouring hillock.

He reprimanded him saying, " don't you know that suicide is greatest sin? 'In this vein he continued his admonition for a long time. Youth at last smiled and replied,' " this not an attempt on suicide but I am practising how would it feel at the time of facing gallows. It is only a game for me."

Man continued his tirade " you foolish young man! Don't you realise that in the name of this game you are foolishly risking your life? This is not a game that you are playing you are playing with your life, this is suicide for sure."

" No! I want to feel how one feels when one is hanged on gallows. I want to experience such a state."

" What for?"

"As Bhagat Singh accepted to die on gallows with a smile on his face for the sake of his country I also want to follow in his footsteps- this is my fond desire,"Said the young man with pride.

That unknown person hearing his reply was very much impressed by his patriotic feeling and felt proud of this young man. He asked for his name.

He gave his full name as Hemu Kalani.

The stranger said, "I will call you only by your first name Hemu."

Boy replied at home all call me simply Hemu.

With laughter on both sides the relationship was forged.

Laughter mingled with chirping of birds around.

" I stay nearby. I come every day to practice to aim a catapult. Here are many trees with a shade where many birds come to rest. When they fly into sky it is when I try to practice my aim. This makes me happy."

" what are you saying? You are happy to kill such innocent and colourful birds?"

" No I aim near them and they are spared." He replied, and added that he loves to see birds flying freely in the vast sky. I simply practice to aim at them.

" Which school are you studying in?"

“ A little way from here in new Sukkurit is called Tilak High School. Today is holiday therefore you find me in the garden.”

“ You are playing with gallows is this known to your family members? When they come to know about it will they appreciate it?”

“ Yes. Everyone knows it. Even at home after doing all my work when I am free I try it tying a rope on the beam of the doorframe at my home. In the beginning even my family members were alarmed but I explained to them that I want to experience the feeling of Bhagat Singh when he was being hanged on the gallows. They did not understand all this but in face of my determination they silently gave up. Today I felt like trying this in the garden and picked up my rope to practice here.”

“ I am happy to see that you have urge to sacrifice for freedom of the country but be careful lest this exercise accidentally becomes fatal. Life is very precious it is not meant to be squandered away foolishly. Keep this life for the future of the country. Youth of the country is always its future. Keep alive the spirit of sacrifice for the sake of freedom of the country. I am proud of young students like you who are our proud warriors in this struggle.”

This unknown person patted him on shoulders in gesture of blessing and moved away. Hemu moved towards his home.

On the way he met his friend Hira. Seeing him he asked him:

“ Where are you going?”

“ To home” he replied.

“Where have you been?”

“ To Garden.”

“ For strolling or for exercise?”

“ No to practice to be hanged”

Hero could not contain his laughter and said, “ you are obsessed with that thought as if you do not have any other work!”

“ Yes Hira you know it.”

“ Yes I know it. Freedom of the country is your aim. For that reason you practice as to how it feels to fearlessly face the death. I am proud of your courage and determination.”

“Hira! You will not believe what happened in garden today! As usual I was practicing with a rope around my neck an elderly man passed that way and he was alarmed seeing that I was trying to commit suicide! He immediately removed the noose from my neck and reprimanded me for my attempt. He enquired if I was unhappy or any unbearable incident had occurred to impel me to commit such a heinous Sin? ”

“ Who was he?” asked Hira.

“ I do not know but he was clad in Khadi and had a cotton bag around his shoulders. He appeared to be teacher somewhere because he mentioned that he was proud of his students. Youth are treasure of this country, you are trust for the future of country and you should not betray that trust.”

At that time a servants from Hemu’s home came rushing.

He asked. “ What has happened Sheroo?”

Sheroo,’ “ Mother is crying.”

“What happened?”

“ I do not know.”

“ Let us go hoe and see what the problem is.” He found many people were gathered outside his house.

From amongst the crowd on person was loudly saying “ these policemen are useless, oppressors and utterly cruel. They do not hesitate to disrespect anyone.” Some one else was saying, “ while remaining in the pond we should not harbour enmity with crocodile. These British are rulers though they are callous, characterless and blood thirsty. It behoves us to keep distance from them. Neither their friendship nor enmity is good for us.” Some one amongst the crowd countered him saying, “ how long shall we endure this brutal and uncivilised behaviour? Now they have reached the limit. Normally ruler is supposed to protect his subjects but now they have unleashed total lawlessness and now they have ushered in ‘jungle raj’. Now we will have to oppose this cruel rule by all means available to us. It is time we pay them in the same coin.” Uttering these words he became very emotional.

Another young man continued in the same vein. " Yes! Now is the time to throw out British from our land. Break the shackles of slavery. Their oppression will not cease till they are here. Youth has to move forward to break the chains of slavery."

Hearing all these remarks Hemu and Sheroo entered the house.

They found Hemu's mother crying bitterly. On being asked the reason one of the the elder lady who was trying to console his mother said, " Son! Your father was on his way to meet some friend. He saw that and old and weak person was being thrashed by a British Policeman. He wanted to know the reason for such inhuman punishment.

British Policeman instead retorted, " who do you think you are to question me? Allow me to do my work. Do not interfere in my duty." Though he felt anger but he calmly tried to explain the plight of that poor man. He said," I know that I am an ordinary citizen but I would say that beating such an old and weak person is not justifies in fact it is illegal."

" This person has not shown us proper respect. This very fact is defiance on his part and is punishable act."

" But after all what is his crime?"He wanted to know.

" He refused to salute us. Besides he is a thief " replied policeman, " and that is a grave crime."

Old man pleaded " I have not stolen the bread. I have purchased it from the shop by paying the price for it. They are falsely accusing me and are beating me for no reason,"

Father understood the entire situation and in order not carry it further requested the policeman," You may please keep the bread and let this old man go. I apologise on his behalf and salute you twice."

Policeman thought that he is trying to play a joke on them and is trying to ridicule. They said,' " you feel you are very smart and ridicule us. We will teach you a lesson for such an audacity." They started beating him with his cane and after that he has been arrested and taken to police station." Old lady remained silent after narrating the entire incident.

Hearing this incident and seeing the mother crying they were chocked with emotions. Hemu consoled his mother that he would go and soon get his father

released. Hemu's mother was afraid of policemen. Apprehending that Hemu may also lose his cool and matters become more complicated she cautioned Hemu and pleaded with him not to go alone and they could implicate him also. Furthermore they were fully armed and could be easily provoked. In that situation they would be completely helpless.

"I am not alone mother! I have your blessings with me. God is with me. With me are all the young men of this country who are eager to sacrifice their lives for the sake of country. I will soon bring father back. In case I do not return back then take it for granted that I have sacrificed my life for the sake of this country." Saying this he went up to his father's room, took revolver from his cupboard and went out with his friend. He proceeded to police station where his father was held in custody.

They both were moving through heavy traffic and usual hustle bustle was there all around but Hemu was engrossed in his thoughts. Suddenly he heard a voice. The voice was of the same person who had earlier met him in the garden.

"Hemu! Where are headed in such a hurry?"

"My father has been taken into police custody and I am going to get him released."

"Do you think that they will release him merely for your asking for it?"

"They certainly will. My father is respectable and influential person of the community. Even British officers accord him due respect. He is innocent and not guilty of any crime. The Police WILL have to release him."

"You are mistaken. No one would listen to you."

"If they do not release him on their own I will use force to see that he is released." Hemu asserted.

"But how?"

"I will fight with them. I also have weapon."

That stranger was dumbstruck to see his courage. Fearing that the young man may take some wrong step and create more problems for himself and family in order to pacify him he told him, "come with me. I will also help in getting your father released." This way they moved forward. Hemu was surprised to see that instead of directly going to police station he had taken a different direction.

He asked him, " where are we going? This is not the way to police station."

The stranger said," Hemu! Understand properly what I am going to tell you and accept this with all your heart and mind! British have enslaved us and now they are ruling over us with utmost cruelty. Do not expect any justice as the courts give credence to false witnesses, cooked up charges and forged documents. Court of justice is under their sway and they get whatever they desire in the name of justice. It is simple and pure mockery. Justice is deaf and dumb! They feel it is their right to beat us, insult us and treat us as animals! They are rule unto themselves! They can imprison any one they do not like at their sweet will!"

"Now I will take you to my school. There we will coolly think about the ways to get your fateher released. At this stage if we make any mistake it would invite unnecessary trouble. In such a situation we may also be put behind the bars and in case of any violence we may be eliminated in a fake encounter. We have to carefully weigh the situation."

During the conversation Hemu came to know that the stranger was none other than Master Jiwat Lalwani.

" I also want to sacrifice my life following in the footsteps of Bhagat Singh, Rajguru and Sukhdev. I want to sacrifice my life for sake of freedom of my country" asserted Hemu in a emotional voice.

" To jump into fire without thinking about the consequences will serve no purpose. I know that you want to sacrifice your life for country and you are committed to the cause. You have not to waste your life in haste. Haste in any case is harmful. You need to be cool and calm though determined. Patience is need of the hour."

" Do you mean to say that we should fold our hands and silently suffer this oppressive regime? We will have to take some action to change this rule."

" I do not say that you do nothing but remember that the rulers are powerful. They have all the strength and weapons with them. We will be able to undo their regime only if we gather the strength of the similar measure. Empty handed we cannot fight them. First we will have to be as strong as they are and we will have to increase our resources also to fight them. " Saying all this they reached to the gate of the school. Teacher Hemu and entered the school.

" I have brought you here on a purpose. I want you to stay in the school Hostel.

While staying here gather strength and then only you will be able to do something for your country. All this impressed Hemu said, "I assure you that I will always be with you for the cause and do everything as per your instructions and under your leadership. I want to be your disciple I need your blessings."

"My blessings and good wishes will always remain with you."

"Here I will raise voice against oppression and will fight against injustice and cruelty. Hira now you go to my home and inform them that I will be henceforth staying here. In the meanwhile I will manage to get things necessary for me from home. Please never divulge the location of my stay to them. I will return home only after I have avenged the dishonour of my father"

"But... " Hira wanted to protest.

Restraining him mid sentence Hemu said, "See Hira! You are my close friend and a comrade. I do not want to hide anything from you. It is my final decision and determination that I will return back to home only when I am able to free my father as promised to my mother. You are welcome to meet me everyday here. You have to be careful while visiting and see to it that you are not being followed and may be able to trace my whereabouts."

Hira could not say anything to Hemu. Silently he moved from there after assuring him of his daily visit. The teacher escorted Hemu to a room where about 15 persons were already gathered. Seeing teacher entering they all respectfully got up and welcomed him with a slogan of 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' (Victory to mother India)

"who are they?" Hemu enquired.

"See Hemu! You have inspired complete trust for you within me. I will not hide anything from you. Like you I am also a freedom fighter and a soldier in this war. To fight British by all available means we have established "SWARAJ MANDAL". Myself and all present are members of this organization. This meeting has been convened to discuss the concrete steps to be taken to carry forward this war against British domination. I have made you privy to this meeting and a part of this organization in utmost trust. I am sure that not a whisper would escape from you about this meeting which may imperil everything that we all cherish sacred to our hearts. You will only keep you eyes

and mind open and your mouth resolutely shut.” He pressed the shoulder of Hemu as a gesture of reassurance.

He signed to all present to sit down.

Page | 28 Before teacher could proceed, someone from among those present asked.

“ Who is he? Why has been brought here?”

“ His Name is Hemu and he is from Kalani family. Henceforth he will stay here, be one of us and work along with us.” Teacher replied.

“ only a person dedicated to the aims and ideals of our organization, is able to dedicate himself to the cause and sacrifice for its furtherance can be member of this organization. He is mere a child ” Said another member.

“ This child is dedicated and trustworthy. You can trust him as you would trust me.”

“ Of what use will this child to us?” commented another.

Hemu who was silently listening to the above conversation said, “ It is fine that you want to test me.” He moved to the place where fire was burning. He took out a burning log and held the fire in his hand.” Seeing power of his endurance all were wonder struck. Teacher took away the burning log from his hand which was sufficiently burnt till then.

“ Hemu! What are you doing?” reprimanded the teacher.

“ This is a small example of my test. I am prepared for the bigger test to convince you . I am prepared to under go any test that you may put me through. Please tell me about further test I am ready for it.” Hemu said.

All were very much impressed by the child Hemu and continued the session with serious discussion.

Chapter- 4

Public wrestling Bouts

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“ Will prefer to be grinded but will not accept slavery

One who have been sung a lullaby of freedom”

“ BEWAS”

Dr. Mangharam Kalani was a committed freedom fighter. During the non co-operation movement he left the studies of the medical college and joined the freedom movement. All his life he remained an active member of the congress party that was fighting for the independence of India. When Jawaharlal Nehru visited Sind he participated in the function to felicitate him. Some of his colleagues complained to higher authorities as a result he was transferred to far away Thar district which was considered as a punishment posting. Self respecting Manghram could not tolerate this injustice he resigned and openly started working for the freedom movement. During 1942 ‘Quit India’ movement Dr. Mangharam was also imprisoned. For complete independence of India he had established “ Swaraj Sena Mandal” at the local level. He was freedom fighter, Social reformer and worker and at the same time he would propagate the ideals of freedom movement and inspire the youth of country to follow that path. His speeches were very impressive and would draw many a young men and women to the cause of the freedom of the country.

Bardoli Satyagraha had inspired such movements at various places. Such agitations simultaneously started at various places and youth of Bengal, Punjab, Gujrat etc was very much exited. Movement was gaining momentum day by day and under the auspices of ‘Swaraj Sena Mandal’ Dr. Magharam youth from Sukkur and adjoining areas and led the movement. Hemu was nephew of Dr. Manghram and he was put in the charge of young people to lead them. He immersed himself whole heartedly into the cause and enlisted many young school and college students for the cause of the freedom of the country as well as works dedicated to social causes

Youth was inspired to fight against superstition, literacy and social ills this inflicted the society of that time. At the same time the political movement was raging across the country and many young minds were attracted to that path also. Hemu was respected and loved by all due to his fair and just nature he could inspire confidence and was a natural choice as their leader.

Hemu continued to hold steadfast to his ideals and move under the guidance of his uncle Manghram and teacher Jiwatram. There was atmosphere of suffocation in the country and young hearts were seething with anger to do something concrete to contribute to freedom struggle.

One day when Hemu sat engrossed in these thoughts he heard a knock on his door and found that Hira was standing there. Hemu was surprised to see him at that time, " you were supposed to come in the evening! What has brought you at this time of the day?" He enquired.

" Where is teacher?" asked Hira instead of replying to his question.

" He has been out since morning I do not know where he has gone."

" you did not go with him?"

" No after the school closed, I came here."

" Let us sit and talk." They sat on a cot and started their conversation. Hira said, " Tomorrow in open ground of old Sukkar British officers have organised a wrestling bout. Their purpose is to show to local population that no one from among the local people match their skill and strength. Thus every time they win this wrestling and win the bout to humiliate locals and Indians. This time friends desire that you should participate in the wrestling and win. This way you will be able to break the 'tradition'.

" Fine! If you and my friends want me to fight in wrestling contest I will do it and I will fight to win. Lord Hanuman and the blessings of elders are with me. I will not fail you and my friends' expectations of me."

" I had come for this purpose. All friends are confident of your victory and they are sure that your victory will bring great humiliation to the rulers, 'Saying so he went out. Hemu was engrossed in thinking of the coming event. At that time teacher entered. Hemu apprised him all that had transpired between him and Hira.

Teacher said, "It is fine but you have to take care that you do not provide any cause of provocation to them to wreck vengeance on the innocent population of the city."

"If they do not try to indulge in any mischief I have no reason to provoke them but I will not tolerate anything that would compromise my self respect" Hemu politely but firmly replied.

"I do not mean to say that you should meekly bear the excess of the British wrestlers but do not provide them with any excuse for aggression against poor and unarmed people of the city."

Next day Hemu went to an open ground where the wrestling bouts were being conducted. Cutting through the surrounding crowd he stood on the periphery of front rows. He saw that a British, a strong man and mountain of flesh was engaged in wrestling bout with a young Indian. Though the young Indian had no chance of winning he was resolute and did not fear the punishment being meted out to him. He was mercilessly beaten and lay there half dead. The rulers were intoxicated with their victory and started challenging 'any Indian' to come forward. They even ridiculed Indians. Hemu could not tolerate all this. He sprang forward in the pit and accepted the challenge. They mocked him in derision but he stood his ground calmly. Wrestling started. Both were in equal combat for some time. They would use all the tricks and manoeuvres known to seasoned wrestlers. At last Hemu exhausted his opponent, picked him up and dumped him down with all his strength. Thus in the beginning the contest that was considered as unequal ended in favour of the underdog! Such a victory stunned the white 'rulers' and their lackeys but at the same time enthused ordinary Sindhi onlookers. In their enthusiasm at unexpected victory they started shouting Nationalist Slogans like 'Bharat Mata Ki Jai' and were dancing with a joy. A dance that is a tradition at the end of any wrestling that goes as an ancient culture of Sind. They started singing and dancing with Hemu as a Hero to the school hostel.

A small sketch of British atrocities.

The white rulers took it to be a ridicule and challenge to their supremacy. They coerced the referee who had declared only a while ago to again declare that

Hemu had used unfair means to defeat his rival. Hemu stoutly refuted these unfounded charges as lies. This ensued a commotion and provided a much awaited opportunity for 'rulers' to unleash the vengeance on the unsuspecting Joyous crowd. They started showering stick blows on innocent people. The crowd retaliated by stone pelting with the result many innocent persons were taken into custody and were imprisoned.

Chapter -5

Inquilab Zindabad

“ Sing! Revolution, Revolution, Revolution
Let all earth and sky sing in unison
Let every corner, crossroad, village and city
Wake up and Sing Revolution, Revolution...”
Sheikh Ayaz.

After taking leave of the teacher and their friends, Hira and Hemu returned to school. Outside the Iron Gate Doctor asked them, “ today you were to go for wrestling. What was the outcome?”

“ Yes we are returning from there.” replied Hemu.

“ What happened there? Defeat or Victory?”

“ White wrestler was defeated conclusively”.

“ In that case why are you glum with faces downcast? You should be happy.”

Hemu was silent. Doctor asked Hira as to what had happened to dampen their spirits?”

Hira replied, “ When we defeated a white man they could not accept their humiliation and at the same time local people started dancing with joy and some from amongst them raised patriotic slogans. All this was too much for the ‘rulers’. This provoked them and they resorted to lathi charge in which many innocents were injured and many have been taken arrested. All this melee resulted in stampede in which also many were injured.” Hira was silent after recounting the horrific incident of the day.

“ Did it escalate further?” asked doctor.

“ Yes they followed it up by unleashing their horsemen and resorting to unprovoked fire.”

Page | 34 “ And you remained mute spectators! Why you did not take your revenge from those brutes?”

“ Some people did oppose this and Hemu was also on the on the verge of jumping into the fray but I held him up.”

“ But why?”

“ Firstly police men were in large numbers and their force was well equipped with weapons to the hilt. They were trained and organised while we were less in number and unarmed. Any confrontation would have led to unnecessary massacre of local people.” Hira sadly replied.

“ Now what do you propose to do next?”

“ Our first priority is to get those who have been arrested released. Provide urgent medical aid to those injured.” Said Hemu with determination and continued, “ we will have to build up our strength, forge unity. Without unity of purpose it will not be possible to get freedom. We will have to fight for it continuously with faith in our ideal and determination. British are able to crush our fight for freedom because they are well organised and well equipped with arms and ammunition. They are being helped by some of own traitors also. Keeping all these and other factors in view we will have to evolve a well thought over strategy. We will have to unite all freedom loving forces and expose the traitors amongst us. We will have to well knit strong organisation.”

“ I am sure Hemu! You can do all this. You have the backing of youth behind you. If youth is determined mountains could be moved- courses of rivers could be changed. History bears testimony to the fact that in every country it is youth who has been in the forefront to bring about the change and is harbinger of freedom. We have not to waste any time and time to organise and act is NOW. All the work is to be done in utmost secrecy. You forge ahead and we will continue our support in the background. All other revolutionary groups in the country will be in total co-operation in in a sort of co-ordination with your group.” In this way the words of encouragement and inspiration came from Dr. Mangharam.

“ Now what should be my further move?” asked Hemu.

“Apparently you have to lead a normal natural life. You have to enlist the support of maximum number of youth and elderly and respectable persons of the society. Create a consciousness about the cruel and unjust rule.”

“ You mean to say that Swaraj Mandal can not do anything?”

“ Its scope is limited and still it does not have a proper organisation and inadequate resources. Very few people are committed to ideal of freedom and still less are prepared to sacrifice for the cause.” replied doctor. “ You have to have backing of the youth and youth has to fight this war for freedom of the country with whatever means not necessarily non- violent means. Any means any language that this oppressor understands. We need to have support of all classes and masses of this country. You move ahead and the whole country will back you. Forward is the only way looking back is not.

Hira and Hemu moved out of School compound.

Outside they heard a man proclaiming government order. He was announcing that “ Government has announced enforcement of section 144 with immediate effect. Not more than five people are seen at any place. No meeting or public gathering is allowed. No Public speech is allowed. At night people are advised not to move out. Any one flouting the government order will face action and will be arrested. Violation will invite imprisonment as well as a heavy fine. Schools and colleges are decreed to be closed forthwith. This order is by British Government.....”

Hearing this Hemu realised their work has been made very difficult. After thinking for a while he told Hira to go and convey to all members and sympathisers of freedom movement in the city that a secret meeting has been called at 11 pm at night in the ruins adjoining the city. He himself also remained busy in the mission of contacting as many persons as possible who were members of Swaraj Sena. He decided to work out a joint strategy to face the new situation and in that it was necessary to have help of as many people as possible.

Hira had his doubts that all those present would be ready to fight and sacrifice for the movement. He was told to proceed with job without entertaining any doubts.

In society wise persons, Saints and Selfless social workers have always been respected. Hemu was often seen in company of such selfless workers therefore common people especially youth of city respected him.

At fixed time in the ruins about 200 to 300 people gathered. No one knew the purpose of the extraordinary meeting that was convened. Doctor Mangharam and other members of Swaraj Sena were present.

Hemu addressed the gathering, " Friends! And my respected elders! You will soon learn the purpose of calling this untimely and urgent meeting. You all will agree that the situation created by the 'rulers' is unprecedented. It is aimed to overawe the simple and poor population to continue their most hated rule. They want the submission of the common people meekly to their cruel and atrocious whims flouting all the norms of civilised society and behaviour by brute force alone. On one or other pretext innocent people are rounded up and sent to prison. Even innocent people are picked up from their homes to strike terror. How long shall we be prepared to bear this? Are we expected to be mute spectators to all that is happening all around us? We will have to be united to oppose this. We will have to raise a slogan in unison and fearlessly "Inqlab Zindabad" ", Bharat Mata ki Jai" and " Vande Matram. These slogans are a challenge to British Rule. Those who due to any reason can not afford to offend British are free to leave. No one will be coerced to join us. Those who join us will be only by conviction and not through any pressure direct or indirect. We will continue to respect them, understand and respect their limitations and their compulsions. Our motherland is in chains and is calling out to us to free her from the chains! WE WANT TO BREATHE FREE AIR IN FREE INDIA- OUR MOTHERLAND.'

" How many of you are prepared to leave this meeting?" He asked in the end of his speech. He stood there with bated breath to see as to how many would opt out and leave the meeting. He was greeted by a stunned silence and no one got up to leave. After a pause he said now Doctor Mangahram will address you.

Doctor Mangharam addressed the gathering in following words:

" We are citizens of India and like all countries of the civilized world it is our inherent and fundamental right to live in freedom with dignity. Now is a high time that we intensify our freedom struggle and take it to a new level without any delay. Every means has to be adopted. Those who wield influence and any

power they have to use it for freedom. We shall try to explain our case to authorities and seek freedom for innocent people imprisoned. We have to abide by law and have to be non violent. We shall have to resort to non-cooperation also if necessary. We can not remain silent spectators to this injustice meted out to our fellow citizens.”

Hemu informed the gathering what had transpired during the open wrestling bout in the evening. How a white wrestler was routed by him and the jubilation of the crowd could not be tolerated by the ‘rulers’ and they unleashed the terror on the unsuspecting masses only for the crime of shouting slogans. It was too much for them to stomach all the humiliation they felt was being heaped upon them therefore were infuriated for the same reason. He asked, “ is such a behaviour justified for being defeated in the sport?”

All responded, “ Shame... shame!”

“ Tomorrow we all shall gather in school compound. From there we will march in procession to Police station and demand the release of all those who have been arrested. We shall also demand the suspension of those officers who had ordered ‘Lathi charge’ on the innocent people. We may be constrained to call for total closure (Hartaal) in case our demands are not met. Our struggle will continue indefinitely till our demands are met.” This was a practical line of action proposed by Hemu.

Doctor said, “ this movement will be led by Hemu and other members of Sena will form the vanguard of the procession. We now name this organization as “ Navjawan Swaraj Mandal” (Youth freedom Circle). From now itself all of you, youth are deemed members of this organisation. We shall take care of other organisation matters latter on. Hemu is leader and all will follow the instructions issued by the leader. Do you all agree to this? “

“ Yes! Yes! We are all ready and shall follow him and work for freedom of the country “ replied the gathering in one voice.

Chapter-6

Hail of Bullets

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“ Brave soldiers! Move faster
With a flame of faith in your hearts
Even if mountains block your path
Face every danger playfully!
March ahead March faster’

- Parwano Bhati

Hira and Hemu both were busy organizing for a protest procession. Wall of the city were plastered with posters announcing the ensuing procession. Banners were put up on the important junctions of thoroughfares of the city. They carried placards in morning processions with the slogans ‘ Bharat Mata Ki Jai’ , ‘ Jai Sind’ , ‘ Swaraj Sena Zindabad’ , ‘ Vande Matram’ , ‘ Britishraj Murdabad’ , and ‘ Freedom is our Birthright and We shall have it’ . These slogans adorned even banners and posters all across the city.

They distributed pamphlets in which it was mentioned, “ Cruel British have beaten our innocent people. They have been subjected to cruel cane charge. Indians are slaves of British. This will not be tolerated any longer. Until and unless all those who have been arrested have not been released we shall continue our protest and struggle. We shall not rest till our goal is achieved.’ Inqulab Zindabad ‘(Long live Revolution).”

Photograph of a procession

The citizens knew about this procession. The relatives of those arrested also came to join procession and in this way more people than those gathered at

the meeting converged outside the school gate. It was impressive gathering of nearly 500 persons.

At appointed time the procession started under the leadership of Hemu and with him was his friend Hira also. They raised slogans " Release the arrested persons", " Inqulab Zindabad", " Down with British Rule" and many slogans associated with freedom movement.

Government also on its part had made arrangements to teach them a lesson. A large force of armed policemen armed to teeth with arms like Guns, Pistols and whips stationed to prevent them from proceeding further. As the procession advanced towards the police post a white soldier whirling the whip in the air came forward and ordered them to stop and disperse immediately.

Hemu who was leading the procession came forward and said, " we will not go back till our demands are met. You meet our demands and we shall disperse peacefully."

"What is that you demand?" asked the officer sternly.

" We demand that all those who have been arrested yesterday be released immediately and unconditionally. Those who have perpetrated these atrocities on the innocent people should be punished. Assurance be given that such an unjust behaviour will not be repeated in future. We demand an apology."

" None of these demands are acceptable." replied the white soldier.

" Then we will continue with our struggle." retorted Hira.

" Till our demands are met we will not move even an inch from here." Hemu said with determination. " We will move forward." He gave a signal to procession to move forward.

Officer shouted, " If you persist with your folly we will be forced to stop you by all our might."

Thus on both sides the stalemate continued for while. The procession continued the march without any fear. This infuriated the police and within a short time procession was encircled by horse mounted forces. They ordered, "Disperse immediately or face action."

" We want freedom of innocent people" shouted the gathering in unison.

They reply from the authorities was raining of lathi blows and whipping the procession. Hemu, Hira and Doctor Kalani were in the lead of the demonstration. One lathi blow directly hit Doctor Kalani and he started bleeding profusely. Seeing all this Hemu asked his volunteers to attack the police force and enthused them. They attacked police force with sticks on which placards were carried and wooden poles on which flags were carried. In this one lathi was aimed at the head of Hemu. He managed to escape that blow and held that lathi with his bare hand. In the meanwhile many of the protestors were injured. At that time police ordered firing of the arms. They started firing in the air then they resorted to indiscriminate firing. Seizing the situation Hira observed that now it would be unequal fight which will result in unnecessary deaths. It would be wise to retreat and regroup and continue to fight till equal strength is acquired. Strategic retreat should not be considered as failure.

“What should be done now?” asked Hemu

“ We should allow all to retreat and wait for an opportune time to strike with the same might. We shall need to have proper and better organisation.” Hira advised.

“ Yes enemy is more powerful. They are well equipped with arms and we are outnumbered. I agree with you and now we should retreat and wait for opportune time.”

The firing continued and as if on a cue all lied-down on the ground. Injured were being shifted and others started crawling on the ground finding their way out of the danger zone. This also did not work as firing continued so continued mayhem. It was a raging war. Policemen were seen everywhere. Seriously wounded were crying out in suffering and pain. Many corpses lay on the ground. After some time, Hira and Hemu were also found sprawled among the dead. They had feigned their death to misguide the police force. As they were busy sending seriously injured for treatment taking advantage of that window of opportunity Hira and Hemu managed to escape un noticed.

Suddenly one of the policemen saw them escaping and he raised an alarm: “Catch them... Catch them...” but they managed to elude them. They took route leading towards forest and hillocks.

They were tired and returning to school premises was also wrought with danger. They entered the cave where they had earlier convened the meeting.

They knew that it was a rendezvous for revolutionaries. They settled on the stone and started thinking about the future course action.

Chapter – 7

Confrontation with cruel Ruler

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“ On one side is gun powder on the other side

Is heartache

Stop all this music and face the fierce raging war”

- Shamsheer al Haidri

Hemu and Hiro both were very much upset, anguished and angry due to the incident of firing resorted to by the authorities. It was a difficult time indeed! The oppression by the British rulers increased day by day. The entire country was engulfed in the struggle against alien rule. How to help revolutionary forces and create a sort of co-ordination with forces active in the country occupied the centrality of their entire thought process. They were possessed by this idea alone. They both used to discuss the ways and means to move towards that goal. Once at night when all the members of the core group were asleep in the cave, Hemu got up hearing some faint noise of dogs and horses. He got up with alertness. With him awoke his companions also. He asked them if they could hear any sound. They all tried and said it is only a wind and rustling of some bushes and tree leaves.

“It must be an illusion or figment of your tired imagination” suggested Hira.

Hemu was not satisfied, he went to the mouth of the cave and strained his ears to any sound emanating from somewhere. As he was intently looking for any movement or sound, suddenly all heard people loudly shouting and saw a village nearby set ablaze and villagers shouting to each other to wake up and douse the fire. “This must have been done by the British rulers to strike terror in the hearts of the local population,” mused Hemu. In a way it was a reflection of the fire of freedom blazing all across the country”. It was essential to first help the poor village folk, thus Hemu jerked himself awake to reality and his duty. Sitting and watching this scene and not doing anything to help would be disastrous for the village folk and they will suffer unimaginable loss of life and property. When they reached the scene they found people running helter-

skater totally confused in panic. Hemu and his friends with the help of young villagers started to fight the blaze and rescue those trapped. After the needful was done and the fire was brought under control Hemu asked from a villager as to how all this came about?

The villager incoherently blurted that in the evening some policemen had visited the village. They wanted to have fun and frolic with young women of the village, when elders of the village protested they were punished by whiplashing. They even went to extent of tearing off the clothes of some young innocent girls. Young people could not tolerate this offence to honour of village as a result the son of the alderman (chief of the community -Mukhi) was arrested. *Mukhi* went to police station to lodge the complaint. His son had spat on the faces of the policemen and *Mukhi* was hustled out of the police station without even giving him a hearing. This led to altercation and ultimately in violence which impelled son of *Mukhi* to whip out knife and protect the protesting villagers. Some young people brandished their sickles. In the meanwhile they got reinforcements and instead of arriving at a just settlement. The in charge ordered that village be torched at night. No one was allowed to escape even old people and children who thought of leaving in safety were not spared. They have left just a while ago.

Hearing all this Hemu was not only distressed but furious also. He said, " we must not sit idle with folded hands to bear all the humiliation, atrocities and cold blooded massacre and we shall have to reply to them in their own coin and that step has to be taken immediately."

Hira counselled patience. He said, " I agree with you but to face them un armed would be playing into their hands. We have to strengthen ourselves organisationally as well we have to have weapons to fight them. Both will take time and we shall have to remain patient in the meanwhile. All this suppression and uncivilised oppression and untold atrocities and killings of innocent Indians is not acceptable to me also. My blood also boils yet I counsel patience to strike at right time and place with all our might to achieve success."

"But we must do something instantly." Countercd Hemu.

" It would be only madness" persisted Hira.' " It would serve no useful purpose to face well equipped forces un armed and without proper strategy."

Suddenly the situation changed and another village was set on fire. The Mukhi who had gone to police station was hanged on the tree upside down and cops had started fire on the ground to increase the intensity of torture. This led to armed skirmish among the members of Swaraj Sena volunteers led by Hemu.

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This was done by daring attempt by Hemu to snatch a rifle from police *sepoy* and his strategy to lure more men to fight was successful. The Mukhi was rescued in time that earned them a gratitude and life loyalty from Mukhi's family and all villagers. They cautioned villagers that it was possible that to avenge their defeat the village may be attacked at night. They distributed some of the arms and cartridges looted from policemen among the youth of the village and instructed them how to use them tactically and strategically in case of another attack by police. Villagers thanked them for their support but Hemu and his friends said that all that they had done out of a sense of their duty.

They triumphant cry of " Inqalab Zindabad" rent the air as Hemu and his comrades proceeded to the ruins which was centre of their activities.

Chapter – 8

Bombardment on Jail

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“ You play with bullets and Tanks

As a child plays with his toys”

- Lakhmichand ‘Prem’

During freedom struggle mainly two trends were dominant. One section was committed to non violence and other section had no qualms in taking up arms against the tyrannical and oppressive rulers. The weapons of the first section was resorting to mass struggle by offering non violent protest like ‘*Satyagraha*’, defying the government machinery by peaceful means and the other section was in favour of paying the foreign rulers in their own coin by resorting to armed revolutionary activities. In this war they used hand made bombs and other explosives. They used arms like Guns and pistols and in order to strike terror in the hearts of their supporters and to make their presence felt they resorted to acid and stray cases of arson and looting of arms ammunition and money to support revolutionary activities. A network of secret revolutionary societies was active in almost every part of the country and they had support of students and youth of the country and many seemingly ordinary people of the society were also their active sympathisers. They had their own secret sources embedded deep in the establishment to obtain valuable information about the movement and vulnerable areas of the enemy. In Sind it was mostly non violent Gandhian movement that was more visible but there was also a strong undercurrent of youth and students who sympathised with revolutionaries and wanted to follow that path.

Hemu was highly disturbed by atrocities unleashed on the simple village folk. He was seething with anger on such an injustice. He also resolved to resort to armed struggle to avenge massacre of unarmed and innocent people.

Revolutionaries and armed freedom fighters were termed as “ Bandits and Terrorists ‘by the establishment. They were threatened and they were treated in most uncivilised and inhuman manner.

In the meanwhile Hemu learnt to make crude hand bombs. Occasionally he used to visit his house from his hostel. His house had two entrance doors. The front door abutting on the main road while the back door was accessible through a narrow lane. During his visits he used the backdoor. He used to store the bombs made by him on one of the abandoned room on the top floor of his house. No one knew about this activity. He would often hold clandestine meeting with his companions also there.

His comrades were active in distributing material about freedom movement and secret bulletins issued by revolutionary groups in other parts of India. They would make posters to arouse the population against foreign regime and paste them on the walls. This all was necessary to make their presence felt and entuse the masses to actively participate in the freedom struggle. All this was necessary for the reason that the voice of press was muzzled by censorship and arrest of many editors who brought out nationalist papers. All this had to be done with utmost care and secrecy. In all these efforts the Dr. Kalani used to provide them ample material.

On one hot afternoon he could not go to upper floor and he stealthily kept the bombs on the ground floor. During night when all were sound a sleep on the terrace Hemu caught the sound of explosion. Many did not hear due to sleep but even if anyone heard a sound he thought it to be bursting of a cracker somewhere. Hemu was alert. He guessed what exactly had happened. Due to extreem heat one of the bombs had exploded. Hemu rushed down doused the fire immediately with water and sand to stop it from spreading which would have resulted in unimaginable disaster. It would have immediately exposed them to authorities and that situation would have lead to grave consequences. He cleaned up the entire mess and came up to sleep on terracw without anyone knowing about the accident. His brother did hear some crackers bursting but he fortunately did not pay much heed to it.

In the morning Hemu started from his home negotiating narrow and sparsely used lanes of the city he reached at his appointed site among the ruins. His comrades were still asleep. He did not find Hira there. On enquiring his whereabouts he was informed that he has gone to city and has left a message that he would be back by afternoon.

It was too risky for Hira to venture into the city. He was worried that he may be spotted by police and arrested that would have led to searches of the homes of all the members. Hemu knew that the group was under surveillance.

He prayed and hoped for his safety. He was relieved when Hira returned in the afternoon. He was surprised to see that a stranger had accompanied Hira. He carried a black bag and Hira carried a Box in his hands.

“Where were you? I was awfully worried. That...”

“Stop worrying. What will be will be. I am as fearless as you are. You should not forget that we are your associates in the cause and are as much committed and courageous and clever to face any danger. Now let us decide about the future course of action.” Calmly said Hira.

Hemu looked enquiringly at the stranger who had accompanied Hira. Hira explained that the person's name was Hari. He had come from Bombay and was in contact with Dr. Kalani. Dr. Kalani had given him proper directions as how to reach him. Fortunately I came across him as he was seeking Dr. Kalani. He is a reliable person therefore I have brought him here.

“Good!” said Hemu. “Dr. Kalani is in prison as he has been sentenced by British courts for two years.”

“He knows all about it” said Hira.

“Any how we need to free him. We need him now being with us very badly.” said Hari. His entire behaviour was as if he was their own.

“We are also thinking about it but we need to be well equipped for that purpose. We have only a few guns and pistols and they are sufficient to mount an operation to free him. I had made some hand bombs but due to some accident one exploded and under the circumstances I had to destroy all ammunition.” said Hemu.

Hari opened his bag which contained ten- fifteen hand bombs. “They look tiny but they are lethal.” Explained Hari.

Hemu checked the bombs and kept them on the ground. “We will certainly use them. How is the movement progressing at Bombay?” asked Hemu from Hari to reassure himself.

“Gandhiji's Call ‘Quit India’ has galvanised all sections of the population now the situation has reached at a stage where it is matter of ‘Do or die’. Most of the young students under the guidance of some senior radicals even within congress have taken up armed struggle and many leaders are guiding the mass movement by remaining underground. The sentiment to sacrifice for the

freedom of the motherland has reached unprecedented level. Masses are determined to break the shackles of slavery sooner than later. British authorities thought that by arresting Gandhiji and top leadership they will be able to nip the movement in the bud itself. But their move has proved to be counterproductive as new leadership has emerged at all places and at all levels.”

Hearing all this members were very much enthused.

He continued, “On the day the cry of ‘Do or Die’ was raised in Bombay all telephone lines were cut and communication was snapped. This created quite a panic among the population and atmosphere was full of apprehension and fear. All through fares and cross roads were secured by police force and army trucks were also pressed to move across roads to prevent any spontaneous popular upsurge.”

“But revolutionaries were undeterred by all this show of strength of terror. They announced that at Gwalia Tank Ground the Flag of the freedom will be unfurled!”

“The entire ground was occupied police forces. Suddenly a young man (son of Mr. Desai) came rushing on motorcycle with a freedom flag holding in one hand. A police officer issued a stern warning and threatened dire consequences. Aruna Asfali was leading this event. She ignored all the police gathered there and the warning issued and commenced her fiery speech. This led to police using teargas. The volunteers were already trained to face such an eventuality. They were told that in case of teargas being used they have to lie on the ground with their face to ground. This infuriated the authorities and they resorted to mercilessly *Lathicharge* unarmed population which led to bloodshed.”

“The news of this atrocious behaviour against unarmed freedom fighters spread across the city like a wild fire. Shop keepers downed their shutters and all markets were closed as mark of sympathy with freedom fighters.”

“One child peeped from closed door of Shop and shouted “Mahatma Gandhi Ki Jai” and he was instantly shot by a British Soldier. When I saw this I could not contain myself impulsively I snatched the rifle from the soldier and killed him. Police are hunting for me and evading them here I am before you.” He was silent after narrating incidents happening in Bombay.

They assured him they he would be safe here with them as no one knew him here and his antecedents. Even if following him police reached there they would see to it that no harm comes to him. After reassuring him of his safety they told him that they had planed to freed Dr. Kalani from prison by a revolutionary action and the bombs brought by him would be immensely useful for their purpose to which he readily agreed.

Afterwards they all sat together to finalise the fine details of their action and review the entire plan to see if they had left any lose ends to be tied. After they were satisfied with the minute details of their plan Hemu instructed them about the role each one of them had to play in the operation.

As the town clock struck the twelve they all gathered their assigned arms and ammunition and headed toards Jail. Some persons were deployed in the ruins itself to guard the weapons stored and to reinforce them in hour of need.

Hemu again repeated his instructions so that thre may not be any scope of any mishap. He said, " I, Hira and Hari would go at the back of prison wall. All others would hide in the shadows. We would hurl bombs to breach the wall and as soon as a portion of wall which would be nearer to place where Dr. Kalani is imprisoned, as the wall is breached you would rush in with weapons ready to eliminate anyone who tried to prevent you and free Dr. Kalani. Our firing would cause commotion and taking advantage of it we shall whisk away Dr. Kalani. Once the operation begins every one is on his own wits and you are free to exercise your discretion."

Night Watchmen of the town were on their duty and calling out to citizens to be vigilant. It was a usual practice. As they neared the wall Hemu heard a faint sound. He realised that some was approaching in that direction. Hemu immediately signalled his companions to hide. Before that a Jail night guard accosted them and enquired the purpose of their being at place at that untimely hour and wanted to know as to who they were.

Hemu replied with all emphasis that it was none of his business. Hearing this this insolent reply the British guard whipped out his pistol and wanted to kill him but Hemu had quicker reflexes and soon he lay there dead. He did not even have chance to cry.

“This is not good” said Hemu, “All others must have heard the sound of the shot and they will soon rush here.” He told his companions to be alert. “Before they reach here we will have to breach the wall.” opined Hari.

Hari took out handmade bombs and hurled at the prison wall. Hemu already had a Bomb with him which he quickly threw at the base of the wall. In resulting explosion the wall crumbled like a pack of cards. The Earth shook as if mild earthquake had struck.

Now they could see the barracks in which political prisoners were lodged. They were also fully awake on hearing this explosion and were happy at the opportunity of gaining their freedom. Hemu entered the jail compound with his comrades and soon they were surrounded by armed Jail Guards and British soldiers.” Some one from among them challenged and Hemu immediately killed him. Soon it turned into a battle. Hemu found that they were outnumbered. In the meanwhile they had killed forty or fifty soldiers. Hira was also injured in this crossfire and Alas! He lay dead. Hemu also realised that nearly ten of his comrades were martyred. Some were wounded. He was determined and he with his friends continued to fight. Bullets were flying from both sides. Hemu was totally devastated and was thinking how they could allow all sacrifice to go in vain when the purpose of the entire mission to free their leader had not yet been accomplished.

Hari advised that ‘discretion is better part of valour’ It would be futile to waste away their lives in that impossible situation. They could regroup again and with better planning and arms they would mount another attack to accomplish their mission.

Hemu had no option but to reluctantly agree.

At last all the three persons who had survived retreated into shadows and continued to fire in order to foil any attempt at their pursuit. They manoeuvred very fast and escaped. Leaving their pursuers frustrated.

Chapter- 9

Morning procession

“ Will die for motherland and will live for her

Shall not tolerate any blot on its honour”

- Arjan 'Shaad'.

A photograph of Satyagrahis

Hemu Hari and other associate reached their hideout in the ruins and sent all other comrades in the city for an urgent meeting. Soon many of them were present there. Hemu told them that as they have been exposed to the authorities they will not be able to lead the procession scheduled for morning. They informed the gathering about the Martyrdom of Hira who valiantly sacrificed his young life at the feet of the motherland. This news saddened all and they paid their homage to him with moist eyes and heads held high. Hemu instructed them that henceforth Viru would lead the morning procession and would be first to raise the slogans chosen for morning procession and others would follow him with full force. He gave them the pamphlets and handbills to be distributed to chosen people to increase their consciousness about the freedom struggle. He impressed upon them the importance of literature which contained the reports of Valiant efforts all across the country by freedom fighters and and their success. As instructed by Hemu, Kamal and Viru both went out and at dawn commenced the planned morning procession. Those in the procession raised many inspiring slogans some of them were as under:

“Long live revoltion

Long live Motherland”

.....

This is the land of Valliant youth

Motherland is enslaved... enslaved

Freedom demands sacrifice... sacrifice

Yes! sacrifice brothers, sisters mothers

SACRIFICE.

....

British quit India... quit India... quit India

India belongs to us- belongs to us...

Sacrifice.... Sacrifice. Motherland demands Sacrifice

Long live mother India...Long live revolution”

The atmosphere was surcharged with a patriotic fervour. From whichever lane

A photograph

the morning procession passed residents were raising slogans along with them from the windows and tops of their houses. Suddenly the procession was stopped at the bend of one road by local police force. They were asked to disperse and on their refused they were attacked with canes. In the morning time when normally it is time for prayers and thinking about good work at that time many lay injured and their blood lay scattered on the mother earth. This brutal attack did not deter dedicated freedom fighters and in spite of being injured and bleeding they continued to shout patriotic slogans more vehemently. This enthusiasm was provocation enough for authorities to launch a spree of arrests.

Hemu saw Viru running to him almost panting for a breath. Seeing this Hemu asked, "What has happened Viru? Why are you breathless?"

"It is a bad news. Kamal has been arrested."

Page | 54 "Why?" Hemu asked incredulously.

"He has been arrested while he was torching a government property. As he was being arrested he resisted which resulted in fisticuffs with police. At the time of arrest he raised slogans also." said Viru.

"It is possible that under police torture Kamal may confess about the existence of this hide out. It would be better to move from here before police reaches here. Under torture he may tell them everything about us and now we have also become vulnerable. We have to take necessary precautions." said Hari.

"Nothing of the sort will happen. Rest assured. I am sure Kamal is made of very stern and strong stuff. Police will not be able to extract any information from him." said Hemu with full confidence.

"You mean to say..."

Hemu cut short Hari and repeated that he had full faith in Kamal and Kamal would not divulge any thing. He is made of steel. I am confident that he will not betray us. Now we have to think of getting him released immediately.

"Are you thinking of mounting yet another assault on the jail?"

Hemu took out a paper and showing it said we have no intention of mounting any attack. We shall get him released through this paper. This is not an ordinary piece of paper but it is order of release from the jail.

Hari inspected the paper and said that this paper did not bear the signature and required stamp and seal therefore this paper would be of no use.

Hemu smiled and handed over another paper to Hari that bore necessary signature with requisite stamps and seals. Only the name of Kamal had to be inserted.

How did you manage that? The form in itself is totally blank.

Hemu smiled and said even the stamps seals and signatures could be forged.

"Hemu! You have really wrought a wonder!" said Hari.

Hemu told Hari to take that 'Order' and get Kamal released. Authorities had seen him and in event of his being recognised he also would be running the risk of arrest reasoned Hemu.

"If something goes amiss..."asked Hari.

"Nothing will go amiss. We have to be bold. If with this order Kamal would be released we shall be in a position to obtain release of our other accomplices also in the similar fashion." said Hemu. Further he warned him that all this has to be handled deftly and with confidence. In case of any problem cropping up we have to hold our nerves and find a way out of difficult situation without making matters more complicated. Yes we have to be courageous and we are dedicated to sacrifice our lives for the cause that we hold sacred. Our ultimate aim is to lay our head at the feet of our motherland but we have not be reckless but cautious. We have not to be cowards but we have to be wise also. I am sure you will succeed in your mission." With these words he sent Hari with a few comrades to jail for release of Kamal.

When after some time Viru came, Hemu enquired about morning procession. Viru reported that on that day during morning procession their group had done a laudable job. One group set ablaze a office where confidential files on the reports of the activities about revolutionary were stored and brought about a considerable damage to government property. In peaceful procession the women of the city sang patriotic songs urging mothers and sisters to donate their sons and daughters for the service of the motherland. We have to win this battle... Win Win... Children also were singing along with them...

They were raising slogans:

"National flag flutters

Enemy shudders...

Cry of Time

Defeat to British

Victory is ours."

This is our Challenge...

Whenever a sepoy approached children roared "Long live Revolution".

At one place police did resort to Lathi charge but the most heartening news is that people on their own have spontaneously stated morning processions and raised slogans for the freedom. The news of the Bomb blast and attack on the jail have found place in the newspapers which have considerably enthused the local population. At the same time security at the Jail has been tightened and their entire CID has been geared to fret out the persons behind the attack on the jail.

“What is the situation at Karachi?” enquired Hemu.

“In Karachi also many protests have taken place against the arrests of national leaders and the protests have been led by eminent congress leaders of Sind as well as leaders of All India Congress level who are based at Sind. Dr. Choithram Gidwani, Acharya Kripalani, Bhen Jethi Sipahimalani all have protested. In order to protect the honour of Congress flag Bhen Jethi Siphimalani had to face police brutality and was severely injured. They all have been arrested and there have been protests and arrests at Hyderabad also. Many towns of Sind have risen for the freedom and from our very city Sukkur Choithram Vallich also has been arrested.” All this information Viru gave with great enthusiasm.

“Yes Viru! Now circumstances are grave indeed! The reign of terror and oppression will be let loose. There will be more surveillance and we shall have to conduct ourselves and our activities more circumspectly. One thing that is to be urgently done is to prevent our associates from openly distributing literature and any material connected with freedom movement. This has to be done secretly among youth and students to keep up the morale. Let the patriotic message be spread through songs of Kishinchand Bewas, Hundraj Dukhyal and our Great Poet Shah Latif.

“I will do the needful. I am taking necessary literature for distribution and tomorrow I will bring News Papers also.” Saying this Viru moved out.

Chapter- 10

Revolutionaries at Sadh- Bela

“Agreed that the breath and Life is dear
Agreed that life is precious indeed!
But brave young comrades
To sacrifice it for country is cheap bargain.”

-Imdad Husaini

Photograph of Sadh Bela

Sadh- Bela is a sacred religious place situated near Sukkur on an islet formed in the midst of flowing mighty Indus River. This place was established by Maharaj 'Vankhndi' in 1823. This mendicant belonged 'Udasi' sect and while roaming through Punjab and Sind he was enchanted with scenic beauty of this lush green islet near the ancient site of fort of 'Bakhar' which used to be capital of Upper Sind in ancient times. Tree branches would often be seen floating over the current of Sindhu and he would gather them. After drying them he would use them for holy fire. He would conduct his prayers and perform his rituals there in a serene atmosphere. As the place was covered by dense forest very few would venture near it. Slowly his fame as a pious anapurna spread. '(Godess who fulfils the need for food). It is said that this place did not lag in providing food to anybody visiting this place. This place was being constantly visited by devotees, pilgrims, mendicants of all sects' as well rich philanthropists. A huge complex was built there to conduct all activities. This complex had a section for residence also for the devotees who visited this holy place from long distances. This place grew to be a place of holy pilgrimage for many. At that time Sukkar was ruled by Muslims but Hindus wielded great influence in ruler's office as the administration was headed by Mir Munshi

Uttamchand who was a great scholar of Arabic and Persian apart from being a significant poet and was known as nightingale of Garden of Sukkar. In his court he had as his colleagues like Munshi Kishindas, Munshi Kansingh, Munshi Sujansing, Munshi Maliram, Munshi Chandasing and others. It was because of their influence that mendicant Vankahandi could not be evicted from that islet. An abandoned forest islet became a place of significant and luxuriant place of worship. With passage of time a magnificent building was also constructed. After Baba Vankhandi his disciple Swami Harnamdas succeeded him. In that complex was honourably kept Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh holy Book) as well as statues of Krishna and of others Gods were also installed. All the expenses of the upkeep of this establishment were borne by local businessmen, Whole sellers and Bankers.

A photograph

During freedom struggle many freedom fighters who had gone underground would also find a refuge at this place. All arrangements for their food were available here. Many revolutionaries would often wear saffron robes and would be found here working for the freedom of the country. In this way this place became an important centre of revolutionary activities. Some secret meetings were also occasionally held there. Those who came to attend religious discourse were also in disguised or round about manner were informed of the freedom struggle. They would point out that 'Satyagraha' is in fact an act of self purification. This is a righteous war and by taking side of righteous war Satyagraha would be spiritually beneficial also. Service of the people is in fact service to God.

In Sind during freedom struggle mainly three types of activities were conducted. Processions, Mass meetings, and Revolutionary Activities that were conducted underground. During revolutionaries activities mostly government property was targeted and jail walls were breached. Banks were also looted to have resources for the freedom activities. Trains and bridges and other logistics assets of the government were also targeted by revolutionaries. The property of common man was never attacked.

During Quit India movement the revolutionary activities rapidly intensified in Sind and they were mostly carried out by young students. Many young daring freedom fighters were arrested during this period while many went among those arrested were student leaders like Hashoo Kewlaramani, Sobho Gianchanani, Tulsi Tahiliani, Ananad Mewani, Udho Raisinghani, Kirat Babani, Gobind Malhi, A J Uttam, Rochiram Thadaram Thawani, and many others.

In districts of Sind like Sukkur, Shikarpur, Rohiri, Mirpur Mathelo, Gariasinh, Punhoon aaquil, Ghotki and Ubaro the movement was continued.

One Fateh Raj Gujrati a youth from Sukkur established “NavYuvak Bharat Sabha” and Hemu’s group Swaraj Sena was working under the auspices of that organization. They had Pandit Doulatram, Dr. Sobhraj Purswani, as their sympathizers. Dr. Hassaram Pamnani was an active freedom fighter of his times. Pahilajrai Rajpal a deciple of Chithram vallicha also started is separate organiztion with the help of youth of the city. They all were active in spreading the message of Freedom and leading the movement by adopting various means. In Hyerabad Jethanand Lalwani, Nanad Gidwani and Nirmal Jiwtani were active while in Sahiti area of Sind Parcho Vidyarathi, Ainshi Vidyarthi, were active Narayan Wadhwani, Bakhat talreja, Jhamndas Talreja, were active in Shikarpur. They all were told to create awareness about the activities of the freedom fighters in other parts of the country and create a conducive and positive atmosphere for the freedom movement in their own local areas.

Meetings would be held at Sadh Bela also from time to time. Once in meeting freedom fighters from all over India, including those who had renounced their Titles and Honours bestowed by the British Rulers remained there. Notable among them from Sind was Rochiram Thawani. They all considered the ways and means in which the British rulers could be harassed to add to their troubles to deflect their efforts at concentrating on suppression of freedom movement. The measures as to how to keep up the Morale of the masses and freedom fighters were discussed. Measures on self defense were also encouraged. The efforts to be undertaken to distribute pamphlets and other literature about the non violent struggle led by Gandhiji was also a part of agenda of the meeting.

Soon after this meeting Hemu convened the meeting of his group also. They were briefed about the meeting held at Sadh Bela. In light of the decisions taken at that meeting the specific tasks were assigned to the menebrs of the group. In that Group meeting Dada Gopaldas gave the booklets about the martyrdom of Bhagat singh to some selected volunteers for distribution to the committed individuals of the city.

Dada Choithram vallich had given photographs of Mahatma Gandhi, Jai Prakash Narayan, Lokmanya Tilak, to Hemu for distribution. Books about Bhagat singh were also to be distributed among the conscious youth of the city. They were informed that how Jaiprakash Narayan had eloped from Hazaribaug jail and had gone underground to work for the freedom movement. “ Azad Hind Amy” of Subash Chandra Bose had created a critical situation for the British rulers in India. All this information was to be propagated among the masses to aware of the heroic efforts made by the fearless freedom fighters. All patriotic masses would regularly bowd before such figures in reverence. He informed them that in Uttar Pradesh and Bengal revolutionaries have seizes some police stations also. In this way the freedom struggle is sweeping the country like an unprecedented storm. We have to make Sukkur centre also on par with them.” thus concluded Hemu.

The crowds roared with slogans, “Hemu you lead us we all are with you.” They started singing:

The pledge we have taken is to be fulfilled
Let the heads roll and bodies fall
Bugle of freedom is sounding
Wake up brave sons of motherland
Be ready to fight for freedom
We will face the death in this mission
The pledge we have taken is to be fulfilled.

Chapter-11

Arrest

“Knock at the freedom door hoist the freedom flag

Heads will fall! So what!

House may crumble! So what?”

-Sheikh Ayaz

British authorities became very alert due to open freedom movement and the activities carried out by underground elements to damage government property, distribution of revolutionary literature and use of forged documents to obtain release of those detained. They tightened the entire security apparatus and searches to fret out revolutionaries were increased. Special cell in the security was set up to deal with freedom fighters of many organizations. Special raids were conducted at many places. Searches of those leaving the city or entering were intensified. Check posts were set up at various places in the city. Intelligence gathering was heightened up. All those suspected of any freedom related activity was arrested.

In spite of all the measures taken by the authorities the activities of freedom fighters continued though cautiously. All this was very frustrating for the authorities. They would wreck their frustration over the shopkeepers. School children were also often punished by flogging. They would tie someone to a horse and drag him to strike terror among the masses. They would falsely implicate the shopkeepers and were threatened. A reign of terror was let loose.

Once when police raided a house a young student remonstrated and he was badly beaten and no one dared to protest due to inhuman beatings that youth had to pay with his life. This news reached Hemu.

Hemu would plan to avenge all such atrocities and humiliations heaped on the innocent masses. He was biding his time. Without sufficient weapons and ammunition it was impossible to take on them. He was patiently waiting for the supplies to mount another daring operation that would result in spectacular loss to the enemy.

On 23rd October Hemu was sitting with his associates. He was soon expecting a consignment of arms and ammunition. They were busy planning as how to put the expected consignment to maximum use. They had penetrated the intelligence apparatus of the enemy so as to know about their future plans and strategies. His associates were not awed by the brutal force unleashed by the enemy. On the contrary the oppression let loose by British had steeled them more in their determination to fight till the last breath.

During one of such meetings as Hemu was busy fine tuning the strategies and stratagems to be employed. Hari came running. He was in fact panting. It appeared that he had run as he was being followed by some people.

Hemu told him to rest for a while. Then he asked him as to what the matter was. Why did he run? Was something amiss?

No I have not been followed but I have received important information from our sources that was necessary to share with you posthaste. He said, "I came to know from our sources that a train will move from Sukkur to Quetta carrying soldiers armed to teeth and with a large quantity of ammunition to suppress the freedom movement there."

"There is very good news. We are urgently in need of arms and ammunition. Now we will be able to use their weapons against them."

"Do you plan to loot the train? This will be very dangerous and we do not have necessary planning and manpower for this." said Hari gravely.

No. I have no intention of looting or attacking the train. We will work in a way by which we will achieve our aim without any loss to ourselves. Their Soldiers also will die and we shall be able to procure valuable weapons and ammunition badly needed by us."

All eagerly asked what the plan was?

"First you tell me all the details of the information that you have got." said Hemu.

"I was in marked disguised as usual so that no one could recognize me. Just strolling I went towards railway station. I found that the station was heavily guarded like a fortress. I thought that something must be a foot. I stealthily moved towards the gate. I heard the conversation between a Ticket checker and coolie. Ticket checker and coolie were casually chatting and in the course of their talk I could gather that the all security arrangements were not for any visiting high army official but today at 9 pm a train with armed soldiers and ammunition would be moving from Sukkur. We are entrusted with responsibility to unload some weapons and ammunition that is required here. Soldiers with other ammunition would proceed further. As I heard this valuable information I ran here to share the same with you. On the way I saw one intelligence person also who was perhaps looking for me."

"We have to derail the train before it reaches the station." Hemu said decisively with self confidence.

"But it would be dangerous as the entire area is fully cordoned by armed personnel. Reaching at the station is impossible." doubted his associates. "By the way what is the plan?" they enquired.

"I have a plan. The train will be derailed before it reaches station as I have already told you. Many a soldier would die due to derailment following explosions" said Hemu.

"But who would undertake that mission?" Comrades were anxious to know.

"I will myself do this work. I simply want some of you to be present there to keep an eye so that one is approaching while I am on my job to remove the fish plates on the rails." asserted Hemu.

"We shall meet again at underground place situated in the cremation ground bring your torches and weapons with you. Hari you gather the tools required to remove the fishplates and place them in a pit situated near Biscuit factory before 8 O'clock. We have to be careful that we are not arrested before our mission is accomplished. Everything has to be done with utmost alertness, Secrecy and with utmost caution. Search operations are on throughout the city" instructed Hemu.

They all agreed to be careful and meet at designated place at fixed time. There after Hemu proceeded to his home after many days to obtain blessings from his mother.

As he reached home and touched the feet of his mother to seek her blessings. His mother was overwhelmed with emotion. She said, "My son why have you

left us? What is keeping you so busy away from your own mother? I enquired many a times your whereabouts and well being but no one would tell me anything! Have you committed any heinous crime that has forced you to hide yourself? My motherly instinct tells me that you will not have committed any sinful or wrong that keeps you away from your mother and family.”

“Mother! Let me assure you that your this son will not do anything that is morally wrong or sinful rather what shall I do will enhance the prestige of this household and you will be able to hold your head high.”

“Forget about the prestige and honour that you speak of are tell me frankly what are you doing all the time?”

“Mother! Let me assure you that your loving son is neither nor or a dacoit. He is neither murderer nor an oppressor. As you are my dear mother so I have adopted a bigger and dearer mother. I have adopted my motherland I love her and I am devoted to serve her. Now she is chained to slavery. I want to break those chains so that she is set free. This love for motherland turns even a coward into self sacrificing brave son. I am prepared to sacrifice even my life for this cause.”

“ Do not this utter such inauspicious words! Now it is time to think about your marriage and settle down.” His mother countered.

“ Mother! why you do not understand that these Britishers have enslaved all of us and are now ruling this country as our masters. They have removed all our wealth and keeping us in poverty. I have taken a pledge to rid this country from enslavement. I will not shirk holy duty. I am not a coward; I will fight for my country and the rights of my countrymen. How can I take back my decision? My steps will only march forward. Even If I have to sacrifice my life for my ideal I will willingly sacrifice it.”

“My darling Son! Why do you pierce my heart with such harsh words? I have for a long time nurtured a desire to see you as a bridegroom! I want to see you married! See my grandchildren! I will your marriage procession with all pomp and show with band playing joyous tunes in your marriage procession.”

“ Mother! You want to see my marriage procession? I assure you it will be one of the most spectacular than any one has seen in living memory. It will consist of a large number from bridegroom’s side. It will be full of pomp and show!” Hemu consoled her as if in a jest.” Mother! For now I want only your blessings.”

“I shower countless blessings on my favourite son! May you enjoy a long life! May not any misfortune cross your path! Come back soon and do not be away for many days at a time. I yearn to see you near me all the time.” Mother continued... “Today when your work is over come to home for a night of rest. I will prepare your favorite food.”

Yes mother after I successfully complete my work I will certainly come to partake of my delicious food cooked by your lovely hands. Okay! I would want you to feed me with your own hands as you used to do in my childhood. Now I take leave of you.”

May you live long and enjoy a fabulous life. Thus blessed mother

Hemu showered love and affection on his younger brothers and sisters and embarked upon his mission to reach there at appointed time. They all were gathered at designated underground site near cremation ground. All were briefed for their specific tasks and entire strategy was in place.

It was a moonlit night. It appeared that even moon was smiling with a greeting at the enthusiasm of these freedom fighters. At the distance of about forty feet was Biscuit factory. Seth Virumal used to reside near that factory. As planned Hemu’s associates hid themselves in the garden that was also situated nearby .It was ideal place to keep hawk’s eye on the movement of security personnel. Hemu carefully retrieved from the pit, tools to remove fish plates. He slowly reached railway tracks. It was decided that any movement observed by his associates would be indicated by a flash of torch. Others hid themselves in different directions leading to and from railway tracks. * (Foot Note *they were four in number. After a long time when no one was left to contest their claim the following persons came out with their names. Lachandas Keswani, Hashu Santani, Hari Lilani and Tikam Bhatia claimed that they were associates of Hemu Kalani. In this case as no circumstantial or other concrete evidence was produced apart from their verbal claim and their subsequent life in India did not justify these claim. These cannot be accepted as a part of History.— Translator.)

Hemu started his work of removing the fish plates. The sound was heard by watchman of Biscuit factory who was guarding the front gate. He saw there some figures, which he could not recognize. He went out from the backdoor in office and informed railway police about some suspicious movement on the railway tracks near the factory .On being tipped railway forces in plain clothes but dully armed rushed to the site. Seeing people coming Hemu’s friends gave him a signal by flashing a torch to warn him. He signaled his accomplices to run

away but he himself did not move though they urged him to run away and hide himself. He did not even attempt to run and he was encircled by the forces. He did not move from there as he thought that would be an act of cowardice. He instead boldly faced them. In the meanwhile someone managed to send danger signal to station master.

At the railway station the Master who had already granted permission to move the train ahead urgently alerted him not to move due to emergency situation. Thus the train stopped with a thud after moving for only a few yards. The army men aboard the train were puzzled by this sudden development and looked to each other askance.

On the other hand Hemu who had opportunity and time to escape stood his ground and was arrested without offering any resistance along with the tools of removing the fish plates of the rails. He was sent behind the bars. Hemu's comrades reluctantly made their escape good. He was loved and respected by all his associates due to his courage and strict adherence to his principles. At his home night meals for him were being prepared by his mother and grandmother. As the clock struck twelve they were worried and grew restive. No one except his associates knew about his arrest. It was at 1 am after midnight that his family members were informed about his arrest. His family elders immediately rushed to local leader and their relative Dr. Kalani. He did not take this seriously and told them that as Hemu was a mere child no harm would come to him and he will be released by next day in the morning.

By morning the news of Hemu's arrest spread in the city like a wild fire. In entire Sind next day Hemu's arrest was reported as a lead story. Common People of were taken by surprise while his associates were worried and despondent.

Hemu was lodged in the same jail which was built by elders of his family. Hemu was lured with many inducements to be crown witness by simply divulging the names of his accomplices. He did not fall for it but on the contrary he owned up himself all the responsibility. He maintained that he had consciously indulged in this activity to free his country from the bondage and he knew the consequences of such an act. He maintained that in that act he was alone and had no connection with any person or any organization therefore the question of his naming anyone did not arise. Ultimately his case was transferred to military court as at that time that part of Sind was under Martial Law.

Sukkar had disrupted the centuries old bond of brotherly relations between Hindu and Muslim communities. Communal organizations of both the religions

were active dividing a wedge between both communities and spreading hatred and sowing the seeds of discord. This atmosphere resulted in the Martyrdom of Bhagat Kanwar Ram a pious person who harbored no ill will against anyone on the basis of caste, creed or religion. Many poor and needy from both the community would move along with him wherever he performed and gave away to them all that he got at the time of performance. Such a great humanist and pious being fell prey to bullets inspired by communal hatred.

Pir Ali Mohamed Rashdi, who later on became a minister, his brother Hissamudin Rashdi writes that at that time they being misguided used to carry out communal propaganda were being counseled against such an unholy activity which went against the very grain of Sindhi Culture of brotherhood that had lasted for centuries. They fell victim to mechanisms of British rulers who wanted to divide two communities so that freedom movement is weakened and their rule may continue uninterrupted. Alas! Muslims of India fell in that trap.

At that time the movement launched by Hur tribals was also at its Peak. This was led by Pir (Holy Seer) Pagaro of Hur tribe. This movement was also directed against the British domination but it was extremely violent in nature inspired by the religious fervor and zeal as an article of faith and loyalty to their religious leader. These tribals were well built, strong and fearless. They could not be contained in even strong jail walls. They would often break the prison walls and make good their escape. They engaged British forces in many skirmishes in which British forces had to suffer heavy losses. They gave them quite sleepless nights. By regular combing operations many Hurs were rounded up. Many of the spies and informers were ruthlessly executed by Hurs. In order to quell this uprising the authorities declared Martial Law in that part of Sind. As 'Pir Jo Goth' (Village of the Pir) fell under Sukkur district the entire district was placed under Martial Law. This resulted in Hemu's case being transferred to Military court.

News of Hemu's arrest reached his father Pessumal Kalani late. He had taken to making brick kilns at Khapro situated in Tharparkar district. He was a pious man and observed all religious rituals in his daily life. He had good contacts among ruling elite as he was considered a loyal citizen and was awarded government contracts. He tried to exert his influence to get Hemu released. As a last resort he made an appeal to authorities to grant him a bail and that plea was also rejected. During the trial Hemu was lodged in a jail situated in old Sukker. There he was granted facilities to wear clothes brought from his home and he could have homemade food. He was also allowed to meet his family members. This was the only concession that all the influence of his father got

him. His younger brother Teckchand who was about ten at that time remembers that he used to take food and daily necessities to him everyday. During the trial well known advocates of the time Peerzado Abdul Sattar, Nandiram Wadhwani (Uncle of Educationist Jhamatmal Wadhwani) and a team of other advocates was engaged. Thus a legal battle royal continued for some time...

Chapter-12

Court Case

Sukkar had a lower court, Sessions Court and civil court. In those courts normal civil and criminal cases used to be conducted. As stated in the earlier chapter the Hemu's case was referred to special Martial Law court.

Before the case commenced the advocates advised Hemu to deny all the charges. Never divulge to the court the truth about the weapons and explosives and about your involvement in the freedom movement. You have to be firm and maintain that you have been framed.

Hemu remained firm. He told them he will not lie to the court and shall tell them everything truthfully. He would in any case not divulge the names of his associates in this entire episode.

The case commenced in the Martial Law court. Hemu was brought to dock in chains but he proudly held his head high.

As mark of respect to the judge all present stood up till the judge was seated afterwards the prosecutor advocate moved the matter before the court with following words:

"My Lord! This Boy who is standing before you is named Hemu and his surname is Kalani. He is a dangerous criminal."

Judge: "What is he charged with?"

Prosecutor: "My lord! He is accused of revolting against British Empire, Indulging in violent activities such as making and throwing bombs to kill and injure loyal British soldiers, destroying Public property by arson and other means, spreading idea of sedition and conspiracy against the regime and above all he has been caught red handed by the security personnel while he was trying to remove fish plates from rail tracks in order to derail the train carrying British troops and ammunition to cause maximum harm to them."

Defense Lawyer: "My Lord! As you can see he is a mere child and is not capable of all the charges that are falsely leveled against him."

Prosecutor: "My lord! He may look an innocent boy but in fact he is a very dangerous person involved in seditious activities. He has been caught with all

the tools to remove fishplates and they form the part of the evidence. He has support of a very dangerous organization to create mayhem through violent activities in the country to destabilize the established government.”

Defense Lawyer: “My Lord! At such an impressionable age he might have been misguided but from your own experience you must have found that a by proper counseling and guidance all could be set right and in fact he may prove to be a loyal asset to British Government.”

Judge (To Hemu) “What is your name?”

Hemu: My name is ‘REVOLUTION’. I am a proud revolutionary. I am humble son of this land ‘BHARAT MATA’.

Prosecutor: “My lord! This boy is of determined will. He has decided to destroy the rule of the law of the land. He is spreading disaffection against the British regime and he has a political support also for this nefarious purpose. He is connected to a big group that constantly hatches conspiracies against the government and indulge in violent activities to destroy the peace of the society and challenge the established law and order of the country. When he was arrested with him was a group of associates who managed to escape in cover of darkness. Young man will you tell the court the names of your associates?”

Hemu: I have no associates and I was all alone. My only supporter is ‘Revolution’ and on my lips is slogan of ‘Vande Matram’ (Long live motherland).

Prosecutor: Tell the honorable court name of your father?.

Hemu: India the Great.

Prosecutor: What is your vocation?

Hemu: I work for total freedom of my country by all and any means.

Prosecutor: “My Lord! This boy is not as innocent as he appears but he is a danderous criminal. He has been involved in mnay other criminal activities also. In fact he is a murderer. To give a specific instance on 23rd October at night he was caught red handed trying to remove the fishplates of railway track with intention of derailing the train that was moving with troops and ammunition towards Quetta. It was precisely at that time that the train was stopped which otherwise would have resulted in a tragedy of great magnitude leading to loss of many valuable lives and material of the brave and loyal soldiers of His Majesty. It should be remembered that those brave soldiers also

have their families and many mothers would have lost their sons, while others their husbands and their children would have been orphaned. All this adds to magnitude of his crime and sinister design.”

“My Lord! One simply shudders at the thought of enormity of the crime that he was engaged in. You have heard his crude and defiant replies. He is not as simple and innocent as he appears to be. All dacoits, antisocial and criminal elements are linked with him. He has even connections with the unlawful and criminal activities of Hur tribe.

Defense Lawyer: My lord! All that has been alleged by the prosecutor is false and baseless. All allegations leveled by the prosecutor are not supported by any evidence or proof. He is from a very respectable and family that is known for the loyalty to the Crown. They all are very law abiding and respectable subjects. It is possible that due to lack of experience and exuberance of his youth someone might have misguided him to give such replies to show his bravado. Such things do happen in life. In fact he is quite a harmless promising young man from a reputed family with high social standing. All he needs is a proper counseling to channel his youthful energies to constructive purposes. My Lord! A chastisement from you would be enough to bring him to the right path.

Judge: (To Hemu) have you to say anything in your defense? (Hemu remains quiet) Young man you will not gain anything by remaining silent. If you co-operate with the court it court will give you proper justice. Due to your cooperation and helpful behavior and looking at your tender age the court may take a lenient view of your crime and may even grant a pardon if you seek an apology and ask for mercy. You will have to apologize and give an undertaking that in future you will not participate in such illegal activities against the British Government.

Hemu: I am not engaged in any ‘illegal’ activity. I am not a smuggler or a dacoit. I am a freedom fighter. What should I apologize for? Your courts are meant to dispense justice and I know what justice it is. It sends hundreds of sons of the motherland to gallows and thousands have been put behind the bars for their only crime for asking for the freedom of their motherland!

Judge: I want you to think about your tender age and youth. Future is promising for you. You will have to atone for the pain that you have caused to your dear parents and the entire family. Due to your ill advised act entire family stands disgraced in the society. You will have to make amends for the same. Firstly you have to serve your parents who have lavished so much love

and affection on you. Hemu! Think calmly and seriously about the consequences that may await you if you decide to oppose the mighty British Empire.

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Defense Lawyer: Hemu now enough of this emotional outburst! You will not gain anything out of such an attitude. In your own interest and looking to condition of your parents who have brought you up with all love and affection and have very high hopes for your future you must desist from ruinous path and assure the court of your good and loyal conduct in future and plead for mercy.

Hemu: I know the consequences of opposing 'mighty British Empire'. I know the punishment for this 'Crime' is hanging or a long Prison term. In fact it is the present RULERS who need to be punished for usurping our land. They came in the guise of businessmen and ultimately have become our rulers by deceit and treachery.

Prosecutor: My Lord! Beneath this innocent face is hidden other very dangerous and sinister face. His innocence is merely guile. He hides a very cruel face behind his mask of innocence. One who can dare to make an attempt to derail a train to cause untold havoc and death and destruction should not be allowed to roam free and spread more disaffection, ideas of treason in the name of freedom of the country. If he is not adequately punished it will set a bad precedent and encourage many others who are apt to follow the misguided path of this young man. He deserves to be awarded an exemplary punishment for his actions. He should be punished as any other traitor and a terrorist.

Hemu: It is not we who are traitors. We shall never forget that it is the present British Rulers who have seized this land of our by deceit and treachery. I am sure that very soon India shall be a free country and British will have to disgracefully Quit India.

Judge: Hold your tongue! I ask you one last time if you are prepared to apologize and confess to your crime?

As the case was on, outside a crowd had gathered and was engaged in slogan shouting.

Judge asked the pose of policemen present there to maintain order. Police went out and started pushing them. They were lashed and lathi-charged. This created quite a commotion among the people and they started running helter skelter.

Hemu (addressing the Judge) I am a revolutionary who does not fear his death. I every day recite Gita. Lord Krishna in Gita has said that this body is mortal while the soul is immortal. By sacrificing my life this beautiful and bountiful country better than even heaven will attain freedom and that will be everlasting. If one Hemu will die innumerable Hemus will spring from every drop of his blood and avenge his death. I will continue to loudly raise the slogan “BHARAT MATA KI JAI” and “INQUILAB ZINDABAD”. You are free to punish me in the way you like.

Judge: He is an adamant boy and self willed. He is obstinate and has a delusion of false pride. He seems to be involved in many illegal activities which may amount to treason and sedition against the established government and disrupt law and order. He has been caught red handed for removing the fish plates with a intention to derail the train in which British army was travelling and cause immense damage to safety and security of the country. Actual evidence gathered at the spot and circumstances evidence adduced is sufficient to take him into custody so that police may collect further evidence and may extract the information about the wider conspiracy and entire organizational network involved in the subversive activities. Police is free to interrogate him to unravel the bigger conspiracy behind his activities and they are free to use all methods at their disposal.

In the Meanwhile I award him imprisonment for life.

After delivering the judgment Judge went inside his chambers.

On hearing this judgment Hemu laughed loudly and clapped.

He Said, “Bravo! My Lord! What a judgment! Your police will be totally frustrated but this tongue will not open to reveal the names of my associates or any other information that may go against my country. I will not betray my comrades at any cost. I will smilingly bear all the torture that the authorities are capable of. I am very happy today.

All those who were still outside raised the slogans “BHARAT MATA KI JAI”, “VANDE MATARAM”, “BHAGAT SINGH ZINDABAD” and slogan shouting continued the echo of those slogans reverberated across the length and breadth of the county.

Chapter- 13

Inside the Jail

“The brave of this land will not be defeated by death
Sind is never widowed, but it is our milk that has turned sour”

- Sheikh Ayaz

Learning the verdict of the court on Hemu not only family but entire city of Sukkur was shocked and was aghast. Strangely this verdict did not affect Hemu in anyway he was his normal self. He knew about his mission and spent his time in jail being indifferent to whatever was being felt and said about him.

He was moved to main prison which had tall, thick, strong walls and a heavy gate. It could accommodate about 800 or more prisoners at a time. It had separate wards for men and women. At that time prisoners accused of various crimes from across the Sind were lodged there. It was administered sternly by various layers of jail officials and on the top of all of them was main Jailor who was cruel and merciless. His assistant Jiandas Relwani was lenient to those prisoners who abided by prison rules and regulations.

As stated earlier in this jail were lodged freedom fighters from various parts of Sind such as Krachi, Nawabshah, Khairpur state and others. About 400 freedom fighters were lodged here along with dreaded dacoits and criminals of all kinds. Among notable political prisoners those lodged in Sukkur jail were Sachanand Pherumal, Motumal Sachnanad, Hundraj Dukhyal, Hassanand ‘Jadugar’, Dada Choithram Thawani, and many other eminent freedom fighters. Hundraj Dukhyal the noted national poet was lodged in the same barrack as Hemu. Hemu’s room in the jail was shut by heavy iron door and was being guarded by heavily armed jail guards. Even blood thirsty and cruel mercenary guard would avoid going into the room where Hemu was lodged. He had inspired such an awe. They were always on alert to thwart the attempt by his associates to attack the jail and whisk him away. According to jail regulations during the fixed timings on fixed weekly day prisoners were allowed to meet family members. Officials were hopeful that at last Hemu would yield to the

entreaties of his family members and soften his stand and will start co-operating with the authorities. That way they would be able to get at the bottom of entire conspiracy only when Hemu divulged the names of his co-conspirators. He steadfastly held his ground and refused to name anyone.

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One day in the morning as per his daily routine when Hemu was engaged in reading Gita. He heard the loud voice of main Jailor who had demanded to know where that chit of boy who boasted to be revolutionary was lodged and ordered them to open the door.

Hemu firmly and loudly replied as to where he was. As Jailor approached him he said, "My name is Hemu and I belong to Kalani family."

Jailor laughing sarcastically said, "Oh! So you are Hemu Kalani?"

Hemu laughed louder and replied, "Yes! I am that Hemu. Freedom Fighter."

Jailor (angrily), "You shut up! At such a tender age you are engaged in such dangerous activities! Do you even realize as to what you are into? I do admire your courage but rest assured our government is ever merciful to its loyal subjects though let me say at personal level I am a very strict person. If you cooperate with His Majesty's Government and turn crown witness you may even earn pardon in spite of your dastardly act.

Hemu: (Sarastically) Seeking mercy? Crown witness? Freedom for my own self?

Jailor: I feel pity for your parents. You should also think about them and love with which they have nurtured you. You are of tender age. A bright future awaits you. You have only to tell us the names of the persons who hatched this conspiracy to derail the train. Tell us also the names of all those who were involved in this mischief. If you love your life and dear ones this is the only way open to you. Really speaking looking at you I fell sorry for you. I want to help you and set you free. We need only your co-operation.

Hemu: (Laughing) you feel sorry about me. Why suddenly this gushing sympathy. I have heard that you are reputed to be quite strict and cruel in dealing with people. Let me tell you I pity you and this government. Your feigning pity and sympathy for me shall not work with me. I can see through your game and I shall not fall for it. I am not to be swayed by your show of concern and sympathy for me and my parents. You will not get anything from me. It is really ironic that the representative of the mighty empire is reduced to plead with me for help.

Jailor: (Losing his cool) You bastard! Do you know the most dreaded criminals have also broken down and confessed to me and have sung like poor birds?" (He slapped him hard while uttering these words.)

"Tell me who were with you in this?"

Hemu: Inquilab. (Revolution).

"Which organization you belong to?"

"Vande Matram".

Jailor: You keep on repeating Inquilab... Inquilab..

Hemu: (raising a slogan) "Zindabad".

Jailor while beating him with a stick mercilessly kept asking him "Tell us about your accomplices... Your... organization. I will kill you. Do you understand?" His beatings continue all the while.

Hemu suddenly held his stick with his bare hand. He told him "Listen! With me were only a hammer and a spanner. They are already in your custody. You are at liberty to proceed as you desire. You may beat me pulp but all the time my answer will be the same and I will continue to shout 'Inquilab Zindabad' (Long live revolution) and " Vande Matram" (Salute to motherland)

Jailor: (To guards). This man will not come around easily. Torture him enough with all the measures at your disposal till he is compelled to confess and reveal all the necessary information about the conspiracy and conspirators.

After getting these instructions all the instruments of torture were let loose on Hemu. He was whipped, he was deprived of sleep, and he was made to sleep on Ice Blocks. Hemu bore all this without even whispering a word or even once crying in agony. He slumped in semi-conscious state. Again when he gained consciousness he raised revolutionary slogans. This all was repeated many times over but with no result. At last even jailor had to realize that Hemu was made of stern and strong will and had to admit that ' he is a real dedicated Lion and all respect for the mother who produced such a brave child from her womb.'

At the same in courtroom the arguments raged forth and back and his sentence of life imprisonment was maintained. Advocates moved a mercy petition against the verdict.

Photographs of Jamshed Mehta and Sadhu T.L.Vasw

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The court of Martial Law Administrator was located at Hyderabad hence the matter was moved to Hyderabad. There also the arguments and counter arguments continued back and forth. Ultimately the prosecutor summed up his arguments with the following words:

“My Lord! Accused is a very dangerous person. He harbours hatred and ill will against the British Government. If he is let off he will continue to harass the government and cause untold damage to the war efforts which will prove detrimental to Government of His Majesty. Any leniency shown to him will encourage such elements to engage in subversive activities. This may spread like an infectious disease which the government will find extremely difficult to control. This will lead to wide spread violence and disturb peace which is necessary in this raging war situation. He should be given an exemplary punishment that may deter other such elements from engaging in activities against the crown at such a delicate juncture in the History.”

Richardson who was known for his cruelty, obstinacy and haughty dispositions pronounced their verdict. “TO BE HANGED TILL DEATH”.

These orders were communicated by Commander Lord Larnach to incharge of Sukker Jail. He was happy to get riddance of such an incorrigible inmate.

This verdict stunned and shocked not only people of Sukkar and Sind but the entire country. All eyes were moist and an atmosphere of mourning pervaded everywhere.

All eminent personalities of Sind and Leaders from all political parties asked for a pardon of such a harsh and uncalled for verdict. Those who appealed included Mayor of Karachi Municipality Jamshed Mehta, Head priest of Sadh-Bela Swami Harnamdas, Sadhu T. L. Vaswani, Veerumal Menghraj, Peerzada Abdul Sattar, Jairamdas Doulatram and many. They offered to apologise on behalf of Hemu.

Mercy petition was made to Governor General and Viceroy Lord Lilingthow. Hemu's old grandparents with family which included infants went personally to plead for mercy but nothing came of it.

ALL THIS WHILE HEMU WAS HAPPY THAT NOW HE GOT OPPORTUNITY TO LAY DOWN HIS LIFE AT THE ALTER OF HIS MOTHERLAND AND DIE AS A MARTYR AS BHGAT SINGH HAD DONE.

Chapter- 14

Death Sentence

Hemu was lodged at Sukkur Jail. Date of the execution had not yet been fixed. Jail officials were awaiting further orders. All the same all preparations for hanging had been made. Freedom fighters lodged in the jail were restless and anxious. Youngest among all the freedom fighter was to face gallows. They all were distressed and angry with British Government.

Leading personalities of Sukkur after taking due permission came to meet Hemu. They all expressed their dismay at the verdict and and enquired about the treatment meted out to him while in jail. They enquired about his 'wellbeing'.

Hemu replied that all was fine. On being enquired about the food served in the Jail Hemu replied, "As you know the food in the jail is not fit to be eaten even by the animals. Half cooked or stale food is served. *Daal* that is served is more of water than anything else. Yet look at me inspite of bad food I have gained in weight by 8 pounds! Iam happy that now I have got the opportunity to lay my life for my country.

One of them gave a piece of paper to him to sign. Hemu read that letter and declined to sign it. Elderly person who had given paper told him, "Son! Now this is the only way to save your young life."

Hemu humbly replied, "Honourble Sir! To apologise would be cowardice. If I had wanted to apologize I would have done it at the first opportunity and I would have avoided all the torture that I had to endure. You must understand that I have chosen the path of a revolutionary."

Old man: "You are young and inexperienced in the ways of the world. Do you realize that all are praying for you, appealing to all possible authority on your behalf and exerting themselves in every way possible?"

Hemu: Let me tell you that all your well intentioned efforts are futile as I am myself willing to sacrifice my life at the alter of my motherland. Remmember

that even Guru Gobindsingh sacrificed everything including his sons. Recently Bhagatsingh and his comrades have smilingly touched the noose of gallows. I want that Sind and Sindhi people and for that reason people of India may feel proud of me for having contributed to the great freedom struggle. I have been taught to sacrifice life for the sake of my country; these feelings are filled in my heart like my very blood. I have blessings of you all elders. What more one can aspire for? I am sure the day is not far when the freedom will dawn at this country and my countrymen will be able to breathe in freedom.

Old person: We appreciate your steely will and determination but once again we urge you to think about your mother, father, brothers and sisters who all are in mourning at your home. You owe your duty to them also. You please sign this paper.

Hemu: You are like my grandfather to me. I respectfully want to tell you it is only freedom of the country that will bring solace to all. This entire country now is my family. I do not have restricted sense of family. If now I apologise all Indians will feel betrayed and I will be considered traitor to the cause of the country. I refuse the life of such a humiliation but I want that my family and all my Indian brothers and sisters should feel proud of me. As I am proud of my family I am equally proud of my country and its honour. You all are my elders with all due respect and humility I urge you not to tell me to sign this paper. I only crave your blessings and wish that my born again in Sind to serve my Land.

All Elders: Hemu! We are all proud of you. May God be with you!

Hemu: Vande Matram.

All: Vande Matram.

Chapter- 15

Efforts to save him

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“If it is treason to fight for right
I want to be greatest traitor”
Parsram “Zia”

Sketch of Mahatam Gandhi

Father of the Nation Mahatma Gandhi had slogan of “DO OR DIE” to the nation. In absence of all the leaders who were put behind the bars. Abdul Kalam Azad exhorted every freedom fighter to work thinking that that he is the president of Indian national Congress.

The call given by the Gandhi galvanized the entire country and particularly the youth of the country brimmed with unprecedented enthusiasm to his Call. He had declared in no unequivocal terms that the freedom will be all inclusive it will include all religions and other various sections of the society. He laid down one condition that the movement will have to run on the principles of ‘Satyagraha’, Truth and non violence. Though the rulers will provoke violence but we have to strictly adhere to this path.

Youth of the country was not content to be constrained with the dictum of non violence. At many places youth abandoned non violence and many revolutionary groups emerged at various places and inflicted heavy losses on the ‘enemy’. In the process many police posts were burnt down. Bombs were hurled at police posts and assassination attempts at the authorities were made.

All such activities needed a financial support which was provided by raiding Banks. One daring youth fired with revolutionary zeal emerged in Sind also. He was Parcho ‘Vidharthi’.

He was born on 15th June 1919 at Larkana (Sind). As he was student at that time he adopted name “Vidyarthi”. Under that name he used to publish a

underground magazine also. His father was a true Gandhian and implicitly believed in non violence. One he asked his father why was Bhagat singh hanged? He was told about British atrocities right from Jalianawala Baug till recent times. Hearing all this the son chose a different path. He came into contact with some underground members of communist party and socialist party and other revolutionary elements. He was tasked to provide financial support for revolutionary activities and for that purpose he used to raid Banks. He was labeled as a 'Bank Robber'. With this finance revolutionaries would procure arms and ammunition and would use the funds for logistic purposes. Parcho used to be under ground all this time.

When Hemu was awarded death sentence Parcho and his comrades decided to free him from the Jail. The planning was initially done by Jhaaman Kalni. They made foolproof plans to accomplish this objective. To discuss the proper implementation of the plan he met his accomplices near the shop situated in the vicinity of the jail. As the discussion was going on Parcho realized that he has been spotted by plain cloth informer who had alerted authorities about his presence.

Soon they were surrounded. Parcho whipped out a pistol with a lightning speed. While firing bullets in the air he could make good his escape but while running some papers fell from his pocket and all plans to release Hemu came to naught. In this Aishwariya 'Vidhyarthi' and Narain Wadhwani both Parcho's accomplices who were tasked with cutting of prisons's telephone lines were caught and sentenced. Authorities tried their all but failed to find Parcho who remained elusive for them.

After this safety measures in the jail and around it were strengthened.

Chapter-16

Mother I shall come back

“If you have a coward in your womb you are not a Sindhi Mother

Do not cultivate weak hands; do not be afraid of oppereesor

Though we may become weak but our bodies are made of steel ”

Sheikh ‘Ayaz’

With the verdict of dearth Hemu’s house plunged into mourning. Many pprole Came to his house to offer sympathy and in the house itself a round of prayers and recitation of the holy books commenced to invoke divine mercy. All were expecting some miracle to happen to avert such a disaster for the family. Hemu was moved to cell reserved for prisoners to be put on death row. Many freedom fighters were lodged in Sukkur jail at that time. Jail would occasionally viberate and reviberated with slogans of “ Inquilab Zindabad”, “Bharat Mata Ki Jai” and “ Vande Matram”. Now they would chant, “ Hemu Kalani Zindabad” also. Hemu was not allowed to meet any visitor. When Hemu used to hear in his cell the slogan “Inquilab Zindabad” his eyes would shine radiantly. His entire being would be astir!

Though Hemu was not allowed to meet any outsider yet he was allowed to meet his family members for one hour everyday. This concession was also granted with a purpose. There was some hope with authorities that some day or some time a name may slip through his lips that may help them to unravel the entire ‘conspiracy’. In such a situation his father and mothers could prove to be useful. The work that could not be done by torture inflicted may be accomplished by motherly love. Hemu belied all such hopes. He was as if made of steel.

One day Hemu’s parents came to meet him at appointed time.

Pesumal: Son! We now stand defeated. All our appeals have been rejected. Our influence and all our efforts have failed to move the court to reconsider and mercy petitions also have been rejected.

Hemu: Dad! No amount of money or influence is going to change my fate. Do not make yourselves miserable on my account. I am born to be sacrificed for the freedom of my motherland. I will sacrifice my life for the sake of freedom. That is my certain fate. This is also will of God. Accept it as such. Does anyone have a power to defy God's will?

Mother: You say it as God's will. What about the love of mother who nurtures the child in her womb for full nine months only to be sacrificed by these monsters? What about motherly feelings? (She starts crying)

Pesumal: (Consoling his wife) your crying will not help your child. Son! Speaker of the Sind Assembly Bhojsingh Pahilajani and Sadhu Vaswani are still trying to help us.

Hemu! Dad! Army commander Richrdson is devoid of any feeling. He is cruel and arrogant. I do not wish that such great people should go begging for mercy to such unworthy person for my sake. His refusal would a rebuff to such great personalities of our Land. He feels he is doing his 'duty'. Please for my sake do no go abegging for my life. This is my appeal to you and all my countrymen.

Mother: Yes! Commander is merciless and cruel. What a travesty of justice is this! My son has been jailed and tortured. He was awarded life imprisonment. I accepted it feeling that some times I will be able to see his face. At least he will be alive. So long he would remain alive a lingering flicker of hope would keep me also alive. First he was awarded life imprisonment and on appeal it was enchanced to death sentence. What can be more ironical! THIS IS NOT JUSTICE... THIS IS NOT JUSTICE...

Pesumal: Yes! Hemu's mother! This is not justice. This is gross injustice of martial Law where all witnesses are from government side and judge is also from amonst them. They are free to follow their whims and fancies. This is THEIR JUSTICE!

Mother getting out of control indulges in an emotional outburst and insists to take away Hemu with her and starts wailing loudly. Father tries to console her.

Hemu: Mother! Why terars in your eyes? You are a very brave mother indeed! You have always remained my inspiration and role model. From the very childhood you have taught me to be brave and your teachings now have come

to fruition. You should be happy that I have imbibed your teachings in letter and spirit. You should be proud that like old and recent martyrs in the line of Mahrana Pratap and Bhagatsingh I am also treading the same path. You will surely be proud of me as all other countrymen will. I will not betray the Milk with which you have nourished me and I will proudly accept the gallows and noose round my neck.

Mother: What about mother's attachment? My Love!

Hemu: Mother be free from the bondages of love and attachment and think about the higher goal that I am to achieve! Mother now you must bless me with all your heart. Bless me so that smile of my face remain on my lips even in the face of death. Mother! You have taught me that we have two mothers one that gives the birth and other is motherland at whose feet we find more than even heaven. Now I have got opportunity to serve my motherland and this mere life of an individual is of no consequence. My sacrifice will bring about the freedom of my country from the chains that bind her now. Many mothers have sacrificed their loving sons and I am lucky to be one of them. I assure you that I will be born again and again and everytime to same motherland. Mother I am bound to return therefore do not grieve for me.

Mother: (Crying) my loving son!

Hemu: Mother! I promise to come back till this country is not rid of foreign yoke. Please promise that you will not grieve my death. You will not shed tears and through my sacrifice will continue to inspire my Indian brothers and sisters to dedicate their lives for the sake of this country. Bless me now.

Mother: Son! From where to bring heart made of steel like you. How can I suffocate my motherly attachment and bless you for your death?

Hemu: Look at me the verdict of death has gladdened my heart. I have started eating more and I have gained weight also. Believe me! I am very happy. I am not scared of this 'punishment'. This is in fact is a boon for me. You have to encourage me and not discourage me for this noble cause. Now Mother! Bless me with all your heart.

Mother: How can I.....

Hemu: Dad! Are you not proud of me?

Father: Yes son I am very proud of you. I can hold my head high and pray that every household has a son like you who is prepared to sacrifice his life for motherland and make Sind and Hind Hind proud.

Hemu: You should not be distraught or feel sorry for the sacrifice of your one son. Many sons of this country will look at you as their own mother with a sense of pride. I shall always be with you in the faces of innumerable children of this country. I will appear before you as colourful flowers of this soil and I shall pervade the flora and fauna of this entire beautiful land!

Mother: yes! In my selfish love and attachment I had forgotten for a time that you belong to this sacred soil of the country. I am happy to have such a brave son like you. Now I forsake my selfish attachment and dedicate you to this sacred country. May God give you courage to go to gallows with a chant of "Inquilab Zindabad". May this country be free soon and prosper.

Hemu touches the feet of his parents and seeks their blessings.

Chapter- 17

Hangman's Noose

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“Those who die for the country will always live
For ever such brave, remain dear to heart”
- Hari ‘Dilgir’

As stated earlier, Hemu's family was allowed to meet him for one hour daily. Looking at such a pitiable condition of his parents Hemu told the jail authorities to withdraw this facility as now he does not wish to meet his parents or relations anymore. Anyone wishing to see him may not be permitted.

As desired by Hemu jail authorities rescinded this facility. All the while his parents and relatives continued to plead with authorities but nothing came of it. They did not know that it was Hemu himself who had expressed such a desire. His parents were under the impression that authorities have become strict and cruel. They complained about such a callous behavior to Leaders like Jaopakash Narayan and Aruna Asafali also. Jail authorities were accordingly instructed to resume this facility but Hemu refused to avail of such a facility and did not move out of the cell reserved for the 'condemned' convicts.

Sketch of Hemu

Superior jail officials were happy that Hemu was 'punished' to be hanged but there was one person in jail who was unhappy. His name was Sital Prasad. He was petty official in Jail. His duty consisted of regular counting of the prisoners and he developed a sort of paternal attachment for Hemu. His duty was also to bring food for Hemu. In his spare time he would sit with Hemu and tell him that at such a tender age he had accomplished such a great deed. He would often bemoan the cruelty of the British rulers and curse them. Some times in such a situation he would be tearful...

Hemu would reply he did not know if it was a great deed or not. He only knew that British had enslaved his country. They loot this country to enrich themselves and impoverished Indian masses. They feel that Indians are fools and can not see through their nefarious game. Indians now understand everything and they will not be fooled anymore. They forget that Indians are proud people they would rise for their freedom and fight to their last for it. They will break rather than bend. They are proud inheritors of ancient civilization that has been torch bearer of the path for many countries in olden times.

Sital Prasad would be dumbfounded before his knowledge and would be all praise for him in the heart of his hearts.

Hemu was in solitary confinement. He had obtained a copy of Bhagwat Gita through Sital. In the morning at fixed time he would get up. After completing his bodily rituals, he would do necessary exercise to keep himself fit and healthy. At fixed time he would read Gita and other religious books and in this way he would conduct his daily routine without any worry showing on his face. Those guarding him were astounded that the man sentenced to death was leading a normal life as if nothing serious had happened. He is so silent and peaceful!

Hemu's face did not betray any anxiety or worry or despair. There was no trace of regret. On the contrary he appeared to be happy and contented.

Richardson who had pronounced death sentence would some times send his officers to Hemu. He wanted to know the reaction of Hemu on the sentence pronounced by him. He wanted to know if he is rattled. Is he worried and anxious? At such times Hemu would opt for silence. It was only Jail superintendent who was secretly in sympathy with Hemu. He was some times afraid that under pressure Hemu may buckle and apologize. He had great respect for steadfastness of Hemu. He desired that Hemu should bravely face the gallows and be pride of the country. That would be defeat for the British rulers. He managed to secretly send some mature and steeled freedom fighters to him to strengthen his resolve. One of the persons sent to him was Rochiram Thawani. After being assured of his firm resolve he could rest assured.

One morning after bathing when he was busy in his daily ritual of Pooja and reading of holy books he found Jailor and guards outside his cell. He came to gate of his cell and asked what the matter was? What was the purpose of such an early visit?

Jailor was shaken and he fumbled and said that they had received orders from Army headquarters to carry out the execution on 21 st Jnauary in the morning.

Hemu had a hearty laugh and said that was the very day of 21 st January. To day is my lucky day to lay down my life for the freedom of my motherland.

Now my wait is over. Today I feel fortunate to meet you. You have conveyed good news to me indeed! I am happy and I am ready.

Jailor was surprised.

His parents also had received a telegram to that effect and permission for the last visit. Telegram was dated 20th January which was received by the family in early hours of 21st. The entire house plunged into mourning and pitiable wails pervaded the atmosphere at home.

In the morning this news spread in the city like wild fire. It appeared the population of the entire city was headed towards Jail. Even the secretary Shah Nawaz during the world war two was among those present outside the jail. That day entire Sukkar city as a sign of mourning observed a complete shutdown.

Hemu's parents with all his siblings including a small sister in mothers lap were present there.

Hemu came out of his cell and he touched the feet of his parents in salutation and told his brother to continue the work left by him unfinished and see that the country attains freedom. All eyes were tearful at the last parting. Tears were of sadness as well as pride! Hemu also became emotional at this point but he held himself and proceeded to plot where hanging was to take place.

On the way he met his jail guard Sital who could not contain his emotions. Seeing him thus Hemu raised the cry, "INQUILAB ZINDABAD". At this jail inmates also realized as to what was happening. They all raised patriotic slogangs which rent the atmosphere with patritic fervor. Slogans continued to Viberate and reviberate in the entire jail premises and outside. All the while the Hemu was proudly wearing jail badge on his chest. Hemu was all satisfaction and smile kept playing on his lips.

Magistrate: (Reading the order) Hemu! Today on 21st January you are to be executed by hanging...

Hemu: (Interrupting him) for fighting for the freedom of my country.

Jailor: You have only a few minutes left.

Hemu: It is true that this body is mortal and I am here for only a few minutes. I am sure that my ideals will remain for ever. This will be a memorable day for my countrymen. I am sure that after I am gone many more sons of this soil will rise to free the motherland from oppression of the foreign yoke. I am sure that my dream of freedom for my motherland will never die and my death would continue to inspire many more. Now you will remove my shackles and I am sure that very soon you will be forced to remove the shackles of my motherland too. "INQUILAB ZINDABAD".

Magistrate: Before mounting the platform state your last wish which will be fulfilled.

Hemu: I know that you will not be able to fulfill my last wish. You all are helpless. You are servants of this government. I harbor no ill will against anyone of you. You are simply executing the orders.

Magistrate: (To Jail Doctor) you carry out his medical checkup and take his weight.

Dotor: (After checkup and taking his weight) He is quite healthy and his weight has increased by 14 pounds.

Jailor: Unh! This is very strange. I have seen that after the person is condemned his weight decreases and I have never seen anyone's weight increasing!" Hemu! Once again I ask you about your last wish which will be fulfilled."

Hemu: Okay! My last wish is that all of you present here raise the slogans with me. INQILAB ZINDABD... BHARAT MATA KI JAI...

To fulfill his last wish I reluctantly raise the slogans.

Jailor signaled to hangman to proceed but Hemu proceeded at fast pace raising patriotic slogans. He himself took black cloth from hands of hangman and brought himself noose round his throat.

All present there seeing his courage were mournful and they salute his courage.

Inside and outside the Jail the slogan "HEMU KALANI JI JAI "spread far and wide. Atmosphere was ELECTRIFIED!

Chapter- 18

Last Journey

“ You had not even properly grown a moustche
Those were the days of your fun- frolic
You saw only a few winters and rains
You sacrificed yourself for the country”.

-Kamla Goklani

At the death of Hemu it appeared that even skies were crying! For a while even nature held its breath and everything came to stand still. Even the waters of Sindhu stopped as a mark of salute to the young Martyr. It was cold winter day. Defying the biting winter it appeared as if the entire city of Sukkur had converged at the central Jail. Even people from the neighbouring areas rushed there to have last glimpse of this proud son of mother India. They all stood there without bothering about thirst or hunger. The atmosphere was charged with patriotic slogans and Slogans ‘Long Live Hemu’ also rent the atmosphere.

Authorities had not anticipated such a huge demonstration. The police force at their disposal was limited and in order to control the crowds and to maintain peace in the city reinforcements were called for. Inside the jail also among freedom fighters and even among common criminals’ passions ran high.

Looking at such a situation the authorities were delaying the process of handing over the body of Hemu. This delay resulted in the crowd growing larger by every minute. At last the Body was to be handed over to relatives after the written assurance that by handing over the body no riots would break out and the final journey and rites will be conducted in peaceful manner After

all these formalities were completed the body was handed over at 4 pm at the other end of the bridge which was quite a distance away from the proper city.

People could be found everywhere on roof tops and on tree branches to have a final glimpse of this brave son of their country. After his body was placed on the ground people in orderly manner paid their homage and no untoward incident took place. All this while all eyes were moist and tearful.

Last photograph of Hemu's Body

Even in his death his face was glowing and it appeared that he was in deep peaceful sleep. At that time the population of old Sukkar was 10 thousand and of new Sukkur 70 thousand but the mourners in the last journey were more than 1 Lakh. He was cremated at a place where notables of Sukkur used to be cremated. His remains were scattered in the holy river Sindhu.

As stated earlier the situation inside the Jail continued to be tense and surcharged with patriotic fervor. Apart from the slogan shouting the inmates made flags from their headgears and a leading lady freedom fighter Jethi Sipahimalani made a flag by tearing her Sari. This way they paid homage to Hemu.

Photograph of Jethi Sipahimalani

His cousin Dhanomal was a medical student at that time. He gave a call for a strike and this spread to other educational institutions also. Even small children held tricolor flags in their hands as a mark of respect as well as a mark of protest. They all appeared to be silent but in their hearts the echo of Long Live Hemu continued to throb with their heart beat.

Later on his home became like a sacred place. Many prominent people would visit his home. Many eminent people from many faiths came there to offer their condolences for his death. People from numerous organizations came there. At many places Condolences meetings were held and homages were paid. This happened in every city and village of Sind. All news papers carried this news and many wrote columns in their papers condemning such inhuman and barbaric act of the government.

Hemu was executed on 21st and on 26th January along with the flag of Indian National Congress at many places black flags were also hoisted to mourn his martyrdom. On 26th January Karachi Congress organized a freedom March in the morning which started from Sharda Temple (Due to this March the nearby school was closed) and many carried black flags as a mark of mourning. This March went through many streets of Karachi. At Swami Narayan Temple a meeting was held there also flag of Indian National Congress and black flags were hoisted. In that meeting those present vowed that the sacrifice of Hemu shall not be allowed to go in vain. (This was done by taking water in their palms).

Successor to founder of Sad Bela Ashram Swami Harnamdas installed a photograph of Hemu opposite the platform from which he used to give religious discourse. That Photograph used to be regularly garlanded and by important persons who visited that holy place.

Sketch of Jawaharlal Nehru

Members of Bombay Legislative council observed mourning and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on 26th January 1943 on the occasion of 13th day of declaration of complete freedom (In 1930 on 26th January Indian Congress had declared complete Independence as a goal) said, "Today my mind is wandering in Sind where some days ago Hemu a Young man of 19 or 20 years was martyred by the order of the Martial Law court. He was charged for attempting to derail an army train. He was merely a school student and had just passed Matriculation examination. I do not know if any proof of his 'crime' was produced. I am deeply saddened by this action. This has shocked the entire Nation. His blood and those young people who have shed their blood for the sake of the country shall always remain as a permanent witness to our struggle for freedom." (This translation has been made from Sindhi Text. – Translator).

Gold Medal received from Indian National Congress (Sketch)

A close aid of Netaji Col. Dhillon also visited his home and awarded him a Gold Medal for his sacrifice for the nation. A great Saint of Sind Sadhu T. L. Vaswani also sent a message of condolence to his home.

Photograph of Captain Dhillon with his mother

Out of reverence often people refer to him as Bhagatsing of Sind.

Chapter- 19

Tributes...

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“Hemu you are immortal
Your sacrifice has taken many shapes
All young learn lesson from you
Fearlessly you made milk of your mother great!”

- Kamla Goklani

Hemu's untimely death sent a wave of shock and sorrow all across the Sind. Many meetings mourning his death were held at many places throughout Sind. In many journals editorial appeared condemning this dastardly act. Many poets found their inspiration in him and wrote poems eulogising his courage. Thus it all added to corpus of Patriotic literature in Sindhi Language.

Sketch of Bharat Mata with Hemu inset

- * Hundraj' Dukhyal' National poet of Sind and true Gandhian and after freedom ardent follower and companion of Vinobha Bhave was in Sukkur Jail when Hemu was martyred. He wrote many poems on the boldness and courage of Hemu and his dedication to motherland while he was in prison.
- * Freedom Fighter Jiwatram Lalwani “Trang” would provide accommodation for the underground freedom fighters and revolutionaries. He not only would spare no hospitality for them but would help them financially also to certain extent. He wrote poems on Hemu and inspired many.
- * Padamshri Prof: Ram Panjwani called Hemu a fearless freedom fighter and inspiration for the youth of the country.

A small photograph of Prof: Ram Panjwani

* A Scholar Educationist Prof: Kanhayalal Talreja has called Hemu a treasure of the country, Kohinoor diamond of the freedom movement that adorned Sind.

Dr. Manghram Kalani has attributed many qualities to Hemu of being fearless and devout and fiercely Anti- British who sacrificed his life at the alter of 'Bharat Mata.'

* Peer Ali Mohmed Rashdi in his book observes that Hemu was fearles soldier of the freedom movement. He was determined to fight British rule and vowed never to rest till his goal of free India was achieved.

* K. D Mehta observes that Hemu was leading freedom fighters for the country. He heeded the cry of Gandhiji to 'Do or Die' and plunged into freedom movement and sacrificed his life for it. In this way he added to golden annals of the freedom History of India.

* Dr. Chithram Gidwani said that he was a fountain head of inspiration for the freedom fighters. I bow before his mother Jethibai who gave birth to such a brave son who while chanting the patriotic slogans lay down his life at the alter of his motherland. This child martyr's name will be written in the freedom History with Golden Words.

Photograph of Dr. Choithram Gidwani

* Swami Shanti Prakash said that Hemu dedicated his life to a great cause of freedom and sacrifice of this young man is a Historical saga that will continue to inspire future generations to come. I very much desire that a suitable memorial to him is created.

Photograph of Swami Shanti Prakash

* Swami Lilashah has to say that such fearlessness is rare. He accepted the hangmen's goose with courage that is exemplary. Day of his martyrdom should be befitting observed in all parts of India and Indians should be made aware of such a great sacrifice for the freedom of the country by Sindhi youth.

Photograph of Swami Lila Shah

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* Acharaya Kripalani said that for the freedom to spread to all parts and sections of the society we shall have to continue to make more sacrifices and in such a situation Hemu's example will stand out and be a source of inspiration. I bow before his mother who gave a birth to such a child.

* Jairamdas Doulatram said that he respected the sacrifice for the country by Hemu. Inspired by Gandhiji he laid down his life for the sake of freedom of the country. Youth has to learn from his selfless sacrifice and let the feeling for the betterment for the country may continue to inspire them.

* Dr. Ram Manohar Lohia said that heeding the call of Gandhiji he sacrificed his young life for the freedom of the country and I bow before him with all the humility.

* Press secretary A.M. Abdul Hamid to President of India Fakhruddin Ali Ahmed informed that in the capital the martyrdom day of Hemu Kalni is being observed and we are happy to know it. From the bottom of my heart I pay my Homage to him.

Sadhu T. L. Vaswani said that he was a true patriot and his eyes reflected the unlimited love for his people and his soil. I bow before your supreme sacrifice. Let us celebrate your love for the countrymen and the country. Let your memory continue to inspire the future generations to guard the freedom that has been achieved with great sacrifices.

His martyrdom was commended by many stalwarts of the freedom movement without exception.

Gandhiji had said that to fight for the country is not cowardice and the country needs such people who would sacrifice their lives for the freedom of the country.

* Jairamdas Doulatram said that he values the sacrifice of Hemu Kalani. Under the influence of Gandhiji when he called for the sacrifice of young for the freedom of the country he heeded that call and sacrificed his life. We have to learn a great lesson of sacrifice from his example.

Photograph of Jairamdas Doulatram.

(Free translation from Sindhi version)

