



Sadbhavana



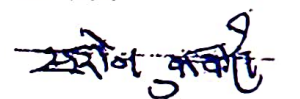
मेरे पति और मैंने जीवन के 64 वसंत और जिन्दगी में आते उतार-चढ़ाव एक साथ मिलकर देखे। हम एक दूसरे की शक्ति प्रेरणा स्रोत भी रहे हैं।

मेरे विवाह के उपरान्त मेरे जीवन का केन्द्र-बिन्दु मेरे पति ही रहे। मैं उनके साथ कंधे से कंधा मिलाकर चलती रही। उनके स्वर्गवास के बाद मैं चाहते हुए भी उनकी याद में और उनके आदर्शों को आगे बढ़ाने में ज्यादा कुछ कर नहीं पाई क्योंकि मुझे इस सड़मे से उभरने में 5 साल लगे।

अब मैंने अपने परिवार के साथ मिलकर उनको आदर्शों और उनके मूल्यों को आगे बढ़ाने के प्रयास में दृढ़ संकल्प होकर "सद्भावना फाउन्डेशन" की स्थापना की है।

आशा ही नहीं अपितु पूर्ण विश्वास है के आप सभी का इस फाउन्डेशन में योगदान और सहयोग बना रहेगा।

आपकी







SONIA GANDHI
PRESIDENT



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ALL INDIA CONGRESS COMMITTEE

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You have chosen a wonderful theme for the Memorial Lecture in honour of your father this year. In these times, when divisions between our different communities are being created, and our democratic rights curtailed, we need more than ever to promote and celebrate India's diversity and to defend our fundamental rights. Shri Arjun Singhji himself cherished our diversity and was a proud upholder of India's secular, pluralistic and democratic traditions. He saw education as a means of broadening the mind of the young generation rather than as a tool for promoting a narrow and intolerant ideology, as is increasingly being done these days. He was always conscious of the rights, welfare and dignity of every citizen, especially the Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, the minorities, women and other vulnerable sections of our society. Such concern seems sadly lacking today, as recent incidents have shown.

Yours Sincerely,

Sonia Gandhi



MOTILAL VORA, MP



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Friend, Philosopher & Guide

I have had a long innings with him. I have many memories of those days, which I could share with you but for the paucity of space, I limit myself to one or two incidents which would show the closeness between us.

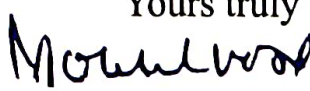
Sometime in 1984, while Shri Arjun Singh was the Chief Minister, Madhya Pradesh, I was appointed by late Smt Indira Gandhi ji as President, Madhya Pradesh Congress Committee. Immediately, after taking charge, I went to Vallabh Bhavan - the Madhya Pradesh Secretariat - to call upon Shri Arjun Singhji. He immediately came out to meet me and told me that in future, I as President PCC, should not come to Vallabh Bhavan to meet the Chief Minister. Instead, I could send a message for the Chief Minister who would see me at the Party Headquarters. He always felt that the President of the State Unit of the Party should be held in high esteem and he maintained what he said.

I had the occasion to work in the council of Ministers under Shri Arjun Singhji. I was assigned the charge of Minister of State (Independent charge) for Higher Education. True to the connotation *Independent Charge*, I was given a totally free hand to function. It was during this period that we, in Madhya Pradesh, established around 100 new colleges- the largest number so far, in Tribal and backward areas also. During the period there was no college in Jagdalpur. I consulted Shri Arjun Singh and we were able to establish eight colleges in the area.

I had the occasion of also working with him when he was the Leader of Opposition in the Madhya Pradesh Assembly in 1977. His functioning was truly democratic inasmuch as he used to consult me and other leaders on all the issues which he wanted to raise in the Assembly.

In his death, the country lost a towering personality and I a personal friend, philosopher and guide.

With good wishes,

Yours truly

Motilal Vora



MOHSINA KIDWAI
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Batey Kum Kaam Zyaada

In today's times whenever I think of Arjun Singh Ji, I always think of him as a great visionary, a soft spoken human being and a true Congressman. Congress ideology ran in his veins. " Batey Kum Kaam Zyaada" signifies Arjun Singhji's style of work.

Arjun Singh ji held many posts during his tenure, he rose to become the Congress Vice President, Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Union Cabinet Minister and was also the Governor in terror ridden State of Punjab and signed the historical Rajiv Gandhi Longowal peace accord.

I still remember that when he was the HRD Minister he started a scheme called " Hunar " specially for Muslim girls craftsmen, artisans and individual skilled workers, he envisioned the need for skill development in the nineties (1992-94) which hold so true in today's age. Many State Govts. adopted this scheme and I have been told it has done very well in Bihar. This shows how he was always ahead of his times.

He was a man of few words and worked relentlessly, focusing on the poor. All his thoughts were centered around upliftment of the needy class of India. Many a times people had a wrong impression that he was not paying attention to thier small requests such as transfers, postings and job seekers etc. In one such experience of mine over a transfer of a very poor man in U.P. whose son was posted in M.P. when Arjun Singh ji was the CM of M.P. I was surprised when I received a copy of the transfer within a fortnight. His grasp on problems facing the needy was so sharp that no one went back disappointed.

Another very pleasant memory I would like to share is that when Rajiv ji was the P.M.,he had a Cabinet meeting in Sariska wild life sanctuary,we were the only lucky ones to see a tiger as we had taken a route based on Arjun ji instincts. This showed his general perception of all things from natural habitat to human kindness.

Yours truly,

M. Kidwai
Mohsina Kidwai



DIGVIJAY SINGH
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Remembering a Mentor

I had the good fortune to work closely with the late Shri Arjun Singhji, one of the finest minds in Indian politics through the decades beginning the late 50s and ending right up to the first decade of the 21st century, right from my early days in politics. He was my mentor through thick and thin. I remember him fondly and often miss his wise counsel.

When I first became the member of the Madhya Pradesh Legislative Assembly in 1977, he was the leader of the Congress party, which then occupied the opposition benches. My learning curve with him began from that point onwards. It then continued through my years in state and national politics.

Fortunately, the '77 Janata experiment was short-lived. Due to ideological difference and clash of ambitions they did not last the full term and the country was plunged into a mid-term election. Under the sterling leadership of Indiraji, the people of the country voted the Congress back to power in 1980 both at the centre and the state of Madhya Pradesh. Arjun Singhji then became the Chief Minister of the state and with his blessings I was inducted as a junior minister with the portfolios of agriculture, fisheries, animal husbandry and irrigation. It was in those years under his guidance that I came face to face with the problems of the state. During his years as Chief Minister, Arjun Singhji laid the foundation of a modern industrialised Madhya Pradesh that was fully committed to the socialist ideals of the welfare of the weaker sections and the minorities. If the seeds of all the industrial activity that we see in the state today be in Mandideep, Pithampur were sown by him, then he also pioneered the Soyabean revolution that has brought prosperity to the farmers in the state.

He had the foresight to set-up a plant for the manufacture of optical fibre cables (that carry all the telecom signals in this era of 4G communication) way back in the 80s. But he also dove-tailed this with a genuine welfare based approach launching schemes for the

grants of pattas to the homeless slum dwellers, along with single point electricity connections and announcing bonus for the poor pluckers of tendu leaves, transforming them from workers to owners. It was characteristic of his determination and administrative calibre that these welfare schemes had to be continued by the successive governments, even though these were ideologically opposed to such measures.

While, I do owe my administrative insights to his early mentoring during my days as a legislator, minister and parliamentarian, and subsequently through the various assignments I have had in the party organisation, the most valuable and enduring lessons have been in the field of secularism and communal harmony. He had an uncompromising approach on these issues and was prepared to pay any price to uphold these values. I have adhered to the same principles all my life.

He was also a great 'team player' in the modern sense of the word. Though he had a reputation of standing by his supporters, he would always be mindful of the party interests and would even carry along those 'opposed' to him. This was reflected in the tremendous electoral successes he achieved for the party in the state and national elections of the 1980 and 84, when the Congress domination of the state was total. The same approach was reflected in his relations with the leaders from the rival parties, first the Bharatiya Jana Sangh and then the BJP. He never brought in any bitterness in the political field.

In so far as his remarkable personal qualities are concerned, he had enormous patience and courage, and was meticulous to the point of being obsessed with perfection. He had excellent command over the use of English and Hindi language. Though extremely soft spoken he was a convincing public speaker, never raising his voice. As a parliamentarian, he excelled both in debates and steering the legislative agenda to suit his politics. One of his less remembered performances as the leader of the Lok Sabha in the initial days of the 1991 P. V. Narasimha Rao government was when the prime minister was not a member of any house of the parliament.

Arjun Singhji was also a strong believer in some of the long standing principles of old school politics. Never to betray the confidence once reposed in you was his guiding mantra and this came across through every crisis that he handled – be it the Bhopal gas tragedy, or the Punjab militancy or the various sensitive assignments in the government and the party. He was a formidable letter writer and had a detailed record of his exchanges through such letters but then he never put this to "any use." Even when he wrote his autobiography he stuck to these principles.

Apart from excelling in politics that he deployed for the purposes of development and social welfare, Arjun Singhji was a man of high literary taste and refined cultural values. It was under his guidance that the Bharat Bhawan in Bhopal emerged as a global multi-arts centre. It is one of the few places where the modern art lives with the tribal form, and various performing arts- drama, dance and music can co-exist in the same space. It was a mark of his humility that as Chief Minister, he would often quietly walk in and find a place for himself (without disturbing others) to enjoy a performance.

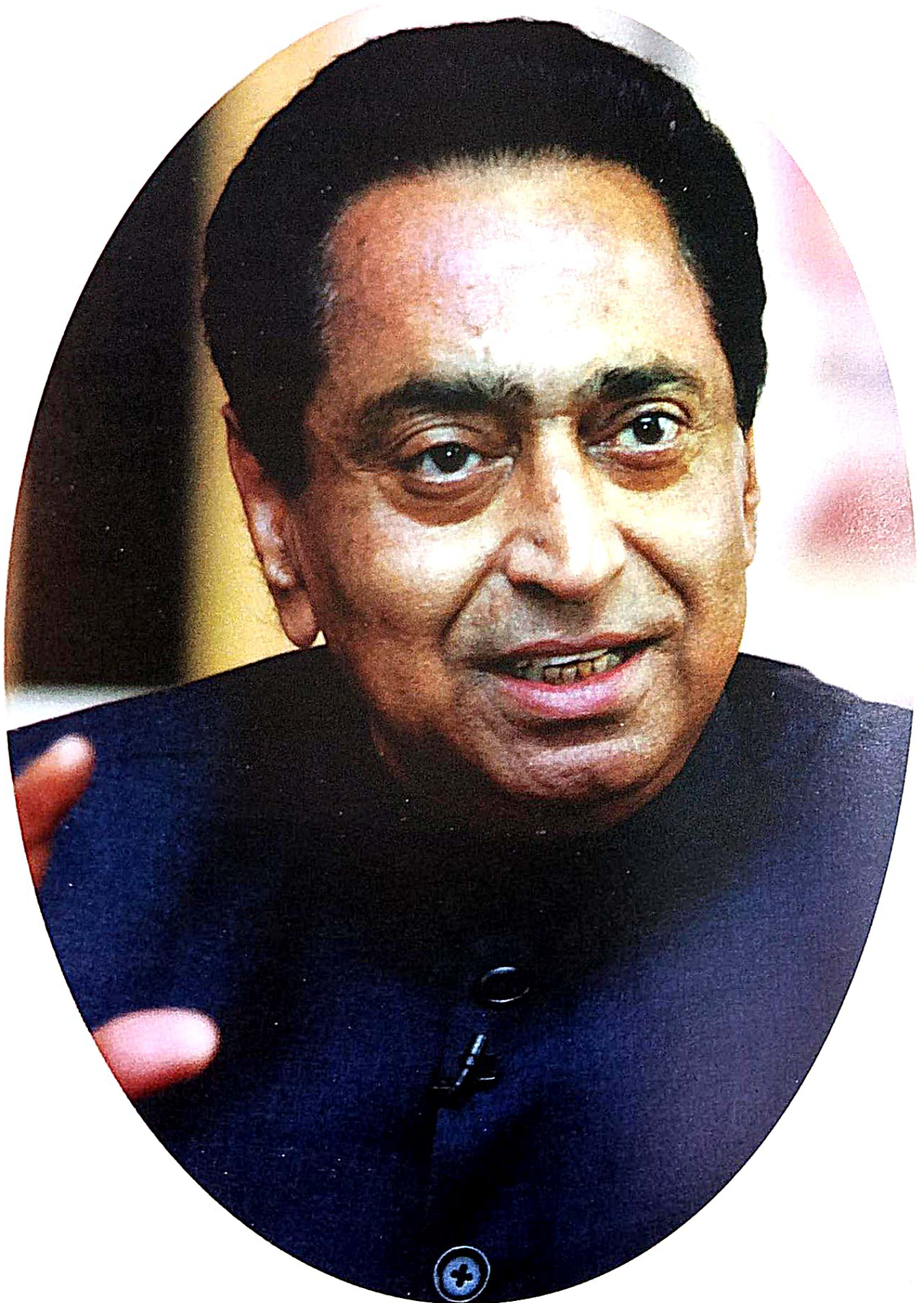
His ability to get the best out of his team and the capacity to absorb different points of view saw him create a band of civil servants and police officers who not only remained loyal to him but also served the state with remarkable efficiency and skill. Indeed, loyalty was a key element with Arjun Singhji, and he stood with the Congress party, and its leadership through generations of changes. He did not buckle under pressure in adverse circumstances, even during the last days of his life. I salute the memory of such an unparalleled mentor.

Yours truly,

Arjun Singh

Digvijay Singh





कमल नाथ
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उनकी अनुपस्थिति का अर्थ

अर्जुन सिंह जी की राजनीतिक जीवन यात्रा के लंबे रास्ते में मेरा और उनका काफी नज़दीकी साथ रहा। बहुत-से महत्वपूर्ण मसलो पर हमारे बीच राय-मशविरा होता था और मैंने हमेशा पाया कि उनकी सोच दूरगामी थी। वे राजनीति को रोज़मर्रा की उठापटक और खींचतान से निपटने का विषय नहीं मानते थे। उनकी राजनीति दीर्घकालीन रणनीति पर आधारित होती थी। अर्जुन सिंह जी ने 1980 से 85 के बीच मध्यप्रदेश का मुख्यमंत्री रहते हुए समाज के दलित और वंचित तबकों के लिए जो योजनाएं और कार्यक्रम शुरू किए, उनसे कांग्रेस को पूरे प्रदेश में एक नई मज़बूती मिली।

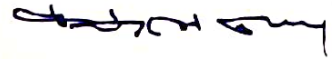
1957 में पहली बार मध्यप्रदेश की विधानसभा में चुन कर आने के बाद से अर्जुन सिंह जी पूरी तरह राजनीति के हवाले हो गए थे। वे 24X7 राजनीतिक थे। राजनीति ही उनकी जीवन-शक्ति थी। यह अर्जुन सिंह जी ही थे, जो तेंदु पत्ते का सियासी महत्व समझ सकते थे, जो पंजाब में संत लॉंगोवाल को आतंकवाद के खिलाफ खड़ा होने के लिए राज़ी कर सकते थे और जो अयोध्या में विवादित ढांचों के गिरने पर अपने प्रधानमंत्री को पार्टी फोरम पर कटघरे में खड़ा कर सकते थे। राजनीति की तमाम उथल-पुथल के बीच भी लक्ष्मण-रेखा का पालन करना उन्हें अच्छी तरह आता था। विपरीत परिस्थितियों को अनुकूल बनाने की कला वे जानते थे।

आज की स्व-केंद्रित राजनीति के दौर में इस बात का उल्लेख करना भी मैं ज़रूरी समझता हूँ कि अर्जुन सिंह जी ने अपने समय में राजनीति की दुनिया में अगली पीढ़ियों को तैयार करने का बहुत ही महत्वपूर्ण कार्य किया। उन्होंने समाज के हर वर्ग के प्रतिभावान लोगों को राजनीति में लाने, उन्हें जिम्मेदारियां देने और तराशने में बड़ी भूमिका अदा की। मध्यप्रदेश में ही नहीं, देश भर में, ऐसे कई नाम गिनाए जा सकते हैं, जिनके राजनीतिक भविष्य का निर्माण करने में अर्जुन सिंह जी का योगदान रहा।

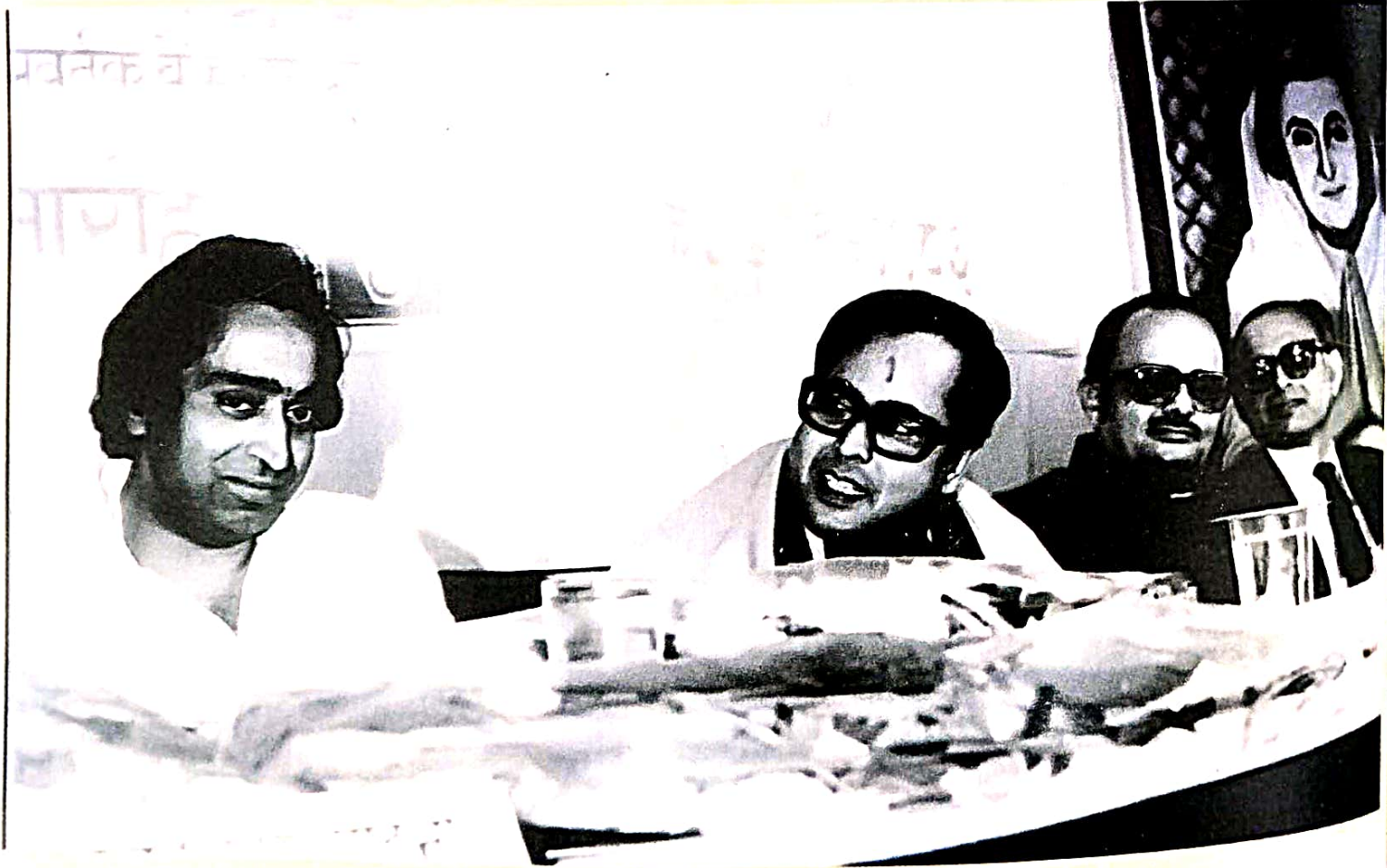
कांग्रेस के बुनियादी मूल्यों और सिद्धांतों पर चल कर अर्जुन सिंह राजनीति के उस मुकाम तक पहुँचे, जहाँ कम ही लोग पहुँच पाते हैं। राजनीति में ऐसे मौके आते हैं, जब किसी को उसकी योग्यता से कम मिल पाता है और कभी किसी को उसकी योग्यता से बहुत ज़्यादा मिल जाता है लेकिन अर्जुन सिंह

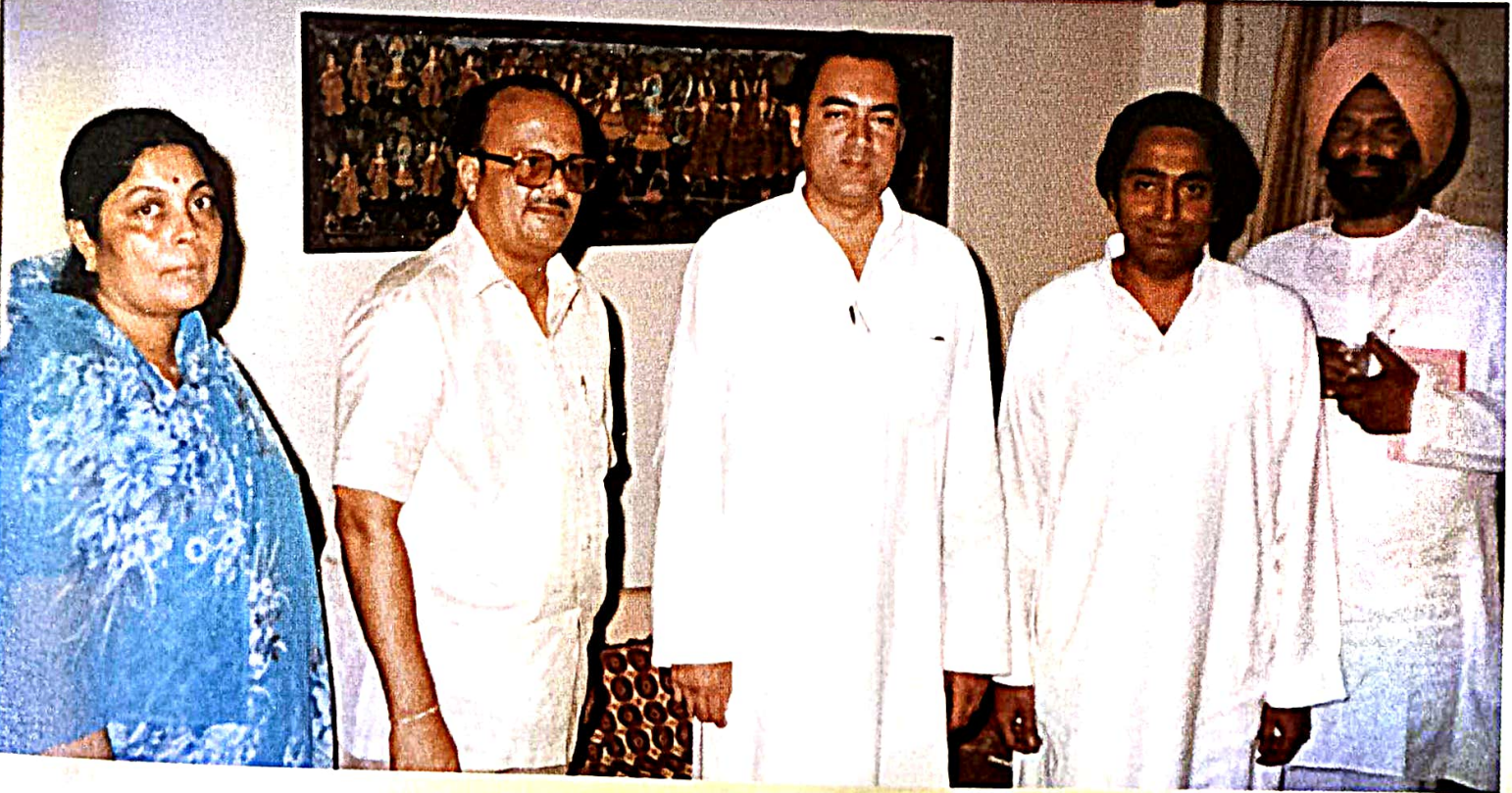
उन लोगों में थे, जिन्हें अपनी ज़िम्मेदारी का निर्वहन करने में इन बातों का कोई फ़र्क नहीं पड़ता था। उन्हें जब जो ज़िम्मेदारी मिली, वे निभाते गए। आज की राजनीति में ऐसे लोगों की कमी होती जा रही है।

मैं उन लोगो में हूँ जिन्होंने अपने राजनीति जीवन की शुरुआत करीब 45 साल पहले तब की थी, जब सियासत का एक अलग दौर था। हमें हर काम बड़ा दिल और दिमाग रख कर करने की सीख जन्म-घुट्टी में मिली थी। हम राजनीति प्रतिद्वंद्वियों को अपना निजी शत्रु नहीं मानते थे। हमारे राजनीतिक सरोकारों में समाजिक हित सबसे ऊपर होता था। हम अपनी पार्टी के भीतर और अपनी पार्टी की सरकार के भीतर और दूसरे राजनीतिक दलो से भी मुद्दों पर लड़ते थे। किसी भी ऐसे मामले को राजनीतिक तूल नहीं देते थे, जिससे अंततः पूरे समाज का नुक़सान होता हो। राजनीतिक मर्यादाओं की अवहेलना के मौजूदा दौर में मुझे आज अर्जुन सिंह जी की अनुपस्थिति और भी ज़्यादा खलती है।



कमल नाथ







JYOTIRADITYA M. SCINDIA
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A Source of Inspiration

I have very fond memories of Sh. Arjun Singh Ji. Ours was a very long and old association. He was my father's contemporary in public life and therefore, I knew him since I was a young boy. He was a source of guidance from the moment I entered public life and someone I always looked upto. Not only was he a very sharp and astute politician but more importantly, a warm-hearted mentor. He was a self-made man whose rise in public life was due to his sheer hard work, especially for the progress of the poor and the deprived, will always be remembered.

I will be eternally grateful for and cherished his presence, despite his ill-health at the time, at the opening of the Jawahar Navodaya Vidyalaya in Bajrangarh, Guna and the Kendriya Vidyalaya in Mungaoli, Ashoknagar in his capacity as the Union Minister for Human Resource Development. His commitment as the HRD Minister was unwavering and admirable and I recall a time when I had made a request to him in my official capacity as the Minister of state for Communications and Information Technology. I had asked him for Grameen Daak Sevaks (government postmen) to be considered as official Government of India employees for the purpose of securing the admission of their children in Kendriya Vidyalayas around the country and he went out of his way to fulfill this request. His willingness to help, speaks volumes about his passion for the cause of education and his belief in its power to truly uplift the downtrodden.

A visionary leader, his tenure as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh saw the state progress in leaps and bounds with unprecedented construction of power plants and dams that put Madhya Pradesh onto the path of development. Sh. Arjun Singh Ji was a dynamic politician and a far sighted leader, who is and will remain a source of inspiration for me and other leaders across the political spectrum.


Jyotiraditya M. Scindia



Youth Congress Session Pachmarhi Smt. Indira Gandhi, Dr. S. D. Sharma, S. S. N. Mushran & Shri Arjun Singh Youth Congress President



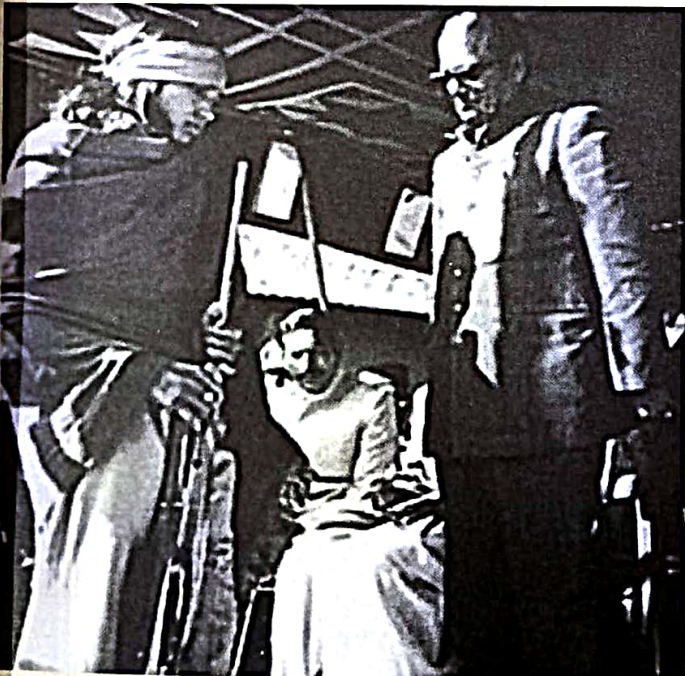
First oath ceremony as Minister 1963.



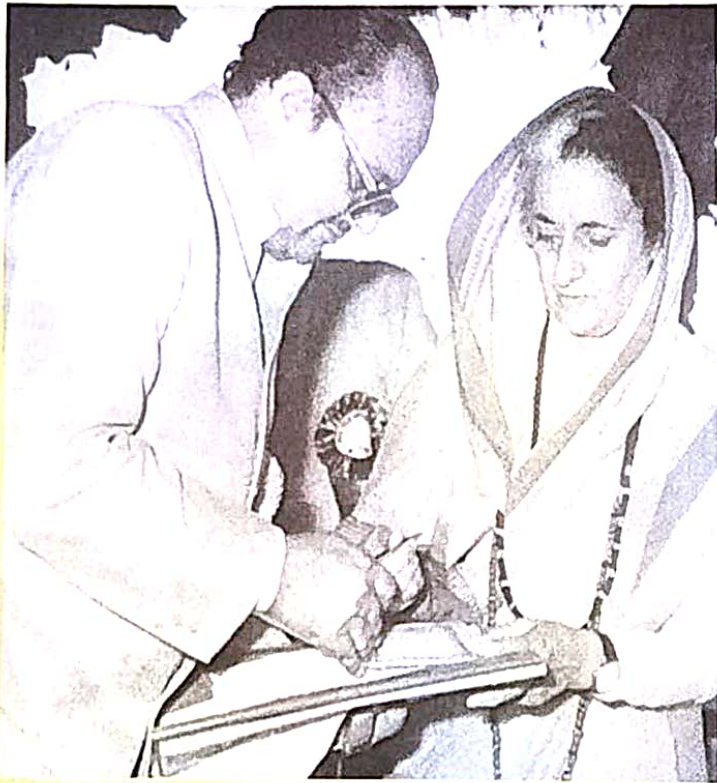
Wansagar power project agreement Madhav Singh Solanki CM Gujarat & Arjun Singh CM, M. P. Maharaj Rewa Martand Singh & Ajay Mushran



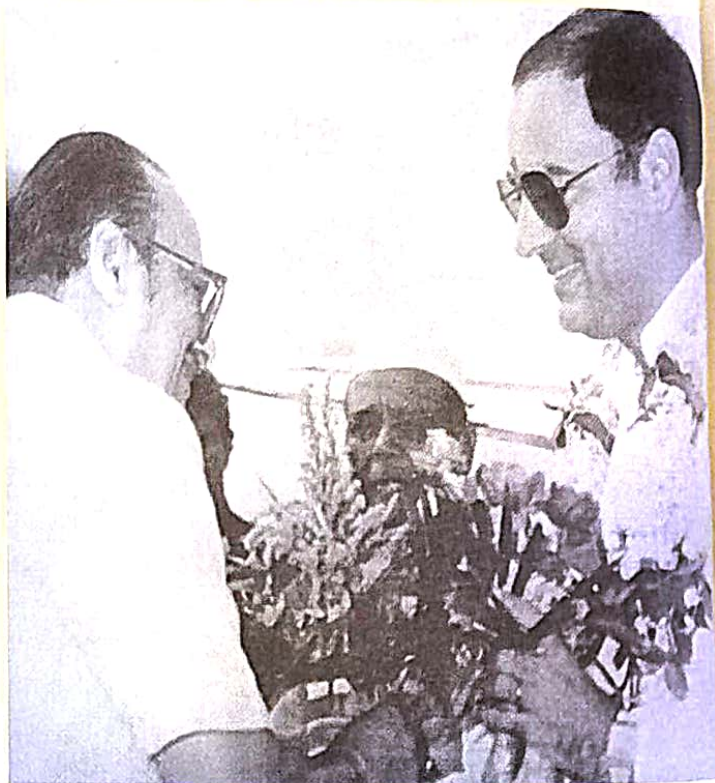
Address to the State as Chief Minister.



**Surrender of Dacoits Malkhan Singh & Phoolan Devi
which received global recognition**



Greeting Indira Gandhi



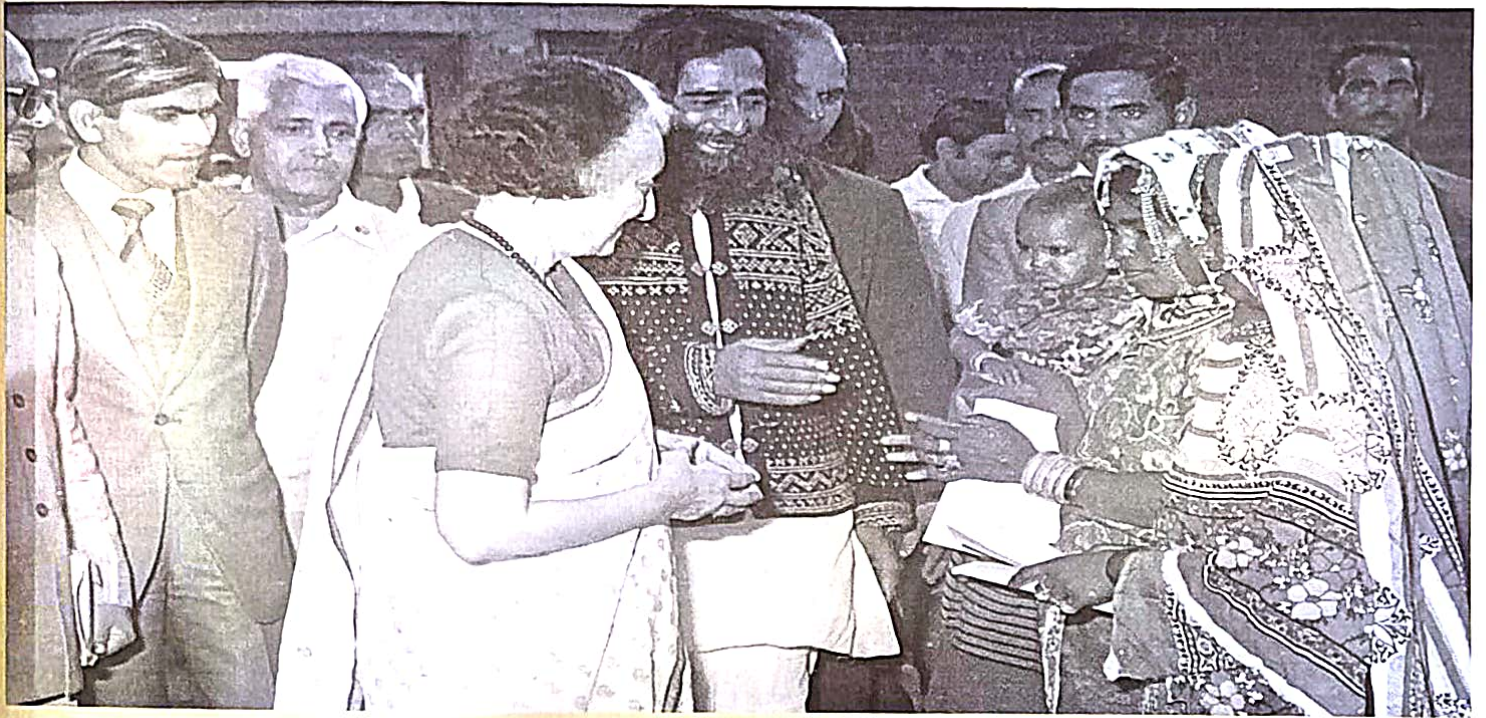
Greeting Rajiv Gandhi



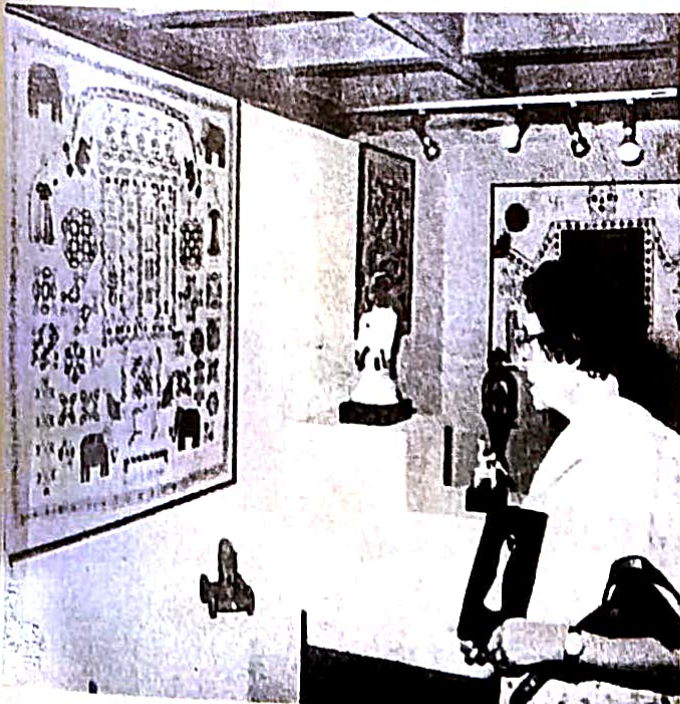
Irrigation Board Meeting between Maharashtra & Madhya Pradesh



Motilal Vohra as CM 1984 with Arjun Singh, Gulam Nabi & Buta Singh



Inauguration of Bharat Bhawan the Cultural Centre of India





DR. KARAN SINGH
MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
(RAJYA SABHA)
CHAIRMAN
COMMITTEE OF ETHICS



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A Man of Sharp Intellect

Arjun Singhji and I were born only a few months apart and our political careers overlapped for several decades although in different circumstances. I was in contact with him ever since he was an MLA in Madhya Pradesh and was always impressed with his sharp intellect and deep commitment to the basic values and ideal of the Indian National Congress. Later he rose to be the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and was then appointed the Governor of Punjab when the state was going through a traumatic experience. He was also the Vice President of the Indian National Congress. He then returned briefly as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh before joining Union Cabinet led by Shri Rajiv Gandhi. He continued as Union Minister from time to time and was Minister of Human Resource Development in the Cabinet of Shri P.V. Narasimha Rao and later Dr. Manmohan Singh.

Throughout his career, Arjun Singhji faced a number of controversial situations which he confronted boldly. He was a man of strong and often controversial views but he never deviated from the basic principles. He was instrumental in my being nominated as India's representative on the Executive Board of UNESCO. A man of few words, he was a shrewd political player and his overall contribution to post-Independence Indian politics was substantial. Despite his ill health he soldiered on bravely until the end. Through the pages of this souvenir, I express my warm sentiments to the memory of Shri Arjun Singhji.

Karan Singh

MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT
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ARJUN SINGH JI - A Nationalist to the Core

It is not easy to write about a good friend, senior colleague Shri Arjun Singh Ji as my association began several decades ago. We were both contemporaries in Youth Congress. He was senior to me and we met on several occasions as Youth Congress workers. It was much later in 1984 when we became good friends he was the CM of Madhya Pradesh and I was General Secy. of the Party. From then on till his death we were very close colleagues in serving the party.

Arjun Singh Ji was a man who was known for his courage of conviction, commitment to secularism and crusaded against divisive and communal politics. He also stood for a pluralistic inclusive society.

His Nationalist views are remembered by one and all, and his fight for social justice and unity among all strata of society are some of his sterling qualities. At various meetings of the CWC, CEC it was very well known that he would stick his neck out for a party worker or a cause he believed in till the end and not worry about the repercussion on his own self.

As Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh he introduced the law of Tendu Patta which benefitted the Poor and tribals of the State- which the tribals feel indebted till date. Such was his nature for which all party men will remember him always.

As Vice President of the Congress Party (under Shri Rajiv Gandhi Ji as President) I was the General Secretary of the Party, We worked closely on many issues and were successful in resolving many problems plaguing the party in the early nineties, Rajiv Ji entrusted Arjun Singh Ji and myself to speak to Lal Thanhawla the Chief Minister of Mizoram to resolve the insurgency in the State. After several rounds of talks with Shri **Laldenga** the insurgent leader the Mizoram Peace Accord was signed and peace was brought to the State. Lal Thanhawla had to step down as CM and Laldenga was sworn in as new Chief Minister. This was only possible because of the tact, diplomatic skills and insight of Shri Arjun Singh Ji. This was a landmark achievement of the times for which I will always remember him. At the Tirupati session when party elections were held he helped me in great measure and we both won with a good margin as CWC members of the Party.

Later as HRD Minister in his first tenure he did transform the education system to a more relevant level by introducing many changes to bring it to International Standards.

In his second Tenure as minister of HRD he made many enemies owing to his farsighted planning and loyalty to the party (which even affected his health) but he never compromised on his principles and worked relentlessly for the benefit of the poor and minorities.

I would like to remember him as a true Nationalist and an uncompromising leader of his times with complete faith in Secular India.

A. K. Antony



VIRBHADRA SINGH
CHIEF MINISTER



Ellerslie
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An Asset to the Nation

I had a long association and very good equation with Shri Arjun Singh. I cherish my personal relationship with him and have fond memories of him. His company was always enjoyable and enlightening. He had an inspirational and impressive personality. Shri Arjun Singh was a tall leader, able administrator and a fine person. He was a man of pluralistic and egalitarian vision.

Shri Arjun Singh was a strong, seasoned and astute leader who made immense contribution to the nation in various capacities as Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh, Union Minister and Governor of Punjab. He was a man of few words and believed in action. He had many achievements to his credit. He steered Madhya Pradesh to new heights of progress and prosperity during his three terms as Chief Minister of the State. Barely three months after he took over as the Chief Minister, he founded a new and independent department of culture in M.P Government. Under his leadership, the M.P. Government was the first state Government to do so. As Governor of Punjab, his contribution in inking the Rajiv-Longowal accord was immense as it paved the way for restoring peace in Punjab. He had a flair for writing and most of the time he used to draft important speeches himself.

Shri Arjun Singh was secular and a true nationalist. He was a great asset to the Congress Party and the Nation which he served with full dedication and commitment throughout his life. He will always remain alive in our hearts.

Virbhadra Singh



Sheila Dikshit

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A Great Administrator

Shri Arjun Singh was one of the tallest leaders of 20th century India and also of the early 21st century. He was a very sagacious politician, a great administrator and dedicated to the ideology of the Congress Party. In changing times and the needs of the nation his approach to ideological changes without compromising on the basics within the Congress were welcomed and adopted.

The Longowala Accord was a Landmark in the improvement of conditions in Punjab towards normalcy. It was a historic agreement towards the solution of a modern and normal state. Punjab we recall was strife-torn and a cause of great concern to the Indian nation. The country cannot forget his contribution towards the stabilization of Punjab.

In the central government his contribution as a Cabinet Minister was no less. His participation in the deliberations of the C.W.C. were respected and adopted. This was the impression of many senior members of the C.W.C.

His split with the governance of P.V. Narsimha Rao was based on principles and not on a desire for self aggrandizement. His sincere belief was that the principles of J.L. Nehru, Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi were being over looked. Therefore he took the bold step of splitting the party.

His admirers were many but so were his distracters out of envy. But he remained true and bold and never compromised on his beliefs.

For those of us who knew him and saw his commitment and work, he shall remain an inspiration.



Sheila Dikshit



सुन्दरलाल पटवा
SUNDARLAL PATWA

पूर्व मुख्यमंत्री, मध्यप्रदेश
पूर्व केन्द्रीय मंत्री



बी-3, (74 बंगला)
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मेरे परम मित्र

आपको पत्र के लिए धन्यावाद माननीय अर्जुनसिंह जी के ऊपर संस्मरण लिखने के लिए आपके आग्रह के प्रति आभारी हूँ।

माननीय अर्जुनसिंह जी और मैंने एक साथ विधानसभा में प्रवेश किया। उन्होंने भी विपक्ष के नेता के रूप में कांग्रेस के विरुद्ध चुनाव लड़कर विधानसभा में प्रवेश किया। वे निर्दलीय चुनाव लड़े थे। बाद में कांग्रेस में प्रवेश किया। दोनों रूप विपक्ष और कांग्रेस में साथ रहा। वे कांग्रेस के नेता थे और मैं विपक्ष का, उनका मेरा विचित्र साथ था। वे अद्भुत स्वभाव के थे। हम दोनों विधानसभा में परस्पर कट्टर विरोधी थे। विधानसभा के बाहर परम-मित्र। हमारा संबंध काफी धनिष्ठ था। परस्पर एक-दूसरे के यहाँ भोजन का व्यवहार होता था। विधानसभा में मेरे द्वारा की गई कठोर आलोचना को वे व्यक्तिगत बुराई के रूप में नहीं लेते थे। हम दोनों परस्पर मित्रता के कारण बदनाम भी थे।

एक बार ऐसा प्रसंग हुआ कि हमने दीनदयाल उपाध्याय जी के जन्म दिवस पर मुख्य अतिथि के रूप में उन्हें आमंत्रित किया। पहले तो वे थोड़े हिचकिचाए, फिर उन्होंने आना स्वीकार किया और अपने भाषण में शालीनतापूर्वक आलोचना भी की। अपनी पार्टी में इस कार्यक्रम में आने पर उन्हें काफी आलोचना भुगतना पड़ी और उन्होंने उस आलोचना को सहन किया। परन्तु उन्हें श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए मैं उनकी याद में प्रणाम करता हूँ।

सुन्दरलाल पटवा



हमेशा याद आएंगे अर्जुन सिंह

श्री अर्जुन सिंह के नाम का उल्लेख होते ही कम शब्दों में बारीकी से बात कहने वाले एक गंभीर व मृदुभाशी आकर्षक व्यक्तित्व की छवि मन में उभर आती है। उनके व्यक्तित्व में दृढ संकल्प वाले राजनेता और गरीब-वंचित के लिए सरकार की सारी ताकत का प्रयोग करने की क्षमता वाले एक कुशल प्रशासक की छाप सबको हमेशा नजर आती रही है।

1992 के तिरुपति एआईसीसी में मिलकर कांग्रेस कार्यसमिति का चुनाव लड़ने पर सबसे अधिक वोट लेकर हम दोनों का जीतना यदि सबको अब तक याद है तो पी.वी. नरसिंह राव द्वारा दोनों को मनोनित श्रेणी में डाल देना भी। लेकिन बहुत कम लोगों को यह पता होगा कि कई असमानताएँ के बावजूद हमारे बीच समानताएँ भी रही हैं। हम दोनों एक ही समय में अपने अपने प्रदेशों के युवक कांग्रेस अध्यक्ष रहे, 1973 से 1977 तक तो दोनों के पास शिक्षा मंत्रालय भी था। इस कारण भी हमें एक दूसरे को देखने सुनने और मिलने के अवसर मिले थे। मुझे स्व. यशवंतरावचव्हाण जैसे गुरु मिले तो उन्हें लगभग उसी अवधि में स्व. द्ववारीका प्रसाद मिश्रा का पुरा आशीर्वाद मिला कुछ संकोच के साथ लिखना चाहूंगा कि उन्हें मध्यप्रदेश में और मुझे महाराष्ट्र में अच्छे व मजबूत प्रशासन के लिए अभी तक याद रखने वाले लोग भी काफी मिल जाएंगे इन दोनों प्रदेशों के बीच भी एक अजीब सा बंधन है— केंद्रीय प्रांत का एक हिस्सा विदर्भ कई दशकों तक महाराष्ट्र में कांग्रेस का गढ़ बनकर रहा तो उससे अलग हुए महाकौशल और छत्तीसगढ़ (एक नवंबर 2000 से अलग प्रदेश) दशकों तक मध्यप्रदेश में कांग्रेस की सरकार बनने की गारंटी बने रहे हमारे प्रदेशों की लंबी सीमा भी एक तरह से हमारे रिश्तों को परिभाषित करती है।

अर्जुन सिंह मुझसे ठीक 10 साल बड़े थे। उनका जन्म 5 नवंबर 1930 को विंध्य की पहाड़ी वादियों में बसे चुरहट में हुआ था तो मेरा जन्म 12 दिसंबर 1940 को सहयाद्री की पहाड़ियों वाले क्षेत्र में हुआ था वे 1957 में पहली बार विधायक बने तो मैं उनके ठीक 10 साल बाद 1967 में। मुझे बारामती की जनता ने 7 बार विधानसभा और 7 बार लोकसभा में विजयी बनाया व अपना आशीर्वाद दिया और उन्होंने कभी भी कम नहीं होने दिया। अब मैंने राज्यसभा को चुना है लोकसभा का चुनाव वे भले ही 1996 में सतना व 1998 में होशंगाबाद से हारे लेकिन अपनी चुरहट विधानसभा सीट से वे लगातार 7 बार जीते हारे कभी नहीं यदि चुरहट वाली सीधी लोकसभा सीट आदिवासी आरक्षित न रही होती तो शायद हार कि कटुता उनके हिस्से में नहीं आती।

पहली बार विधायक चुने जाने से पहले ही मुझे महाराष्ट्र में युवक कांग्रेस की जिम्मेदारी मिल गई थी तो 1965 में अर्जुन सिंह को नारायण दत्त तिवारी की राष्ट्रीय अध्यक्षी वाले भारतीय युवक कांग्रेस की प्रदेश की जिम्मेदारी मिली । डी.पी मिश्रा ने उन्हें पहली बार 1963 में जीएडी व कृषि मंत्रालयों में राज्यमंत्री बनाया। केंद्र में उपप्रधानमंत्री बनने की राह पर आगे बढ़ने के लिए श्री यशवंतराव चव्हाण, पंडित नेहरू के बुलावे पर चीन से हार के बाद पहले रक्षा मंत्री और फिर क्रम से गृह, वित्त और विदेश मंत्री बनने के लिए नवंबर 1962 में दिल्ली जाने से पहले ही यशवंतरावजी ने मुझे पहली बार राज्यमंत्री बनाकर गृह व खाद्य मंत्रालयों का काम सीखने का अवसर दिया।

तीन बार मुख्यमंत्री पद की शपथ लेने वाले अर्जुन सिंह ने 1980 की गर्मियों में पहली बार जब यह जिम्मेदारी संभाली तो उससे पहले वे मध्यप्रदेश में कांग्रेस की ओर से नेता प्रतिपक्ष रह चुके थे। मेरे खाते में इससे उलटा लिखा है सबसे पहले 18 जुलाई 1978 को मैंने महाराष्ट्र के सीएम की जिम्मेदारी संभाली और उसके बाद मुझे अपने राज्य में विपक्ष का नेता बनने का अवसर मिला मैं 4 बार मुख्यमंत्री बना हम दोनों ने संसदीय जीवन शुरू होने से पहले छात्र राजनीति में हाथ आजमाया। वे 1952 के आमचुनाव के समय रीवा के दरबार कालेज छात्रसंघ के अध्यक्ष थे तो पुणे में पवार पैतृक का असर कई वर्षों तक रहा। लेकिन हम दोनों के पारिवारिक परिवेश में अंतर था— वे जागीरदार परिवार से थे तो मैं खेती— किसानों से। शायद सहकारिता के क्षेत्र में दोनों के हस्तक्षेप की सक्रियता में अंतर के पीछे इसका कोई योगदान हो सकता है।

अर्जुन सिंह जी, कांग्रेस में राष्ट्रीय उपाध्यक्ष पद तक पहुंचे तो मुझे लोकसभा में 1998-99 में कांग्रेस दल का नेता और प्रतिपक्ष बनने का अवसर मिला वे पंजाब के गवर्नर बने ,जबकि मैं राजभवन से दूर रहा, लेकिन उस दौरान पंजाब समस्या के समाधान के लिए राजीव गांधी की रणनीति के अनुसार दोनों ने अपने-अपने तरीके से योगदान दिया मैं केंद्र में मंत्री बनकर सबसे पहले 1991 में आया और पहले रक्षामंत्री बनने के बाद फिर मनमोहन सरकार में 10 साल तक कृषि मंत्री रहा। अर्जुन सिंह जी मुझसे कुछ साल पहले केंद्र में संचार मंत्री बने और 2 बार, वे मानव संसाधन मंत्री भी बनें पहली बार की केंद्रीय जिम्मेदारी के बाद हम दोनों कुछ समय के लिए अपने प्रदेशों में सीएम के रूप में वापस लौटे यह भी एक संयोग था। उन्हें वर्ष 2000 तो मुझे 2003 का उत्कृष्ट सांसद होने का सम्मान मिला। हम दोनों की पुस्तकें पढ़ने की आदत हमेशा चर्चा में रही है।

अर्जुन सिंह को मध्यप्रदेश ही नहीं केंद्र में भी एक योग्य, कुशल और चुस्त प्रशासक माना गया है। छोटी पत्रियों पर उनके द्वारा लिखे गए आदेशों पर चुस्ती से अमल होने की बात सबके ध्यान में रहती है।

योग्य अफसरों को पहचानने और उन पर विश्वास करके उन्हें काम की छूट देने का उनका गुण मध्य प्रदेश के कई लोग अभी भी मुझे बताते हैं। अपने कार्यकर्ताओं को मजबूती से आगे बढ़ाने और उन्हें टिकट व पद दिलाने के लिए अपनी सारी ताकत लगाने में वे कभी पीछे नहीं रहते थे। मृदुभाशी होने के आलावा अर्जुन सिंह बहुत कम शब्दों में अपनी बात कहने के लिए मशहूर रहे हैं, प्रारंभ से ही उन्होंने बुद्धिजीवियों और खासकर वामपंथी रुझान वालों को प्रश्रय दिया और धर्मनिरपेक्षता के लिए आरएसएस का विरोध करने में उनके शब्द कभी कम नहीं पड़े, बुद्धिजीवियों और कलाकारों में उनके प्रेम को अभी तक महसूस किया जा सकता है।

1972 में मध्यप्रदेश का शिक्षा मंत्री बनने के बाद उन्होंने इस प्रांत में शामिल हुए अलग - अलग राज्यों की पृथक शिक्षा प्रणालियों का एकीकरण करके एक समान किया, सभी सरकारी हाईस्कूलों में ट्यूशन फीस खत्म करके पीजी स्तर तक लड़कियों को मुफ्त शिक्षा देने की। महाजन आयोग बनाकर उन्होंने ओबीसी वर्ग के विकास को सरकारी ताकत दी। झुग्गी-झोपड़ी में रहने वालों को उसी जमीन का पट्टा दिया, रिक्शा चालकों को मालिकाना हक दिया तो सरकारी खर्च पर सबको न्यूनतम एक बत्ती कनेक्शन देकर सबके यहां बिजली का उजाला पहुंचाने की भी उन्होंने गंभीर कोशिश की। सिंचाई बढ़ाने के लिए नई बांध परियोजना, नए बिजलीघर और औद्योगिक क्षेत्र को खड़ा करने में भी उन्होंने काफी रुचि ली। बस्तर के आदिवासी समुदाय की लोक कला और संस्कृति को बचाए रखने के लिए वे अबूझमाड़ को संरक्षित रखने के स्तर तक चले गए, आदिवासियों को तेंदुपत्ता लॉबी की जकड़ से कमजोर करने में उन्होंने सहकारिता की मदद ली तो डकैत समस्या से पूरे मध्यप्रदेश व खासकर चंबल क्षेत्र को मुक्त कराने में उनकी भूमिका कोई भूल नहीं सकता। डाकू मलखान सिंह के अलावा फूलन देवी का समर्पण भी उन्हीं के समय हुआ। मलखान बाद में सरपंच बना तो फूलन संसद पहुंची।

हमारी परस्पर विरोधी मुद्रा में डा. मनमोहन सिंह के प्रति रुझान एक बड़ा उदाहरण बन गया है। राव शासन में जब वित्तमंत्री बनकर मनमोहन सिंह जी तीव्र अर्थिक प्रगति के लिए उदारीकरण व वैश्वीकरण के लिए कदम बढ़ा रहे थे तो अर्जुन सिंह उनके खिलाफ थे और मैं साथ में खड़ा था संग्रम के समय भी हमारी मुद्राएं ऐसी ही रही इस सब धूप-छाव के बावजूद मैं इतना तो कह ही सकता हूँ कि उनकी स्मृति के बिना मध्यप्रदेश और कांग्रेस ही नहीं राष्ट्रीय राजनीतिक पटल की कथा भी अधूरी ही कही जाएगी।

शरद पवार



The Honour of being a Colleague

The lasting impressions with me regarding my association and interactions with Shri Arjun Singhji continue to remain as fresh and endearing as they were before he physically left us. I had the fortune of associating with Arjun Singhji in many programmes during the last three decades of his life.

I was in University at the time when his contributions as the Chief Minister of Madhya Pradesh and later as the Governor of Punjab were part of the chronicles of contemporary history. As the President of the Students Federation of India between 1984 and 1986, I had to attend many memorial meetings in the Punjab when our comrades were killed by the fundamentalist forces during those turbulent times. The Rajiv-Longowal Accord, which many correctly feel, was a milestone in the achievements of Shri Arjun Singhji's illustrious political life. This was welcomed by all those seeking relief from such attacks mounted by the fundamentalist forces. For the people of Punjab and India, this carried the hope of return of peace and normalcy in the prosperous state of Punjab.

Since the mid-eighties, I had the honour of meeting him off and on. It was only a decade later that on issues of the defence of India's unity and integrity and safeguarding the secular democratic character of the Indian Republic did my association with him grow.

It was in 1996 that one morning Arjun Singhji came to my Spartan quarters in Vithalbhai Patel House in Delhi. This was completely unexpected. As is our practice, this was a one room Communist fulltime worker's quarters. I did not even have a land telephone line those days. My school going daughter, who is now teaching modern history at Edinburgh, was too shocked to open the door for a very big political leader. She spent years recollecting that experience. That was the day when the results of the 1996 Lok Sabha elections were being declared. In those days of counting the ballot papers, this was a long process. The reports that I was receiving was that Arjun Singhji was trailing in the Satna Lok Sabha seat. To my utter surprise, Arjun Singhji did not display any degree of concern or anxiety at such a possibility. Though he lost the election, he played an important role then in the formation of the United Front, which after defeating the 13-day Atal Behari Vajpayee government in the confidence vote in the Lok Sabha went on to form the United Front government with Shri Deve Gowda as the Prime Minister. Arjun Singhji, probably, never forgave me for the decision taken by the CPI(M) Central Committee in not allowing Jyoti Basu to become the Prime Minister of India.

The fall of the United Front government and the subsequent assumption of office by the BJP-led NDA government under Mr. Vajpayee in the 1998 elections, its defeat by one vote in the Lok Sabha and the subsequent 1999 Lok Sabha elections was a period of intense efforts to safeguard the secular democratic foundations of India. Eventually, when the BJP-led NDA returned to form the government in 1999, the battle against the communal onslaught against our Republican order became a full blown crusade. There were many programmes on specific issues against the activities of the communal forces that I had the fortune to be associated with Arjun Singhji.

It was during this period before the 2004 General Elections that in opposition to the refusal by the Vajpayee government to convene a meeting of the National Integration Council that Arjun Singhji came up with the idea of organizing a People's National Integration Council meeting. This was held in the Parliament House Annexe with many leaders of all secular parties participating. Such efforts along with multifarious other activities in defence of modern India's secular democratic character contributed greatly to the historic defeat of the BJP and the combination of communal forces in the 2004 General Elections. Such an outcome appeared completely unbelievable to large sections of the Indian people who were bombarded with slogans like 'Shining India' etc. It is a big achievement that the communal forces were kept at bay and eventually defeated.

With the formation of the UPA government with the outside support provided by the Left parties began the task of cleaning various areas of governance that were relentlessly communalized during the BJP-led NDA government. The most important area was to combat the intense communalization of the country's education system and activities of our premier research organizations. Arjun Singhji was given this important responsibility when he assumed the charge as a Cabinet Minister with the charge of HRD Ministry. The re-establishment of the secular democratic character and content of the Indian education system was an arduous task that he undertook admirably.

Arjun Singhji was probably the first senior political leader in the country who had told me that it is important for me to enter the Parliament. For many years, I had avoided coming into the Parliament on the basis of an understanding (which I still maintain) that politics means basically service to the people and the effort to influence people's

consciousness for the creation of a better India fulfilling the promises made to the Indian people at the time of our independence. On many scores, these promises continue to remain unredeemed. Politics, surely, must never be viewed as advancing a career.

Events have their way of asserting. Following the election of CPI(M) Parliamentary leader in the Lok Sabha, Somnath Chatterjee as the Speaker, the Party decided that there was a need for the CPI(M)'s political articulation in Parliament and decided to send me to Rajya Sabha in 2005.

For many years, I had the honour of being a colleague of Shri Arjun Singhji in the Rajya Sabha. In 2005, I suddenly received an intimation that the HRD Minister would be pleased to have me join the official Indian delegation to attend the UNESCO's 60th anniversary at Paris. That was a memorable experience. The humdrum of political existence and activities in India often do not leave sufficient time that could be spent with senior political leaders like Arjun Singhji. To a large extent, this visit to Paris as a part to the Indian delegation gave the much needed opportunity to spend some quality time together. I continue to cherish the experiences of being a part of an official Indian delegation under Shri Arjun Singhji's leadership.

There are many instances where I have had the opportunity to learn a great deal from Shri Arjun Singhji's vast experience. I can go on to relate many such interactions. Hopefully, there will be other occasions when I will be able to share many a lesson that I have learnt from this long association with Arjun Singhji.

The political battles that influenced my association with Arjun Singhji *alas* have become more intense and crucial in the present times. His physical absence in these times is most acutely felt. Yet the memories serve as a source to steel the resolve of all those who cherish the secular democratic foundations of our modern Republic to meet the current challenges and march forward to create a better India.

Sitaram Yechury





Message

I am very happy to note that Shri Arjun Singh ji has a lot of contribution to India's development and will always live in our hearts. His contribution can never be forgotten. His name is written in golden words and lives in the hearts of people. His whole political life is dedicated to upliftment of farmers & weaker sections of society.

He will always be remembered with great respect.

Farooq Abdullah



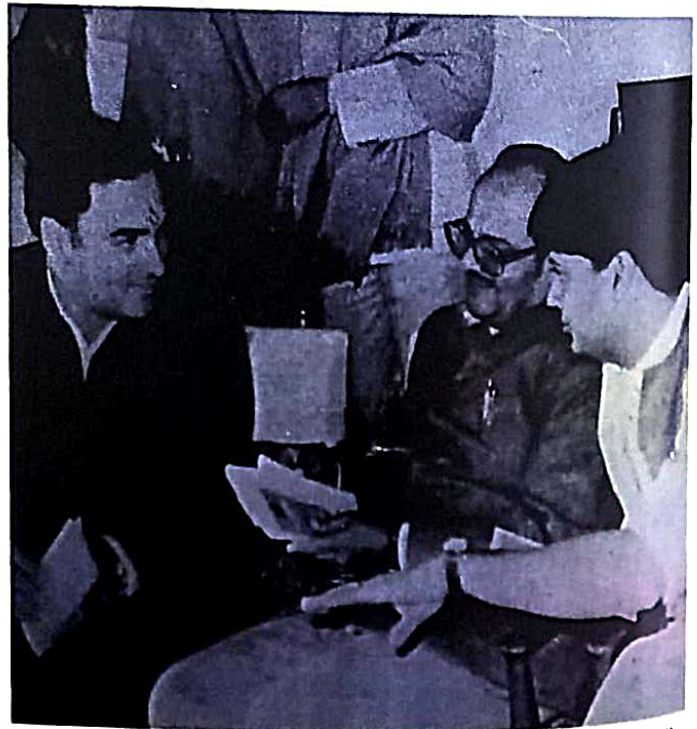
Smt. Indira Gandhi being Greeted by Smt. Arjun Singh



Mother Teresa & Mr. Arjun Singh

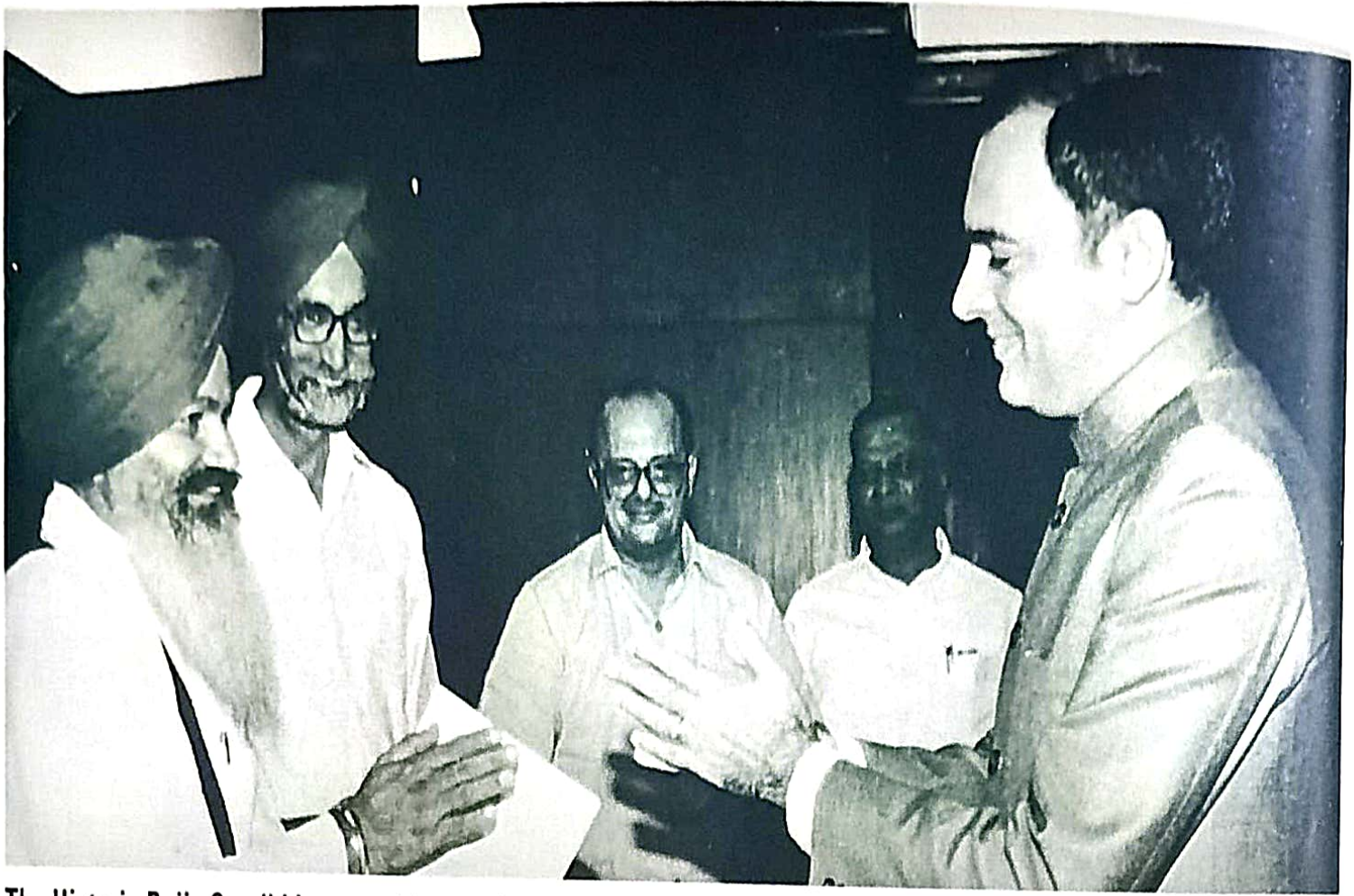


Senior Congress Leader B. Suba Rao with Arjun Singh



In Happier Times - Shri Rajiv Gandhi, Arjun Singh & Madhav Rao Scindia





The Historic Rajiv Gandhi Longowall Peace Accord 24th July 1985 & below Swearing Ceremony as Governor of Punjab





The Mizoram Peace Accord being signed in 1986 & below Rajiv & Sonia Gandhi visiting Mizoram after signing of the Mizo Peace Accord July 11, 1986



अजीज कुरैशी

पूर्व राज्यपाल
उत्तराखण्ड यू०पी एवं मिजोरम।



जिया हाउस
अहमदाबाद पैलेस रोड
नियर फ्लैग स्टाफ हाउस
आपोजिट सूफिया मस्जिद
एबव कोहे फिजा भोपाल
पिन-462001 (मध्य प्रदेश)

एक धूप थी जो साथ गई आफताब के.....

नये मध्य प्रदेश में महा कौशल, मध्य भारत विन्ध्या प्रदेश और भोपाल के इलाके शामिल किए गये थे और भारत की सबसे बड़ी रियासत मध्य प्रदेश को जन्म दिया गया था। इन इलाकों के पुराने और अनुभवी नेता जिनमें भारी संख्या स्वतंत्रता संग्राम सेनानियों की भी थी और अनेक दूसरे सम्मानित नेताओं की भी लेकिन यह बात जरूरी तौर पर खटकती थी कि उनमें नई नस्ल के मार्डन शिक्षित प्रगतिशील असंप्रदायिक और बुद्धिजीवी व्यक्तियों की काफी कमी थी, फिर 1957 में पहली बार नये मध्य प्रदेश के विधानसभा के आम चुनाव हुए और पहली बार नई विधानसभा का जन्म हुआ। अबकी बार नक्शा कुछ और था। काफी संख्या में नये चेहरे..... शिक्षित, बुद्धिजीवी, प्रगतिशील, असंप्रदायिक और भारत को ऊचाई की बुलंदियों पर ले जाने वाले बहुत से नये चेहरे शामिल थे। जो पहली बार विधायक चुने गये थे।.....एक दिन विधायक विश्राम गृह में आयोजित एक सभा में जब मेरा परिचय एक हैंडसम, गुड लुकिंग, वेल ड्रेस्ट और तहजीब याफता नौजवान से कराया गया और उन्होंने अपनी धीमी मगर प्रभावशील आवाज में कहा मुझे अर्जुन सिंह कहते हैं और उसके बाद जब उनसे थोड़ी ही देर तक जो बात-चीत हुई तो ऐसा लगा कि सामन्तवाद, पुँजीवाद और रूढ़िवाद के मजबूत किलो की दिवारे तोड़कर हरी भरी पहाड़ियों से ठंडी हवा के खुशगवार झोंके आ रहे हों जिन्होंने दिल और दिमाग को ताज़गी और रोशनी बख्श दी हो।

मैं उस ज़माने में स्टूडेन्ट्स काँग्रेस का जनरल सेक्रेटरी था और उसके बाद ही इण्डियन यूथ काँग्रेस की स्थापना के बाद भोपाल में पहला यूथ काँग्रेस का जनरल सेक्रेटरी भी बना दिया गया था और इस हैसियत से अच्छे खासे तौर पर जाना जाता था और पहले रोज़ का अर्जुन सिंह जी से परिचय

दोस्ती और रिफाक़त के एक ताकतवर और घने सायादार दरख़्त में तब्दील हो गया और सारी ज़िन्दगी यह रिश्ता कायम रहा और हमेशा वह मेरे बड़े भाई, फ़्रेंड, फ़लास्फ़र और गाइड रहे। कुछ दिनों के लिए दुर्भाग्य से राजनीती रिश्तों में अगर मन मुटाव भी हुए तब भी व्यक्तिगत रिश्तों और सम्मान में कभी कोई अन्तर नहीं पड़ा और हमेशा वह मेरे बड़े भाई और नेता ही रहे। श्री अर्जुन सिंह एक साधारण व्यक्ति नहीं थे और न ही अर्जुन सिंह रोज़ जन्म लेते हैं। उर्दू के मशहूर शायर मीर ने शायद उन्ही जैसे व्यक्ति के लिए कहा है।

**‘मत सहल हमें जानों, फिरता है फलक बरसों,।
तब खाक के पर्दे से, इन्सान निकलते हैं’ ॥**

एक कुंवर ने जब इन मज़बूत किलो की दीवारों को गिराना शुरू किया और इलाहाबाद विश्वविद्यालय की फिजाओं ने जिस व्यक्तित्व को तराशकर एक नया रूप दिया वह नये हिन्दुस्तान और एक नए भविष्य की खोज के लिए संघर्ष करता हुआ एक धर्म निरपेक्ष असम्प्रदायिक और प्रगतिशील भारत के नवनिर्माण के लिए एक खूबसूरत व्यक्ति प्रभावशील वक्ता और अपने विशेष अंदाज़ में अपनी बातचीत और अंदाज़ से दूसरे लोगों के दिलों पर अपनी विजय का झंडा लहराने वाले एक दूसरे ही अर्जुन सिंह थे।

मैं शुरू से ही लेफिटिस्ट रहा हूँ और हमेशा से ही बाए बाजू और समाजवादी विचारधारा का कट्टर मानने वाला रहा हूँ और यह तमाम गुण अर्जुन सिंह जी में मौजूद थे जिसके कारण मेरी दोस्ती और रिश्ता उनसे मज़बूत और मज़बूततर होता गया।

इतिहास एक बेरहम निर्णायक है और जब भी वह फैसले देता है किसी को नहीं बख़्शा। यह भारत का और काँग्रेस पार्टी का दुर्भाग्य है कि उसने अर्जुन सिंह जी के साथ उस समय अन्याय किया और उन्हें वह स्थान नहीं दिया जिसके वह मुस्तहक थे। मेरा मतलब श्री राजीव गाँधी की शहादत के बाद जब प्रधानमंत्री बनाने का सवाल आया तो उस समय सिर्फ़ दो ही नाम सामने थे एक श्री अर्जुन सिंह जी का और दूसरा नरसिंहमाराव जी का (क्योंकि दुर्भाग्य से श्री नारायण दत्त तिवारी लोकसभा का चुनाव हार गये थे वर्ना सबसे ताकतवर उम्मीदवार वही थे) केन्द्र की काँग्रेस लीडरशिप ने उस समय श्री नरसिंहमाराव को तरजीह दी और उन्हें प्रधानमंत्री बना दिया। जो यकीनन काँग्रेस पार्टी के लिए आत्मघाती निर्णय था। अगर उस समय हमने अर्जुन सिंह जी को देश का प्रधानमंत्री और काँग्रेस का अध्यक्ष बना दिया होता तो आज देश और पार्टी दोनों की दशा और दिशा दूसरी होती और हम एक नये हिन्दुस्तान की फिजाओं में साँस ले रहे होते।

अज़ीज कुरैशी



A Stellar Personality

In the last twelve years of my service in I.A.A.S. from where I retired as Director General in 1990. I had interacted with top political leaders of India in different ministries and mostly in the meetings of the Public Accounts Committee. But more people came to meet me at night to consult me astrologically at my residence. I went to the houses of four politicians for different reasons: to the house of late Dinesh Singhji to meet some old and experienced astrologers on his invitation: to Late Charan Singhji when he was the Prime Minister for astrological consultation twice when he had expressed a desire to meet me and to the house Shri Natwar Singhji to meet a remarkable Irish psychic. But for astrological consultations Dinesh Singhji and Natwar Singhji came to my house.

The only exception I made was in the case of late Arjun Singhji whom and whose wife I met for the first time in 1986 when I had gone to their official residence when Arjun Singhji was HRD minister in the government of Shri Rajiv Gandhi. The reason was the instruction of a great saint Mauni Baba whom I had first met in the house of late Shri Nagendra Singh, former judge of the International Court of Justice and with whom I had lost touch. Later I came to know from a woman disciple of his that after the death of Nagendra Singhji, Baba was coming to the house of Arjun Singhji in Delhi. In my presence, once Baba told Arjun Singhji and his wife to consult me only for astrology and asked me to give them consultation in their house.

Before I had met Arjun Singhji and his wife, his daughter Veenaji had come to meet with Shri A.U.Singh Deo, now a member of Rajya Sabha, at my house and looking at her horoscope I had asked her to concentrate on social work which she has been doing very well and with great enthusiasm. Later the second son of Arjun Singhji, Shri Ajay had come to meet me and I had asked him who had advised him to join politics. Surprised he asked me what was wrong. I had told that he was going to get involved in a big controversy and that happened when the Churhat lottery episode became explosive for some years till it died down.

Why Baba gave such an instruction became clear to me later when I came to know that an astrologer of Delhi, more notorious for sensational prediction than real ability, had told the wife of Arjun Singhji that her husband would be shot dead and a pistol shot would penetrate

his forehead. There were some matters which had better been discussed in the privacy of his house and that suited me.

In so many meetings of ours, we never discussed politics and if we had, some bitterness could have crept in. With the passing of the Gandhian era, greatness in public life had collapsed into opportunism, pseudo secularism had become a vote catching shibboleth. I had served as a personal volunteer of Mahatma Gandhi in Sevagram in my early teens and am only one year junior to Arjun Singhji in age. As the son of an idealist great and famous editor of the National Herald, the founder editor of the National Herald, late Shri K.Rama Rao, I had personally seen from closest quarters the famous political leaders of the Gandhian era and known them personally in the pre independence era. I had my own political convictions though it is the government service I drifted into and kept my political opinions to myself. Arjun Singhji knew it and appreciated that I had my own strong private political convictions. Fortunately, no occasion arose ever for us to discuss politics and disagree disagreeably.

I looked deeply into his horoscope and kept the readings to myself till one day Mrs. Arjun Singh sent me a message to meet them in the hotel room. I went there, saw the depressed face of Arjun Singhji and straightaway told him that in 1991 the Congress Party would come back into power and he would be an important cabinet minister. The rest is history---in 1991 the Congress party formed a government at the centre under the late P.V.Narasimha Rao and Arjun Singhji became HRD Minister for a second time.

No big occasion arose for the next four years for me to give any major prediction to Arjun Singhji. In 1990, when the Congress party was out of power an article had appeared in the Navbharat Times, the Hindi sister paper of the Times of India, under the name of Arjun Singhji, pathetic in tone and a half willing acceptance of fate. He had undergone an open heart surgery and was resting in an air conditioned room of a hospital. It was as though the razzle dazzle of politics was only a faint memory now and what awaited him was oblivion.

Having retired in 1990, I had to vacate the government bungalow in six months and while I was preparing to move, Arjun Singhji asked me not to move and made me the vice chairman of the Sanskrit Parishad where the work was of financial nature, for which

Sanskrit scholarship was not required. I could retain the government bungalow. But after a year a half, I requested him to relieve me of this post as I wanted to move into a small private flat I had decided to buy and not remain dependent on the charity of government. He and his wife were surprised and I moved away to east Delhi but remained in touch with them throughout often going to their house for dinner or lunch and occasional astrological consultation.

Strangely, one day Arjun Singhji asked me to meet him privately, not in the presence of his wife for an astrological prediction sometime in 1998 and asked me whether his life span was over, as an astrologer I had told him. I assured him that for another eight or nine years there was no danger except health problems which would increase and that he would once again become a cabinet minister at the centre.

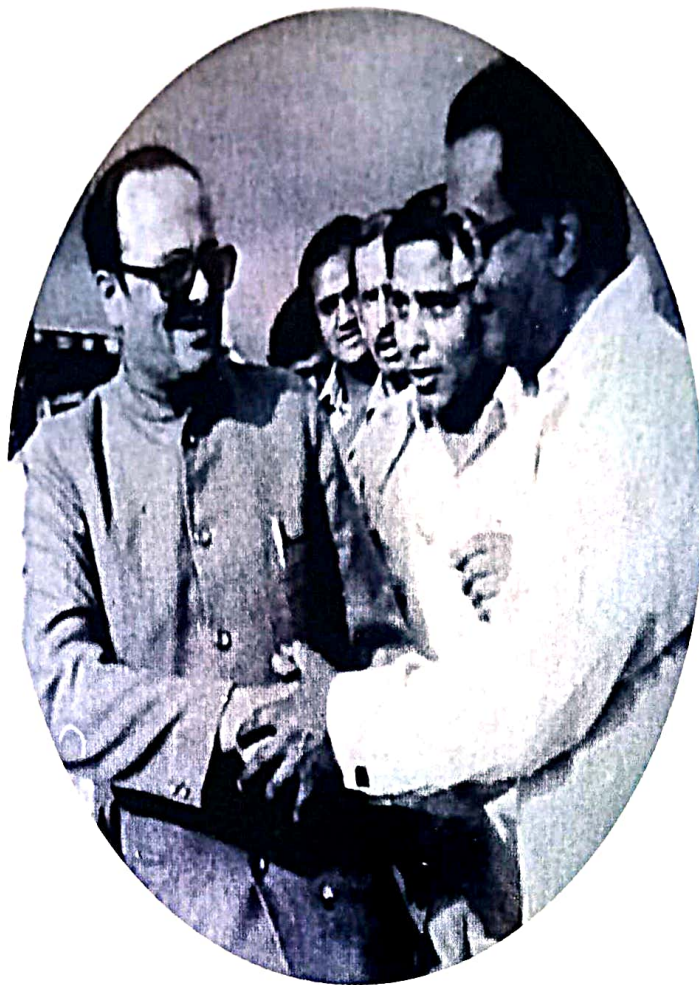
If I ever envied Arjun Singhji it was for his huge library, a great collection of various books which have now been donated to some library. He was one of the best read politicians India ever had though this facet of his personality was not known to many except me because often he referred to some book to seek support for his arguments. Academically, he and his children have been brilliant.

NDA in power then had introduced astrology as a subject of study in non Sanskrit Universities but in 2004 when the UPA came into power and Arjun Singhji became HRD minister for the third time, I had asked him whether he would allow astrology to continue. He smiled and said that he would not touch the decision as he knew more than eighty percent politicians consulted astrologers and were not opposed to astrology

Some years later he was dropped from the cabinet of Manmohan Singhji and I told Mrs.Arjun Singh that her husband's career was over and they should accept it all as the final sun set on the long career of Arjun Singhji.

The mahadasha was changing, from Jupiter's to Saturn and I had seen it as ebbing away of his stellar political career and life itself. In Saturn Venus period he breathed his last on 4 March 2011.

Sincerely,
K. N. Rao



A Progressive Politician

I met Shri Arjun Singh in July 1948 when he joined Allahabad University. Shri V.P.Singh also joined in the same year. I was one year senior to them. As the luck would have it V.P. Singh, Raja of Manda, became Prime Minister of India while Arjun Singh just missed the grand opportunity. His rise in politics was remarkable. He came from a remote village in Sidhi District of Vindhya Pradesh. He was shy, spoke little and listened more. He grew up to be an aggressive politician, knowledgeable & excellent orator both in Hindi and English. He was a voracious reader and had indepth knowledge of current affairs. Development politics was his strength. His opponents joined together to oppose him and eventually he lost the race for Primeministership.

Arjun Singh entered the political arena in 1957 when he was just 26 years old. That year he won assembly election as an independent candidate but later joined the Congress Party. He was close to Nehru family. In 1963, Pandit Dwarika Prasad Mishra inducted him in his Cabinet. Here he got the first opportunity to display his many faceted talents. He did some pioneering work in developing agriculture in the newly formed Madhya Pradesh. Madhya Pradesh was created by amalgamation of erstwhile Madhya Bharat, Bhopal, Vindhya Pradesh & Hindi speaking Mahakasha region (including Chhattisgarh) of C.P. & Berar state. The state had different climatic zones, while Bastar (South part) had over 1600mm of rain, Malwa (western part) had just 800mm of rain. He made meticulous plans for development of agriculture in the various regions. Economy of the new state dependent on agriculture. He was instrumental in bringing about the green revolution in the new state. His administration and planning brought about prosperity in the State.

In 1966 I came to Bhopal with desire to enter the political arena. He guided me at this stage. I wanted to contest from the Sidhi parliamentary seat in the ensuing general elections. I did not get it, main reason being that I was a green horn in politics. My desire was fulfilled a year later in 1967 when I got elected as an M.L.A.

In 1977 when the Congress party was in the opposition he was the leader of opposition. With his old fiat car he drove all around the state. From Bastar in the South to Gwalior in the north. Sometimes he did not even have a driver. I was his driver when we drove from Bhopal to Mandasour and back. He injected life into the demoralised congress party. He led the party to victory in the 1980 election and was elected as the Chief Minister. His wife Smt. Saroj Kumari (My younger cousin sister) had a major role in his successful political career as she managed his entire home affairs perfectly so he could concentrate totally on his political life & profession.

A new era dawned for Madhya Pradesh with Arjun Singh becoming the head of the State govt. I had not contested the 1980 elections. In 1982 he called me and said he would like to make me Vice Chairman of the State Planning Board of Madhya Pradesh. I half jokingly said that

uptill now this Board accomodated retired politicians only so why did he want me to retire. His earnest reply was- because you have good experience of planning as you have held so many important departments in Govind Narain Singh led government.

I joined State Planning Board. He gave me many powers. He used to give me ideas for the development of the State. Progress was made in Bansagar-Hydropower-Irrigation project. We made rational and realistic plans for the State. Pithampur-Industrial estate was his brain child. He asked me to prepare a development plan of Bastar. Agriculture, Irrigation, Forest produce collection and processing, cottage industry were vital to economic development of Bastar. Education, health and conectivity were given prime importance. For some reason the plan was not implemented. Mainly, because he had to go to Punjab as the Governor soon after he had brought a historic repeat victory for Congress party in Madhya Pradesh. Naxal leaders say that had the plan been implemented they would have found it difficult to get a foothold in Bastar.

With his guidance the State Planning Board made elaborate plans for the Urban and Rural areas of State. The plans were implemented and Madhya Pradesh progressed. The Administration was transparent, He was a socialist at heart. In 1998 when I became water resource Minister in the State, he called me to Delhi and said you had started planning for Bansagar Project on Son River in 1968 when you were in Govind Narain Singh cabinet, it is still incomplete so please complete it as it is the lifeline of Vindhya region. He said some politicians do not want it to be completed. I promised I will do it. It was to generate 1000 Mega watt Hydropower and irrigate over 5 lakh acres of dry region of Vindhya. I completed the project in October 2000. Water flowed through Sehawal canal to Churhat area of Sidhi district. He thanked me profusely and said, "my dream has come true".

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Dr. Ramchandra Singhdeo
Raipur

बोलिये पर वक्त पर बोलिये

श्रीमान कुँवर अर्जुन सिंह जी, से मेरा व्यक्तिगत परिचय 1942 में हुआ था जबकि हम लोग मार्तण्ड हाईस्कूल के छात्र थे तब से बराबर अक्सर-गत संबन्ध बना रहा। 1947 में उनका विवाह हमारे पूज्य बड़े भाई साहब श्री मेजर शिव प्रताप सिंह की कन्या श्रीमती सरोज कुमारी से सम्पन्न हुआ था। इसके उपरांत हमारे निकट संबंध, उनके पुरे जीवन काल, किसी न किसी घटनाओं के साथ बने रहे, सबसे निकट उनके साथ काम करने का अवसर मुझे 1980 में, जब वह मुख्यमंत्री थे और मैं भोपाल में डी.आई.जी. गुप्तचर विभाग भोपाल में पदस्थ हुआ, तब करीब-करीब, प्रत्येक दिन मुलाकात करने का अवसर प्रदत्त हुआ था इसके बाद जब वह गवर्नर पंजाब नियुक्त हुए उस समय मैं, आई.जी. सी.आर.पी.एफ. पंजाब और जम्मू कश्मीर के चार्ज में था और मेरी पदस्थापना चंडीगढ़ में हो गई थी। 1984 में पंजाब में ब्लू स्टार आपरेशन हुआ पंजाब में अराजकता का वातावरण छाया था। और उन्होंने इसके बाद लौंगोवाल संधि समझौते में अहम भूमिका निभाई, पंजाब में चुनाव हो जाने के बाद जब अकाली सरकार बनी वे वापस केन्द्र में मंत्री पद पर पदस्थ हुए, और मैं वहीं से रिटायर होकर रीवां आ गया। उनके साथ कार्य करने का जो स्वर्णिम अवसर प्राप्त हुआ था उससे मेरा आत्मबल व विश्वास बढ़ा तथा उनके प्रशासनिक अधिकारी कि लिए मूल्यवान है। वे अपना लक्ष्य बहुत पहले निर्धारित कर लेते थे और जाने-अनजाने अवसरों की एक माला तैयार करते रहते थे, जो उस उद्देश्य के लिए उपयोगी थी, उस उद्देश्य के पथ में आने वाली कठिनाईयों का बारीकी से अध्ययन करते थे और विषय से सम्बंधित सूचनाएं तथा अन्य पथ प्रदर्शक अपने संकल्पों में जोड़ते जाते थे एक सूचना भण्डारण की प्रवृत्ति, उन्हें महान उद्देश्यों के तरफ अग्रसर करती थी। उनका नई पुस्तके पढ़ने का इतना अटूट शौक था कि जब वह केन्द्रीय मंत्री पद पर पदस्थ थे, तब भी व्यस्ततम कार्यक्रम में कुछ समय निकाल कर रास्ते में, ट्रेन में हवाई जहाज में सफर करते वक्त, एक मिनट व्यर्थ नहीं गवांते थे। कोई भी नई पुस्तक देश व विदेश में प्रकाशित होने के बाद, उनके पास पहुँच जाती थी, आज भी उनकी लाइब्रेरी एक बहुत बड़ी पुस्तकों का भण्डारण है, समय की उपयोगिता और उसका प्रबंधन उनका अनुकरणीय था विशेषतः प्रत्येक दिन का हर एक पल उनके गणना में महत्वपूर्ण था।

उनके प्रशासनिक प्रबंधन में कुछ ऐसी विशेषताएँ थी वह अपनी संकलित विषयों पर सबकी विस्तृत विवेचना और आम राय इकठ्ठा करते थे, उदाहरणः एक विषय, जो मुझे याद है, वह

तेंदु-पत्ते के संग्रहण का है। मैं किसी कार्यवश भोपाल आया था और उनसे मिलने गया तब उन्होंने मुझसे सागर चलने के लिए कहा और वे रात्रि प्रवास पर सागर गए, जहाँ उन्होंने सब तेंदु-पत्ता व्यापारियों की एक मीटिंग बुलाई थी चूँकि मैं दो वर्ष एस.पी.सागर रह चुका था और तेंदु-पत्ता के उद्योगपतियों से काफी परिचित था, मुझे भी साथ में ले गये और मीटिंग के पहले मुझे उनसे कुछ उद्यमियों, से बात करने को कहा। बाद में मुझे उस मीटिंग में शामिल किया, दो घंटों तक दोनों तरह के वाद-विवाद हुए, अंत में सभी इस मुद्दे पर तैयार हुए कि सिर्फ भण्डारण का उन्हें कार्य सौंपा जाय इसके बाद सरकार को जो पैसा तेंदु-पत्ते से प्राप्त होता है, वह भण्डारण के कमीशन को छोड़कर बाकी सब जमाकर दिया जावे। तेंदु-पत्ते की तुड़ाई तक सरकार के हाथ में, यह कार्य क्षेत्र रह सकता है, भण्डारण तथा बिक्री उद्योगपतियों के हाथ में कायम रहे, मैंने भी यही सोचा, कि यह निर्णय अंतिम है, पर उन्होंने अंतिम निर्णय के लिए एक सप्ताह का समय दोनों पक्षों को दिया। बाद में मुझे ज्ञात हुआ कि तेंदु-पत्ते का पूर्णरूपेण राष्ट्रीयकरण कर दिया गया।

इस घटना से उनके समस्या को हर एक दिशा से समझने की व सूचना प्रबंधन प्रदर्शित होती है। समय का प्रबंधन एक महत्वपूर्ण विषय है जिसके बारे में, उनका चिंतन अनुकरणी है वह हर एक कार्य चाहे तनत्य या नैमित्तिक हो, समयबद्ध सीमा में करने की कोशिश करते थे और दूसरे को दिये कार्य में हरदम समय सीमा की आशा रखते थे, यह उनके अत्यंत व्यस्त कार्यक्रमों में भी देखा जा सकता था। सीमा उलंघन बचाते थे।

उनका भावपक्ष भी बहुत आकर्षक प्रतीत होता था, बीमार गरीब, अपाहिज या विकलांग दुखी, लोगों के प्रति बहुत ही संवेदनशील थे इस पक्ष में वह कभी-भी पक्ष या विपक्ष चाहे कोई भी राजनीतिक दल हो वो निःसंकोच मदद करते थे कई बार उन लोगों की भी मदद करते थे, जो उनके आलोचक थे, पर वो यही कहते थे, कि अलग-अलग पटल है इनको जोड़ना मानवता के विरुद्ध होगा एक भावनात्मक दृष्टि और दूसरी व्यावहारिक।

कुछ अपने अनभव के अनुसार मैंने विषयों का उल्लेख किया है जो मुझे आकर्षित करते थे, वैसे बहुत कुछ लिखा जा सकता है पर यह बातें आने वाले पीढ़ी के लिए अनुकरणीय गुण हैं, जो महानता की ओर प्रेरित करती हैं उन्ही विषयों का मैंने उल्लेख किया है। वह तौलकर बोलते, जितना आवश्यक होता था उतने ही शब्द उनसे निकलते थे—बोलिये पर वक्त पर बोलिये मुद्दों सोचिये फिर बोलिये—उनके प्रति कहा जा सकता है।

शिव मोहन सिंह



A Brave Crusader

Arjun Singh's brief tenure as Punjab Governor may be seen in perspective. He was sent to Punjab to fill the political vacuum and diffuse the alienation of the Sikhs after Operation Blue Star and the 1984 riots.

This was a seemingly insurmountable task. An analogy may be drawn in present Pakistan where public figures have been intimidated into silence on the issue of the Anti Blasphemy Law after the assassination of the Pakistan Minority Affairs Minister and the Punjab Governor by religious fundamentalists. In 1985 Punjab, the Sikh political and sectarian leadership was in prison. The persons bereaved, displaced or affected by the events in 1984 and earlier were understandably agitating for justice and retribution vehemently. The Press was divided on Sectarian lines. In the circumstances, no Sikh Leader was willing to have a dialogue with the Government for fear of being dubbed a "traitor of the Panth with all the consequences."

In contrast, there was pressure from Sectarian Hindu groups and official quarters to treat Punjab as a Law and Order problem. Dialogue was appeasement. Any person from civil society and Human Rights groups seeking justice and an amicable solution were dubbed anti-national and appeasists.

In the event Arjun Singh, to paraphrase the Roman General Julius Caesars military campaign in ancient Egypt, came to Punjab, saw and conquered. He got released over two thousands political prisoners from detention inspite of strong resistance and obstruction by the Union Home Ministry. The Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal Accord was signed and Punjab had peaceful elections inspite of the assassination of Sant Longowal.

Of all the leaders of his time, perhaps Arjun Singh alone could have achieved this feat in a few months. Politicians generally take up causes to further their careers and partisan interests. This may apply to Arjun Singh too. He was a pragmatic politician or else he would not have held high office for over 40 years. However, he was not a hypocrite.

He believed in the cause of minorities and the deprived both in national interest and as right. He succeeded in Punjab because he was genuinely concerned for the State and its people. Arjun Singh's success in Punjab and his tenure as Vice President of the Congress led to heart burn amongst his colleagues. In addition, the infighting amongst the Akalis and the Punjab Congress allowed his initiative in Punjab to fade away once he left the State.

In his brief association of about eight months with Punjab as Governor, Arjun Singh initiated the setting up of the Kapurthala Coach Factory and the Longowal Institute of Technology. As the HRD Minister, he had a big role in giving clearance for the Knowledge City in Mohali. A systematic campaign was conducted by his opponents to keep him away from Punjab. With his death, Punjab and the Sikhs have lost a true friend.

Gurbir Singh

A Humble Messiah

My association with Shri Arjun Singh began with my posting as Collector of District Sidhi during 1978-79. From then on, till my retirement from IAS in 2006, I was closely associated with Shri Arjun Singh in one way or another. The one quality of his that impressed me the most was his graciousness. I can cite many occasions when I was witness to his graciousness.

Sidhi is a backward district on the Uttar Pradesh Border of Madhya Pradesh which falls in the rain shadow region and has been suffering from severe drought due to scanty rains and no irrigation worth the name. Sidhi was under a severe drought during my tenure there. Shri Arjun Singh, as the leader of Opposition in the Madhya Pradesh Vidhan Sabha was leading an agitation in Sidhi to force the State Government to initiate action to mitigate the effect of drought in the district . There was a rumor that the agitators were planning to bring an elephant to the Collectorate (like Shri Suresh Seth did during an agitation in front of the Legislative Assembly in Bhopal). The District Police was nonplussed and had no idea of how to deal with an elephant in the procession. The Superintendent of Police Shri Swaraj Puri, had a brilliant brain wave. He knew that a contraption that can be used to stop an elephant was there in Arjun Singh's home in village Sada near Churhat. We lost no time in bringing the contraption from Sada to the District Head quarter to be used in case the agitators do bring the elephant there. Fortunately, better sense prevailed and the agitators did not bring any elephant and we could heave a sigh of relief . The agitators courted arrest in large numbers and we had to send Shri Arjun Singh to the Rewa jail. It was Deepawali the next day. Shri Arjun Singh spent Deepawali in Rewa jail and was on hunger strike. .

Election time has a tendency to bring more trouble to the District Administration. Assembly elections were announced. The undivided Sidhi District had six assembly constituencies. Congress and BJP were the main parties in the fray. As leader of opposition, Arjun Singh had the responsibility for overseeing the election in the entire state and could not devote much time to his home district.

After the nomination process for the election was completed, I as the 'returning officer' I had the duty to assign election symbols to the various contestants. The official symbol of political party is reserved for the official candidates of the party. Each party has to specifically indicate

to the Returning Officer the names of the official party candidates. For some unknown reason, the high ups in the Congress party in MP failed to send official intimation regarding its official candidates for the six assembly constituencies in the district. Shri Arjun Singh was not present in the district and his younger son Shri Ajay Singh was in charge. He made frantic efforts to get the official letter of authorization of the names of the six official party candidates. But Sidhi is remote location made it impossible to get the authority letter in time for the allotment of symbol and in the absence of such an authority letter, I as returning officer could not have allotted the official reserved party symbol to any candidate including Shri Arjun Singh, who had filed his nomination from Churhat constituency. Ajay Singh told me the names of the six nominees who are likely to be made official party candidates and requested that all these six nominees be given a common election symbol.

I agreed to the suggestion and decided that the six persons indentified by Shri Ajay Singh for six assembly constituencies will be allotted any common symbol. Ajay Singh chose "Railway Engine" as the common symbol for the six candidates. Ironically, Sidhi has virtually no railway line and most of the population of the district has never even seen a Railway Engine.

I also advised that the Congress Party could approach the Election Commission at Delhi in appeal against the order of the Returning Officer on allocation of the symbol. If they are able to convince the Commission that the party was prevented from reaching the authority letter to the Returning Officer in time for reasons beyond their control, there is a definite possibility that the Commission will allow me to allot the party symbol to the authorized candidates.

The Congress party approached the Election Commission and the Commission allotted the official party symbol to Shri Arjun Singh and the other five official candidates of the party.

Election went off peacefully, congress won the majority and Shri Arjun Singh become the Chief Minister of the State.

My well-wishers had predicted that Shri Arjun Singh would be very annoyed with me on account of the symbol affair and on account of putting him in jail on Deepawali day. I was quite apprehensive too.

A few days after becoming the CM, Shri Arjun Singh made his first official tour to his

home district. I was ready for an unpleasant encounter and a dressing down from the Chief Minister. But to my utter amazement I found no trace of rancour in the CM.

He called me and said that my order on the symbol case was perfectly in order. After all, the Returning Officer has no business to decide as to who will be the official candidate of a party in an election. If the Returning Officer had allotted the official symbol to any one without proper authorization, it would have led to problems in an election petition to both the candidates and the Returning Officer.

The newly elected CM quickly allayed all my apprehensions and put me at ease. Mrs. Saroj Singh was also very considerable to my wife during the three day tour of the new CM to the district. The CM told me in so many words that my action on the allotment of symbol was perfectly correct and any deviation would have jeopardized the Congress candidates position in an election petition. Not only was I not punished but I was offered a position in CM's Secretariat at Bhopal as Dy. Secretary, causing much astonishment and also admiration for the new CM among my colleagues.

We at the CM's Secretariat used to organize files disposal camps to clear the arrears of paperwork that accumulated relentlessly in the office. These camps were held in remote guest houses where the CM could be expected to devote some time for paperwork undisturbed by visitors. One such camp was held in a small town in Hoshangabad district.

A large staff of officers, clerks , peons , drivers etc. has to be housed and fed for three or four days in these camps, involving not inconsiderable expenditure. The CM Secretariat never had to feel any embarrassment whatsoever on account of this as the CM himself used to graciously pay for all the expenses of the entire retinue.

It has been a long innings for me with Shri Arjun Singh. I had learnt a lot from him; have great admiration for his many qualities. A lot could be achieved during those days in the field of public policy and new ground broken in many fields.

I use this opportunity to place on record my humble respects to arguably the best Chief Minister that Madhya Pradesh has seen in the six decades of its existence.

K. Shankar Narayanan

IAS Private Secretary to Arjun Singh as Chief Minister & Governor Punjab



दीपावली-1981.....दीपावली विशेषांक

मध्यप्रदेश रजत जयंती पर मुख्यमंत्री श्री अर्जुन सिंह जी से विशेष मुलाकात के कुछ अंश : भेंटकर्ता-अभय छजलानी

मध्यप्रदेश बनना उचित था,
बना रहना भी उचित है

प्रश्न-मध्यप्रदेश के निर्माण के साथ जो कल्पनाएँ की गई थीं, उसमें संतोषजनक रूप से इन 25 वर्षों में कुछ हासिल किया जा सका है क्या?

उत्तर-मध्यप्रदेश का गठन कई कारणों से हुआ था। हिन्दी भाषी एक बड़ा राज्य बने, यह मंशा थी। कुछ राजनीतिक कारण थे और कुछ आकस्मिक कारण थे। जो भूभाग कहीं सही रूप से नहीं जम पा रहे हैं उनको इसमें जोड़ा था। पहले पाँच वर्ष कठिन थे। लेकिन बाद में स्पष्ट होता गया कि यह असीम संभावनाओं से भरा हुआ एक प्रदेश है। उसके बाद कितना कुछ हुआ नहीं यह तो स्पष्ट है। लेकिन मैं समझता हूँ कि प्रदेश का बनना सही था और बना रहना भी उचित है।

प्रश्न-मध्यप्रदेश में आप शायद पहली बार विधानसभा में 1957 में चुनकर आए तब से आज तक किसी न किसी रूप में विधायक के रूप में अथवा अन्य किसी रूप में आप या तो शासन से संबद्ध में हैं या इस प्रदेश के बारे में सोचते विचारते रहे हैं। जब शासन से पहली बार संबद्ध हुए, शासन को निकट से देखने का मौका मिला तब क्या प्रतिक्रिया रही। अब जब सर्वोच्च जवाबदारी आपके ऊपर ही आ गई तब आप क्या महसूस करते हैं?

उत्तर-मैं 57 में तो बहुत विचित्र परिस्थिति में विधानसभा में आया था। इसलिए उस समय एक नए सदस्य को जो अनुभूति हो सकती है वही थी। पूरे प्रदेश के अलग-अलग लोगों से संपर्क हुआ। तामस्कर जी आए छत्तीसगढ़ से, तो ऐसे लोगों के साथ काम करने का मौका मिला। जो एक स्तर

से सोचते थे एक स्तर से बात करते थे। इन 5 साल के बाद यह आभास हो चला कि यह प्रदेश खिचड़ी प्रदेश नहीं है। इसको कुछ बनाया जा सकता है। 1963 में जब मुझे पहली बार मिश्रजी ने कैबिनेट में लिया तो उन्होंने मुझसे पूछा कि तुम कौन सा विभाग लेना चाहते हो। मैंने कहा कि जो आप देना चाहें सो दें। लेकिन हमारी राय जानना चाहें तो मैं तो कृषि विभाग लेना चाहता हूँ। शायद उन्होंने समझा होगा कि बहुत कम महत्वपूर्ण विभाग लेना चाहता हूँ। उनकी मेहरबानी थी इसलिए उन्होंने दिया। लेकिन मेरा उद्देश्य उसमें एक ही था, कि मध्यप्रदेश का कोई भी भविष्य कृषि के आधार पर बनाया जा सकता था। इस तरह किसानों के प्रश्नों को नजदीक से समझने का और उसमें कुछ करने का अवसर मिला यह मेरी बहुत बड़ी इच्छा थी। उस समय कृषि के बारे में जो अनुभव हुआ उससे इस बात पर विश्वास हुआ कि म.प्र.जो किसान प्रधान देश है, अगर किसान संगठित रहते हैं, और उनके हितों का संरक्षण होता है तो यह प्रदेश बना रह सकता है। फिर सेठी जी के साथ काम करने का अवसर मिला। वो ऐसे मुख्यमंत्री थे कि कोई भी उनके साथ काम करने में खुशी अनुभव करता। सबको काम करने की बहुत ही अच्छी छूट दे रखी थी। शिक्षा और संस्कृति के क्षेत्र में मेरे किसी

भी ऐसे सुझाव का जो कि सामान्य रूप से सही दिखता था कभी उन्होंने इंकार नहीं किया। उसी समय इस बात का भी अहसास हुआ कि औद्योगिकरण बहुत ही महत्व रखता है, इस क्षेत्र में खास तौर से ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र में। सबसे पहले जब सिंगरौली की खदानों का पता लगा तो 1959 की बात है। मैंने सदन में प्रश्न पूछा था। उस वक्त नैसर्गिक साधनों के मंत्री शंभूनाथ जी शुक्ला थे। मैंने पूछा था कि क्या शासन को इस बात की जानकारी है कि इस तरह का इतना कोयले का भंडार मिला है। तो उत्तर यह था कि शासन को ऐसी कोई जानकारी नहीं है। तब से 1972 तक के बीच का समय हम लोगों ने खोया। अगर उस समय हम वह समय नहीं खोते और उस समय ऊर्जा के उत्पादन को एक अत्यंत महत्वपूर्ण बात समझकर करते तो बहुत बड़ी तब्दीली आज प्रदेश के अंदर होती। यह आलोचना नहीं यर्थाथ है।

25 वर्ष हमको भी हो गए हैं। करीब-करीब हर हिस्सा देखा है। यह बात जरूर है कि यहाँ के लोग बहुत विश्वास करने वाले लोग हैं। उस प्रकार की जो चतुराई जो कहीं-कहीं और जगह देखने को मिलती है वह अपने प्रदेश में नहीं है। और खास तौर से हरिजन आदिवासी पिछड़े वर्ग के लोग, इनको फिर से भरोसा हो चला है, ऐसा मैं विश्वास करता हूँ जैसा मैंने समझा है।

प्रश्न-खनिज संपदा की बात आपने की और राज्य पुनर्गठन आयोग ने भी की है। पर, जो संपदा हमारी भूमि में है, उसकी चाबी केन्द्रीय सरकार के पास है। संपदा का भरपूर लाभ हमें नहीं मिल पाता है। इस समस्या का हल करने का कोई सूत्र राज्य शासन के हाथ में नहीं है, ऐसा सबका कहना है? आप इस बारे में क्या सोचते हैं।

उत्तर-यह तो सत्य है कि आज जो कानून कायदे हैं उनमें खनिजों पर आधारित उद्योग या खनिजों से संबंधित नियम प्रक्रियाओं में केन्द्रीय शासन का काफी दखल है। कोयले को ले लीजिए। कोयला

प्रदेश में इतना है लेकिन कोयला किस क्षेत्र में कहाँ जाएगा इसका अधिकार केंद्रीय शासन को है। यह कानून के तहत है, जिसको कि सभी प्रदेशों ने स्वीकार किया है। खनिजों की केवल रायल्टी पर ही ध्यान को केंद्रित नहीं करें और हम अपने ही कुछ संस्थानों को बनाने की बात करें तब माँग करें कि हमको ये चीजें दी जाएँ तो वह एक आधार बन सकता है। जैसे ताप विद्युत घरों का फैलाव है। कोरबा में कोयले पर आधारित मध्यप्रदेश बिजली बोर्ड ने अपना विद्युत घर बनाया तो केन्द्र को कोयला लिंक करना पड़ा। सारणी में बनाया तो कोल लिंक करना पड़ा। अमरकंटक में बनाया तो कोल लिंक फिर देना पड़ा।

प्रश्न—इतने अनुभव के बाद अब जब आप समस्याओं को अधिक जवाबदारीपूर्वक देखते हैं तो मध्यप्रदेश के भविष्य की कल्पना में कौन-कौन सी बातें महत्वपूर्ण मालूम होती है। कौन-कौन सी योजनाएँ बहुत महत्वपूर्ण मालूम होती हैं।

उत्तर—एक तो ऊर्जा के क्षेत्र में मैं कोई अवसर या साधन नहीं छोड़ना चाहता जिसका कि उपयोग नहीं किया जाए। अतिरिक्त ऊर्जा के जो स्रोत हैं उनके बारे में हमें अलग से कोई संस्था बनानी पड़ेगी। आज हमारी जो पन बिजली का नर्मदा घाटी योजना के अतिरिक्त भी बहुत ज्यादा उत्पादन संभव है। छोटी-छोटी योजनाओं के माध्यम से संभव है। रायपुर और रायगढ़ में जो महानदी योजना चल रही है, उसकी नहर से 26 मेगावाट बिजली पैदा की जा सकती है। इसी तरह से बाण सागर से भी, इन सब स्रोतों का अगर हम दोहन करें जिसकी कि लागत बहुत नहीं है तो हमें काफी मदद मिल सकती है। छोटी-छोटी योजनाएँ आपके ग्रामीण विद्युतीकरण में, छोटे उद्योगों के लिए काफी पूरक हो सकती हैं। इनके बनाने का समय भी कम है। इस मामले में चीन में बहुत काम हुआ है।

दूसरा है, खनिजों पर आधारित उद्योगों को प्राथमिकता देना है। अगर इसको हम कुछ हद तक बढ़ा सकेंगे तो वह प्रदेश के लिए बेसिक इंडस्ट्रीज होंगी। जैसे देश के लिए पंडितजी ने बेसिक इंडस्ट्रीज कायम कर दी थी और आज उसके आधार पर बहुत सी चीजें हो रही हैं। यह बहुत ग्लैमरस तो नहीं है लेकिन यह बेसिक इंडस्ट्रीज होगी। इस प्रदेश के भावी विकास के लिए। तीसरी बात है, कृषि के क्षेत्र में सिंचाई। ये सब चीजें तो एक नियमित तरीके से योजनाबद्ध हो ही रही हैं। नर्मदा घाटी योजना का विकास, न केवल आज बल्कि भावी कितनी ही पीढ़ियों को उत्तेजित करने वाली होगी। अब हम इन योजनाओं को अपने जीवनकाल में विकास का एक रूप लेते देख सकते हैं।

मुझे उत्साह इसलिए भी है। कि आज जिस स्थिति में हम पहुँचे हैं वहाँ पहुँचने में इंदिराजी ने ही सबसे ज्यादा मदद की है।



राजनीति के कबीर

लगभग 58 वर्ष बीत गये, जब पहली बार परिचय हुआ था, श्री अर्जुनसिंह से। एक नवम्बर 1956 को मध्य प्रदेश का निर्माण हुआ था। भोपाल को राजधानी घोषित किया गया। 1957 के चुनाव में पूर्व विन्ध्यप्रदेश के रीवा राज्य में मझौली विधान सभा सीट से श्री अर्जुन सिंह निर्दलीय विधायक चुने गये। विधान सभा में उन्हें निर्दलीय विधायक दल का नेता चुना गया। विधान सभा में आपकी शैली और संवाद पत्रकार गैलरी में चर्चा का विषय रहे। 1958 में राजधानी के बुद्धिजीवियों ने कॉस्मोपालिटन इन्स्टीट्यूट ऑफ पब्लिक अफेयर्स (CIPA) का गठन किया, जिसमें श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने संस्थापक अध्यक्ष का पद ग्रहण किया।

मध्यप्रदेश विधानसभा में 1959 के बजट अधिवेशन में श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने यह सुझाव प्रस्तुत किया कि सभी विधानसभा सदस्य अपनी सम्पत्ति और आमदनी का लेखा-जोख विधानसभा में पेश करें। इस सुझाव का कुछ सदस्यों ने मजाक भी उड़ाया। पर श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने सबसे पहले खुद विधानसभा अध्यक्ष को एक

पत्र लिखकर अपनी सम्पत्ति और आमदनी का विवरण प्रस्तुत कर दिया। जब अध्यक्ष ने उसे सदन में पढ़कर सुनाया तो अनेक सदस्यों ने उसे कार्यवाही से निकाल देने तक की माँग की। स्वयं मुख्यमंत्री डॉ. काटजू ने इस कार्रवाई का समर्थन नहीं किया।

इस घटना से क्षुब्ध होकर श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने प्रधानमंत्री पंडित जवाहरलाल नेहरू को पत्र लिख भेजा। पंडित नेहरू ने तुरन्त ही उनसे मिलने की इच्छा प्रकट की। श्री अर्जुनसिंह दिल्ली गए और यह आत्मीय आश्वासन लेकर लौटे कि सम्पत्ति का विवरण देना सभी के लिए अनिवार्य किया जा रहा है। उसी साल अखिल भारतीय कांग्रेस कमेटी ने प्रस्ताव पारित करके कांग्रेस के सभी मंत्रियों और विधायकों को अपनी सम्पत्ति का ब्यौरा देने के निर्देश दे दिये।

शहरों की झुग्गी बस्तियों में हो रहे जीवन के निर्मम नाटक को वे देख रहे थे। वे इस बात से दुःखी थे कि जो हज़ारों लोग दूसरों के लिये सुख-सुविधाएँ जुटाते हैं। शहरों में आलीशान इमारतें बनाते हैं, उन्हें खुले आसमान के नीचे रहने की जगह कब नसीब होगी। झुग्गीवासियों के इस कष्ट से वे इतने आहत हुए कि एक ही दिन में एक कानून बनवाकर उन्हें इस कष्ट से मुक्ति दिलवाई। 17 अप्रैल, 1984 को विधानसभा में वे एक विधेयक लाए। उन्होंने उसी दिन सदस्यों से विशेष आग्रह कर विधेयक पारित

करवाया, महामहिम राज्यपाल महोदय से निवेदन कर हस्ताक्षर करवाए और उसी दिन अधिसूचना का प्रकाशन मध्यप्रदेश राजपत्र में करवाया और झुग्गीवासी गरीब-गुरबों के हक में एक नये मानवीय कानून ने जन्म लिया। और 18 अप्रैल 1984 की सुबह प्रदेश के 40 लाख झुग्गीवासी उसी जगह के मालिक हो गए जिस पर वे रह रहे थे और चाहे जब खदेड़े जाते थे। इसी तरह प्रदेश के लाखों खेतिहर मज़दूर जो अस्थायी रूप से गाँव पहाड़ों में घर बनाकर रहते थे उनके बार-बार उजाड़े जाने की चिन्ता भी उन्हें थी और उन्हें भी रहने का स्थायी ठिकाना दिया गया।

एक विचित्र घटना हुई। रविवार की सुबह मैं इनसे मिलने करबला रोड स्थित बंगले पर मिलने गया। उन्होंने मुझसे कहा—'हमारा एक पारिवारिक कार्य है। आपकी सहायता चाहिये। मेरी स्वीकृति पर उन्होंने मुझे एक चित्र दिया और कहा कि लखनऊ के निकट की एक रियासत के पूर्व राजा साहब की पुत्री लारेटो गर्ल्स कालेज, लखनऊ की छात्रा है। यह चित्र है। आप मालूम करके आइये कि यह लड़की हमारे परिवार के योग्य है या नहीं। दीपू (श्री अर्जुनसिंह के ज्येष्ठ पुत्र श्री अभिमन्यु सिंह) के लिये इनके यहाँ से प्रस्ताव आया है। मुझे आवश्यक खर्च के लिये एक लिफाफे में पाँच सौ रूपए भी दिये गये। मैं हतप्रभ था। इतना अपनापन, इतना विश्वास कैसे कर लिया मुझ पर। खैर मैं लखनऊ गया और लौटकर बता दिया कि न लड़की योग्य है न परिवार।

आदिवासी किसानों की ज़मीनें दूसरे लोग छल-कपट से छीन लेते थे। वे ज़मीनें उन्हें वापस मिलें इसके लिए एक क्रान्तिकारी क़ानून बनाया गया। उन्हें उनकी ज़मीने वापस दिलाई गईं। पिछड़ा वर्ग आयोग की स्थापना हुई। उनका जीवन स्तर ऊँचा उठाने के लिए रचनात्मक उपाय किए गए। गाँवों के बेरोज़गार युवकों को रचनात्मक कामों में सहभागी बनाने के उद्देश्य से भूमि सेना का गठन किया गया और इस सेना ने प्रदेश के अनेक पिछड़े इलाकों में निर्माण के कार्य किये। बेघर लोगों को घर देने के लिए मुफ्त ज़मीन दी गई और ग्रामीण आवास योजना का सूत्रपात हुआ। भूमिहीनों को भूमि मिली। शहर के रिक्शा चालकों ने राहत की साँस ली। सभी रिक्शा चालक अपने-अपने रिक्शे के मालिक हो गए। तेन्दुपत्ता तोड़ने वालों के जीवन में जो क्रान्तिकारी आर्थिक परिवर्तन आया उसके लिए श्री अर्जुनसिंह हमेशा याद किए जायेंगे।

जिस तरह फक्कड़ संत कबीर ने भारतीय जन मानस में अपनी गहरी पैठ बनाई है, वही व्यक्तित्व, वही चरित्र, वही आचरण हमें श्री अर्जुनसिंह के व्यक्तित्व एवं कृतित्व में दिखाई देता है। समाज के दीन-हीन दुर्बल वर्ग के प्रति गहरी संवेदनशीलता, पिछड़े और दलित वर्ग के सामाजिक, आर्थिक और शैक्षणिक उन्नयन के लिए गहरी तड़प, उनके उत्थान के लिए एक कर्मयोगी के समान सतत प्रयास और उपलब्धियाँ उन्हें राजनीति का कबीर सिद्ध करती है। साम्प्रदायिकता के खिलाफ़ जो काव्यमय अभिव्यक्ति कबीर ने दी थी उसी की हुँकार अर्जुनसिंह के साम्प्रदायिकता विरोधी संघर्ष में सुनाई देती है। आपके वक्तव्य, चर्चा, परिचर्चा और निर्णय सिद्ध करते हैं कि वे भारत को साम्प्रदायिकता के विष से मुक्त कराने के लिए प्राणपण से संघर्षशील रहे।

श्री अर्जुनसिंह ने 25 वर्ष पूर्व कांग्रेस कार्यकर्ताओं के सम्मेलन में कहा था, आज वह सत्य साबित हो रहा है। उन्होंने कहा था—

“कांग्रेस एक छाता है जिसके अन्दर सब आकर ज़माने की बौछार से बचना चाहते हैं। एक दिन ऐसा आयेगा जबकि उनकी संख्या इतनी बढ़ जायेगी कि उन्हें बौछार से बचना मुश्किल हो जायेगा और उस छीना-झपटी में वह छाता भी नष्ट हो जायेगा और जो छीटें पड़ेंगे वे सबके ऊपर ही पड़ेंगे और उससे कोई बच न सकेगा। ”

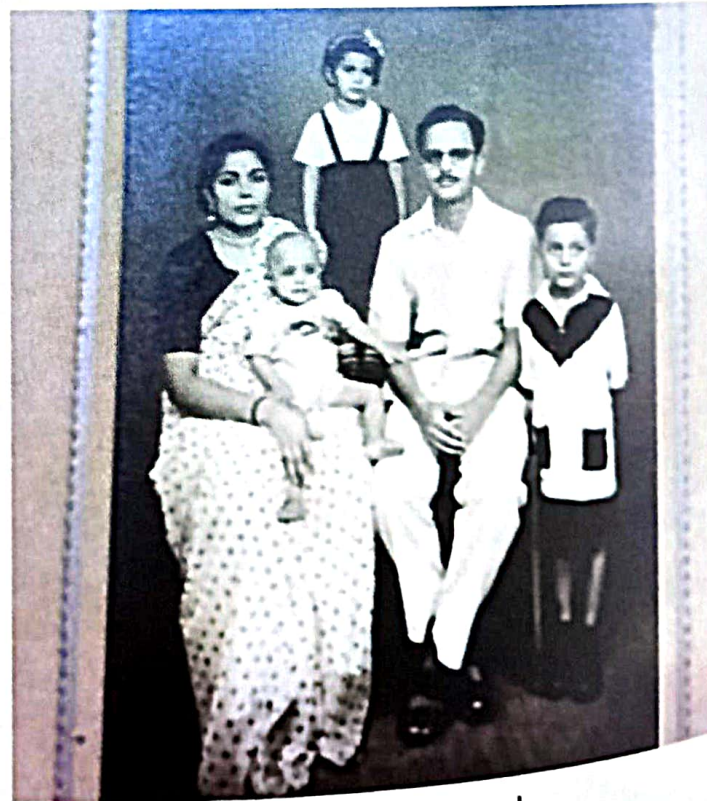
—विष्णु राजोरिया
(अनन्य मित्र-निकटस्थ सहयोगी)



With his Mother Smt. Mohini Devi who was his inspiration till her death in 1994



Mr. Arjun Singh at 6 Months



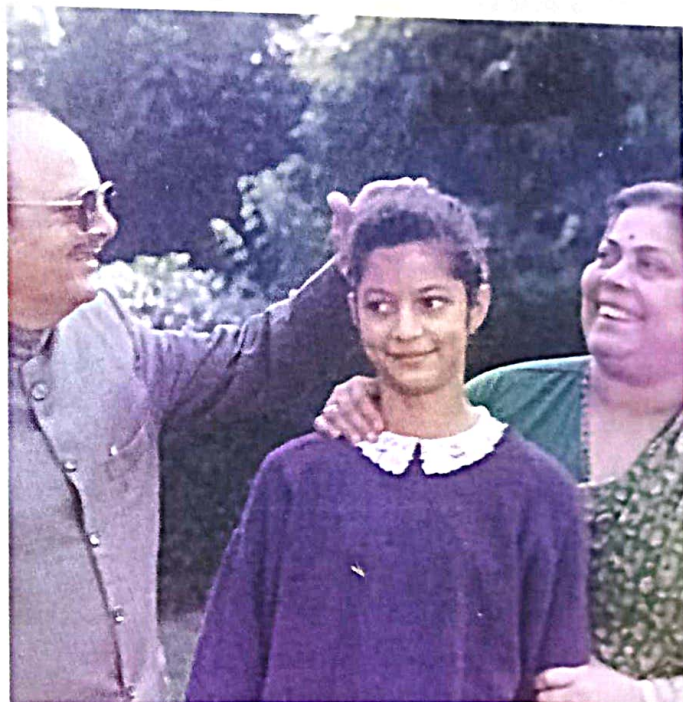
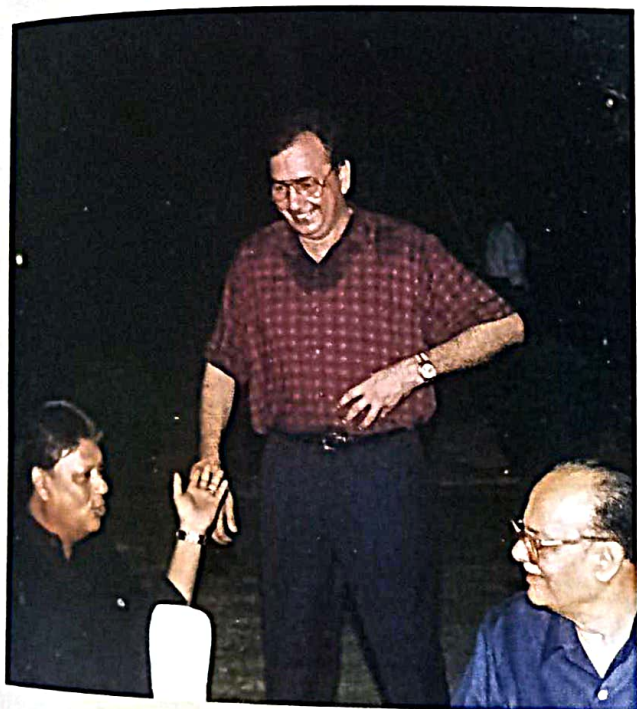
First Family Photograph



Complete Family of 1987

Family Occassions





It has been more than five years since my father passed away but the feeling that he is still around exists in all of us. To commemorate the achievements of his life as a true nationalist – we as a family decided to set up a foundation – The Arjun Singh Sadbhavana Foundation.

We toyed with several possible names before settling for 'Sadbhavana' – a word that aptly represents the core of what my father stood for throughout his long tenure in public life. It is also today's need of the hour – for a more united and peaceful world.

Sadbhavana (Sanskrit roots : 'Sat' and 'Bhav') - the Hindi word that means 'goodwill among all' – maybe be interpreted in multiple ways through other associated words, each of which are similar in meaning but reflect only a facet of the larger idea of Sadbhavana.

- Karuna (करुणा)
- Daya (दया)
- Kshama (क्षमा)
- Sahanubhuti (सहानुभूति)
- Mitrata (मित्रता)
- Kapat Rahit Vichaar (कपट रहित विचार)
- Vaatsalya (वातसल्य)
- Prem (प्रेम)

The logo we developed for the foundation draws inspiration from four quintessentially Indian metaphors – the sun, the chakra, the bindu and the circular form.

- The sun represents 'all giving and forgiving'
- The chakra represents 'continuity'
- The bindu represents 'focus'
- The circle represents 'the infinite, eternity'

Under the aegis of the foundation, we intend to carry forward my father's legacy through diverse works in the public service arena – promoting the spirit of Sadbhavana in all that we do.

