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#TodayInHistory Ram Prasad Bismil,Ashfaqullah Khan and Roshan Singh are hanged in 1927, as they give up their life for the cause of freedom and inspire many a revolutionary. #LestWeForget

Shahjahanpur was a hub of revolution during the freedom struggle. Most of the revolutioaries in the North, were from this town. And among them, the most famous were two friends, whom destiny would bring together- Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan.

Ashfaqullah Khan was born at the turn of the 20th century on October 22, while Bismil was born 3 years earlier on June 11, in the same town. Both of them were excellent writers in Urdu and Hindi.

Both of them would come together under the Hindustan Republican Association, not to mention the fact that Ashfaq was an admirer of Bismil’s poetry, and became close friends with him on that account.

And both these men were hanged on the same date, December 19, 1927 for their involvement in the Kakori event. Two men from different religions, different backgrounds, yet destiny would bring them together.

Bismil’s ancestors hailed from Gwalior, and his native village was close to the Chambal valley. His father was a clerk in the Municipality, and later started a small business lending out money on interest.

He taught Ram Prasad Hindi, and he later sent him to a Moulvi to learn Urdu too. By 14 years of age, Ram Prasad was fluent in Urdu, and read many novels. He learnt the rituals of worship from a priest near to his home and later learnt Sandhya Vandana too from Munshi Indrajeet.

Ashfaqullah on the other hand, was the youngest of six siblings, son of Mohd. Shafiqullah Khan and Majroonissa Begum. While his father, came from a modest background, his mother came from a well off family, whose men were highly educated.

However their support to the British angered the common folk, and their Kothi was ransacked and burnt down during the 1857 Revolt. He was introduced to Bismil’s poetry, through his elder brother Riyasatullah, who happened to be his classmate.

The poetry of Bismil, so impressed Ashfaq, that he wanted to meet him as soon as he could. However Ram Prasad was absconding then for his involvement in the Mainpuri conspiracy.

When Ram Prasad came back to Shahjahanpur in 1920, that was the time Ashfaq got a chance to meet him. Though he tried meeting Bismil many a time earlier, he could not. However one evening when Bismil was at the river,in a meeting with other friends, Ashfaq did manage to meet

. On knowing he was the brother of his classmate Riasatullah, and an equally good Urdu poet, Ram Prasad asked Ashfaq to meet him at Arya Samaj. The principles of the Arya Samaj had a deep impact on Ram Prasad, which was not to the liking of his father.

Interestingly Ashfaq's family too was against him going to Arya Samaj, but he did not pay heed to their words, and went. After a rather long talk with Ram Prasad, Ashfaq became an active member of the Matruvedi, a party that was started by Bismil.

. And that put him on the road to the revolution. Ashfaq advised Bismil that along with their revolutionary activities, they should also be part of Congress party. Many youngsters of Shahjahanpur too joined the Congress.

Bismil along with Ashfaqullah and another freedom fighter Prem Kishen Khanna joined the Congress in 1921. Bismil went to Allahabad in 1923, and drafted the constitution of the new party along with Sachindranath Sanyal and Dr.Jadugopal Mukherjee.

On 3 Oct 1924, the Hindustan Republican Association was founded in Kanpur, with Sanyal as the Chairman and Bismil as the District in charge for Shahjahanpur, he was also in charge of the Arms.

. In fact owing to his organizational abilities, he was given the additional charge of Agra and Oudh too. Ashfaqullah was made Bismil's deputy and it was up to these two to expand the revolutionary activity in the North.

With his business established well, Ram Prasad plunged headlong into the revolutionary movement again, organizing the workers and volunteers. However the lack of funds was proving to be a main hindrance.

It was at such a time, while he was travelling from Shahjahanpur to Lucknow, by train, he observed that at each station, the Station Master bought bags of money and placed them in the guard's carriage, there was no one to guard them.

Kakori was a small village near Lucknow, and the 8 Down between Shahjahanpur and Lucknow used to pass through it daily. Ram Prasad decided to stop the train at Kakori and take away the money bags, this was the genesis of the famous Kakori plot.

Ashfaqullah though initially opposed the plan, saying it was too risky, and the Government would crack down real hard. However with others like Rajendra Lahiri, Thakur Roshan Singh going along with Bismil, Ashfaqullah too lent his support.

. August 9, 1925, evening time, along with 9 other revolutionaries, Rajendra Lahiri pulled the chain at Kakori station, while Ashfaqullah held the driver hostage with his Mauser pistol .

While Ram Prasad Bismil pushed the guard down and looted the Government money from his cabin. However when none could break the safe, it was Ashfaq once again who managed to break it with all his strength.

There was no bloodshed, except for one passenger killed accidentally. Soon the Government cracked down, on the Kakori conspirators and, and arrest warrants were issued.While Chandrasekhar Azad managed to evade the crackdown, Ram Prasad was arrested soon enough.

Ashfaqullah went into hiding for some time, and spent some time in Kanpur, working in Ganesh Vidyarthi's printing press. And for quite some time he wandered all over the North from Kanpur to Bihar to Rajasthan, changing names.

He finally went to Delhi, and wanted to somehow escape India and meet Lala Hardayal. However he was betrayed by his own friend in Delhi, to the police and was arrested by Ikramul Haque.

Tasadukk Hussain, the SP, tried to provoke Ashfaq, against Bismil, using the Hindu-Muslim angle, but he refused to be. He asked him to be a Govt approver, saying freedom would be Hindu rule.

I would rather die under the rule of Hindus than to live under the British rule. You called him a Kafir, I request you to leave now, else another case of murder will be registered on me- Ashfaqullah Khan

Finally Ashfaq was detained in Faizabad prison, his brother took the help of Kripa Shankar Haleja, a senior advocate. Others like Acharya Narendra Dev, Chandra Bhanpu Gupta, G.B. Pant too did their best to defend the Kakori case accused.

In spite of the best efforts of Hajela, Ashfaqullah was convicted of conspiracy and sentenced to death. Ram Prasad Bismil, Rajendra Lahiri and Roshan Singh were also convicted to death along with him.

The whole country protested against the death sentences. Petitions were made to the Viceroy to reduce their death sentence into life sentences. Even the Privy Council was approached. It was all in vain.

It was during his stay in prison that Ram Prasad wrote his own autobiography, considered one of the finest works in Hindi literature. Though under strict watch in prison, he managed to successfully smuggle out copies of his manuscript in 3 instalments.

The book was published in 1929, but was again banned by the Government. It covered his childhood, his ancestors, and his experiences with the Arya Samaj, along with more intimate portraits of his mother with whom he shared a close bond.

Oh Lord! Thy will be done. You are unique. Neither my tears nor I will endure. Grant me this boon, that to my last breath and the last drop of my blood, I may think of you and be immersed in your work.- Ram Prasad Bismil

At Faizabad, Ashfaqullah was put in solitary detention, where he spent time reading the Quran and doing the Namaz. During his confinement in Faizabad, he penned his own diary, apart from Urdu, was equally good in Hindi and English.

Patriotism brings with him all sort of troubles and pains, but a man who chooses it,everything become comforts and ease for him.There is no dream, and if there is,there is only one to see you my children struggling for the same and for which I am expected to die. - Ashfaqullah

Brothers and friends will weep after me but I am weeping over their coldness and infidelity towards our motherland. Only for the love of our country I suffer so much. Weep not children, weep not elders; I am immortal ! I am immortal !!- #AshfaqullaKhan

Excerpt from #AshfaqullaKhan diary on the night before he was hanged. So moving.

Dec 19, 1927
District prison, Faizabad. “My hands are not soiled with the murder of man. The charges framed against me are a bare false”- Ashfaqulla’s last words before hanged. He kissed the rope, and began to recite the Shahadat, as the noose tightened around his neck.

Gorakhpur prison- Ram Prasad got up, had a bath, said his morning prayers and wrote his last letter to his mother. He walked without any fear to the gallows, completely at peace of mind, even the authorities were surprised.

As he mounted the gallows, Ram Prasad shouted “Vande Mataram”, “Bharat Mata ki Jai” and recited the prayer “Vishwani deva savitaha dunitani”. Gorakhpur gave him a fitting funeral, with many breaking down seeing his body and he was cremated near the Rapti river.

The two voices were silenced, but their spirit would live on. Two men from the same place, who became friends, united in death, their sacrifice would inspire countless others. Ram Prasad Bismil and Ashfaqullah Khan, the nation salutes you.

On this day in 1927 when they made the sacrifice for freedom, take time to remember and pay tribute to #ramprasadbismil #AshfaqullaKhan and Thakur Roshan Singh. Salute the heroes #naman