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COLONIAL DEMOLITION OF BAHADUR SHAH ZAFAR'S  
GOVERNMENT SOME BITTER FACTS AND LITERARY REACTIONS

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**ABSTRACT:**

The first armed struggle of the Indians against the British which the British called treason. The East India Company incorporated all the provinces and several states of India into its government one after the other. Due to which doubts about the company arose in the hearts of Indians. The Indian War of Independence began in 1857 at Dumdum and Barakpur in Bengal, where indigenous soldiers refused to use cartridges which they believed contained pork and cow fat. The British government disarmed these soldiers and dismissed them from military service. The same thing happened in Lucknow. Dismissed soldiers spread across the country and began to mobilize troops against the British. Bahadur Shah Zafar was declared leader by the rebel soldiers. He was appointed as the head of the war of independence. This war was lost by the Mughal army. The king was captured. Thus, the sun of the Mughal Empire set and the colonial system began in India.

**INTRODUCTION:**

Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last Mughal ruler of India. He was a great poet and prominent literary figure of classical era of Urdu literature. At the time of the war of Independence, he was 82 years old when all his children were beheaded and presented to him in the form of gifts. Major Hudson also imprisoned his four sons Mirza Ghulam, Mirza Khidr Sultan, Mirza Abu Bakr and Mirza Abdullah. The people continued their dangerous and barbaric pledge to continue

the war and rebellion against the British. Bahadur Shah Zafar took the severed heads of his sons in his hands and prayed for them in words full of compassion, saying that the children of Timur are such servants and perform their duty before the father. After that, the bodies of the princes were hung in front of Kotwali and the severed heads were hung on the bloody door. Bahadur Shah Zafar led the first Indian war of 1857 for the story of the British. Bahadur Shah Zafar was the last king of the Mughal dynasty. His rule was considered from Dhang Alam to Palm. He was the chairman of Nam Mag Delhi and the real government was with the British. He was fluent in Urdu, Arabic, Persian, language, equestrian, swordsmanship, archery and shotgun. He was a well-known Sufi philosopher, a Persian poet, and a writer and poet in Soleh Khan. He continued to run the government till 1857. He was tried by the British in a court of law on charges of murdering government criminals and soldiers. Find out. Homeless, patriotic, pious, elderly 82- year-old Indian mother Ladle Bahadur Shah Zafar handed over a wonderful case. In October 1858, he was sent to Rangoon for the rest of his life. Thus, a patriot, despite being away from the country, continued the fight for independence with his pen, sacrificing himself for the independence of the country. The lyric poems he wrote during this period have a great place in the hearts of those who are addicted to the freedom of India for their skill and development.

### *Analysis:*

It was with commercial greed that the European colonies were founded and promoted in India the British occupied different parts of India in different periods, in whole or in part. They devised the strategies and tactics that were a source of power for the colonial masters. It was the first success of the western nation regarding discover of the sea route to India on 22 May 1498 when a Portuguese ship was anchored in the coastal area of southern India.

The Portuguese central government appointed Alfonso Al-butraque the first governor of Portuguese occupation, who had occupied the coastal areas and made Goa the capital of the Portuguese Empire. Portugal's taxing of Spain in 1801 weakened its political position. Also, with the strengthening of the Dutch East India Company, its commercial activities slowed down.

The most important turning point in the formation of the European colonial system on Indian soil was Jahangir's edict by which East India Company gained some trade concessions and established its trading capital at Surat. We should not forget the fact that the naval power of the Mughals was weak and non-existent and the East India Company, equipped with its strong naval power, set foot in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay. With the permission of the Nawab of Bengal, he built Fort William in Calcutta, which became a political center and power for the people of Farang.

The British took full advantage of the radical atmosphere created by the rule of Aurangzeb Alamgir as the non-Islamic nations of India turned against him and had weakened the social foundations of the Mughal rule. Due to this, independent states were established in Owadh, Bengal, Hyderabad and Mysore. In contrast, the East India Company extended and consolidated its trade

monopoly throughout India. Nadir Shah's attacks on India also played a role in this expansion which weakened India politically.

Exactly a century before the fall of Delhi in 1857, the defeat of Siraj-ud-Daulah in Plasi war provided an important opportunity for the company to establish itself in India. The role of Mir Jafar was fundamental in this defeat. After Mir Jafar, Mir Qasim became the Nawab of Bengal. He formed a tripartite alliance against the looting of the company, which included the Mughal emperor Shah Alam and the Nawab of Owdh, Shuja al-Dawla. At Buxar, a fierce battle was fought with the company in 1746, the outcome of which played a pivotal role in stabilizing the colonial system in India. In the event of this victory, the British preferred financial interests to political by two interests. Along with the acquisition of civil rights in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, practical systems were implemented. Administratively the ruler was local but the tax was collected by the British.

The only obstacle to keeping the rulers of Delhi confined to the Red Fort was the Crown Prince of Mysore, whom the British fought twice to remove, but instead of winning, the matter ended in treaties. When Tipu Sultan became the ruler after Haider Ali, he increased his military capability by joining the French forces, but the outcome of the war was no different from that of Plassey and Buxar. The Nizam of Hyderabad and the Marathas also played a role in the defeat of Tipu.

After the defeat and martyrdom of Tipu Sultan, the Western domination of India was practically almost complete and the foreign masters began to remove the administrative obstacles to the formation of the colonial system. Institutions were also established in this regard and many plans were issued and reforms were made to consolidate power. When Napoleon was defeated in 1851, the British increased their control over India and drove out other colonial powers. The summer of 1857 brought a new fire and heat to the British government. This fire did not start immediately but for a long time the feelings of hatred against the colonial masters were burning, which started intensifying when the father of the prominent classical urdu poet Dagh Dehlvi Nawab Shams-ud-Din Khan, the ruler of Loharo state, was hanged by the British on 17 October 1835. Dharminder Nath writes: "After the execution of Nawab Shams-ud-Din Urdu newspapers have sprung up in Delhi in response. Although some Persian and English newspapers and magazines had been published before, they were beyond the comprehension of the common people. With the publication of newspapers, political awareness among the people of Delhi spread rapidly. Before the revolution, about a dozen newspapers were printed in Delhi. In particular, "Delhi Urdu Newspaper" used to take news from the British and told everyone about their deeds."(2011, page 25)

These newspapers played a role in raising public awareness and inciting revolt against the foreign masters but no such concerted effort was made due to the absence of any leadership. There were also some decisions of the foreign masters themselves to incite hatred against them. This aspect of Lord Dalhousie's reforms is particularly noteworthy in that he wanted to abolish all the native states and the Mughal Empire. This act made much worried the

governors of the state. There was also a suggestion that after the death of Bahadur Shah Zafar, the Mughal dynasty should be relocated to Qutb. On the other hand, Rani Lakshmi Bai of Jhansi was not allowed to make any statement. Baji Rao's successor Nana Sahib was denied a pension. These measures caused great concern in the governors of the state.

A law was also passed in the British army that the army could be sent to fight in any part of the world while crossing the sea was a sin for the Hindus. Besides, Indians were not given any senior position in the government or the army. The uprising in Meerut is generally considered to be the forerunner of the treason, but in the light of the above facts, it would be correct to say that the incident was merely an external manifestation of the cause. Bengali historian Chandr Dat observed that "It is beyond a doubt that political reasons helped a mere mutiny of soldiers to spread among large classes of the people in northern and central India, and converted it into a political insurrection. Lord Dalhousie's vast and rapid annexations had created an impression in India that the East India Company aimed at universal conquest; that they disregarded treaties and the laws of the country in order to compass their object. The minds of the people were unsettled; and leaders of the insurrection issued proclamation dwelling on the bad-faith and the earth-hunger of the alien rulers." (1904, Page 224)

In 1857 an incident took place in Meerut which later proved to be a prelude to widespread revolt. The British Army introduced a gun whose cartridges had to be cut with teeth before use. These cartridges were covered with animal fat. It spread among Muslim soldiers that it was pig's fat, while Hindus feared it was of cow. This provoked outrage among local officers and soldiers, who considered it a direct interference in religion and decided to disobey any order to use these cartridges. Zaheer Dehlavi has described the situation in the statement of the rebel soldiers before Bahadur Shah Zafar as follows:

"It's been a long four months. Committees are being formed in the authorities and we have also been circulating letters in the cantonments of the cavalry that if the army refuses this job tomorrow and quits the job and if there is more violence, one day, one date, all of India will treason. Then see what they can do. The whole army deviated in one go and without this revolt took place in such a way that it was decided that the beginning should be from Meerut that this place is a center and a very large compound is located here and the old trusted army is stationed there. When this unit of army will be broken down, no other army will have the opportunity to stumble." (2002, Page 53)

But unexpectedly, the officers flatly refused to acknowledge the position of their soldiers. They were imprisoned and the soldiers revolted. There was a great commotion and a massacre of British officers and soldiers, after which they reached Delhi in the form of a militant group and asked Bahadur Shah Zafar to sponsor a great uprising against the Fergana. But the king expressed his displeasure and called for a peaceful end to the affair and urged the British resident to play his part. Attempts were made to persuade the rebels, but the situation was not easy. The rebel soldiers faced similar conditions here in Meerut and captured Delhi in a fierce battle.

Later it was equipped with modern weapons and was a major offense to retake Delhi from the rebel army. Various battles continued for a few months. During this period Bakht Khan entered Delhi from Bareilly with a unit of army, of fourteen thousand soldiers, three regiments and several lakh rupees.

In this situation, the role of Bahadur Shah Zafar seems to be twofold. On the one hand, he was willing to patronize the rebels as the crown prince of Delhi, but on the other hand, the situation inside the fort, which was also intimidated by the British power, was subject to strange contradictions and conflicts. The king's wife Zeenat Mahal was greedy for the heartfelt promise of her son Javan Bakht, while Mirza Mughal became the self-proclaimed ruler of the rebel army in his desire to seize the throne.

Bahadur Shah Zafar handed over the command to General Bakht Khan, but he continued to face the envy of local officials. In the ensuing tussle and psychological confrontation, the British managed to regain the control of Delhi. The Mughal princes fled from the fort and took refuge in the tomb of Humayun. Their escape was persecuted. There was a stampede in the city, in the revolutionary forces. Then Bahadur Shah Zafar took his tribe with him and walked towards the tomb of Humayun. General Bakht Khan met the king with his army and explained that only the city is out of our hand, nothing else has gone. From a military point of view, the front in Delhi could not succeed, but the king was discouraged. Then his ministerial advisers were spying on the Fergana people. Mirza Elahi Bakhsh read out that there would be peace with the Fergana people. General Bakht Khan chewed his lip on his failure and left the city with his army. No one knows where he has disappeared and what happened to his army?

Not only were the princes assassinated, but their bodies were hung near Kotwali for 42 hours as a sign of warning. The king, on the other hand, was arrested and tried for sedition. As a result, he was deported to Rangoon, where he died in the garage of a British officer's house.

After the recapture of Delhi, the British not only brought the rebels to their doom but also massacred the local population and shot at those who came forward in retaliation, even those who were considered well-wishers of the British. Zaheer Dehlavi writes about the massacre of peaceful civilians:

“Listen to the reality of the inner city, what happened to these poor people who thought that we were the subjects of the government under the guise of patronage of the British government, they had nothing to do with good and evil and prayed for the departure of the cruel army day and night. There will be peace and order. They thought that we would not be wronged. They did not know that justice was meaningless in the face of this ruthless government.”(2002, Page103)

Distinguishing between the faithful and the traitors, the British also took revenge on those who had taken refuge in their own homes. At that time, instead of distinguishing or investigating the good and the bad, the only idea was to destroy Delhi and no one could survive who could later build a ruined country

or lead a scattered people. Lieutenant Hudson wanted to do to the king and his wife what he had done to the princes, but he was not allowed to do so.

After the occupation of Delhi, where the inhabitants of the city were razed to the ground, buildings were not demolished, where houses, shops and bazaars were razed so that the names of the inhabitants had been wiped off the face of the earth. The whole city presented the picture of punishment for the rebellion against the British government. The kind of hatred and anger behind the steps taken to set a precedent for Delhi and the people of Delhi can be gauged from the newspapers of the time. For example, in the Lahore Chronicle of July 7, a correspondent writes to the editor:

"Enemies should not be taken into account. This is our war slogan. It's time to dump her and move on. The most humiliating example of treason and evil should be demolished in Delhi. The city should be wiped off the face of the earth, but its ruins should be preserved so that future generations can learn a lesson from it and realize how severely the British nation avenged the brutal murder of their children. What is the significance of Delhi for us? We cannot call it the capital of India. But people think that the dissatisfied elements of this country have always considered the puppet king of Delhi as a sign of their unity. Even today, everyone's eyes are on it. Our own servants say that the time of British rule is over and our recapture of Delhi is impossible. If we demolish Delhi and wipe it off the map, then the idea may be common that the Mughal dynasty was overthrown and the British rule was established forever. So hang them and thus put an end to this ridiculous drama of the Islamic monarchy forever." (1857, Page3)

Delhi was recaptured by the British by mid-September, but it took a long time for the commotion to subside. According to the British, the fire of revolt continued until their fire was completely extinguished and the fear of a single spark in the ashes disappeared. It is noteworthy here that the uprising took place in a limited area but the final operations took place more or less all over India and they were crushed wherever there was a fear of rebellion.

The methods used by the masters to suppress the rebellion of slaves in human history. The British tried every tactic with full intensity and did not spare a single minute in their brutality. Below is a letter from a British officer who paints a grim picture of the widespread brutality in India. He writes:

"The troops assembled at Jhelum and we have come along this for doing a little business on the road such as disarming regiments and executing mutineers. The death that seems to have the most effect in being blown from a gun. It is rather a horrible sight, but in those times we cannot be particular. Drum Head Courts-Martial are the order of the day in every station, and had they begun this regime a little earlier." (1926, Page 56)

The British carried out acts of revenge wherever they saw the possibility of a coup d'etat, but since Delhi was the seat of the throne, the city was so devastated that the word city became commonplace for Delhi. Houses were demolished, people were killed or forced to emigrate. The city emptied; people migrated.

Signs of fear and desolation were visible from the collapsed houses. The painful expression of the desolation and ruin of the city of Delhi after the riots of the 5th century is evident in Ghalib's letters. He writes "India's territory has been left without a light, millions have died, and hundreds of those who are alive have been arrested." "Thousands of friends have died. Who should I remember and whom should I complain to? There is no mourner alive, no mourner when I die."(1998, Page 630)

After the conquest of Delhi, the British forces took terrible revenge on the civilian population. People were brutally killed. Hundreds were hanged. Thousands of people were shot. Among them were the guilty and the innocent. The Indians were made to stand in front of the cannons and the cannons were fired so that the rags of their bodies would fly away. In just one day, 24 Mughal princes were hanged and Muslims were selectively killed. The properties of many powerful and wealthy Muslims were destroyed. Due to the slightest suspicion, the Muslims were evicted from their estates, due to which they became destitute. These horrific atrocities were repeated even in the places where the fire of war had first started. The whole country was without lightless and darkness was on every side. Delhi was no more a cultural city. The means of doom spread everywhere. Too much looting and as a result the city was doomed? The situation was such that those who died but no one was left to mourn the dead.

From the commercial greed of the colonial masters to the lust for power, cruel measures have been taken against them. This is acknowledged by the European intellectuals themselves and some even express regret. In an interview, Nobel Prize-winning author Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clezio said:

"Europe and American society are indebted and thankful to those who accepted the colonial system. I mean that the capital of Europe came from the Chinese cloth of the colonists and from this capital they established industries. That is why the people of Europe have to pay the debt of colonialism and they have to repay the debt anyway."(2010, Page 11)

The fact is that this system was not accepted; it was imposed. As for repaying the debt, even if the conscience of the people of Europe wakes up at this stage at some stage, it is not known how this debt will be repaid and whether the repayment of this debt will include the bloodshed of those killed or no? Rather, will there be any reckoning for the generations that fell victim to this slavery?

### **CONCLUSION:**

The demise of the Mughal rule in India and the beginning of the colonial system is not just a story of victory or defeat or an event of change at a political level but a cultural tragedy. After the end of the War of Independence, where Indians were massacred, a civilization associated with poetry and art also died. The last Mughal rulers began political imprisonment in Rangoon, but Delhi's artists and poets were forced to emigrate. This cultural tragedy was also expressed in Ghalib's letters and in the poetry of other Delhi poets. Foreign nations have benefited greatly from the colonial system, but there is a growing realization

that developed nations are indebted to the Third World. This debt is political as well as cultural.

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