

# STORIES

## Unsung Heroes of India's Freedom Struggle

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### The Brave Commander of Delhi – Bakht Khan

*Place: Delhi*

The year was 1857. Across India, the spark of rebellion against the British had ignited. Meerut, Kanpur, Jhansi, Lucknow... everywhere, soldiers were revolting. At that time, from Bareilly, a tall, strong, and intelligent officer marched toward Delhi with hundreds of his soldiers. His name was — **Bakht Khan**.



Bakht Khan was no ordinary soldier. He held the high rank of **Subedar Major** in the East India Company's army. But witnessing British tyranny, exploitation, and the plunder of the country, a volcano of rebellion erupted in his heart.

Upon reaching Delhi, he met the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah Zafar and said firmly, "**Maharaj, give me command over your soldiers. I will drive the British out of Delhi.**"

Bakht Khan reorganized the army, took charge of the artillery, and launched fierce attacks on the British. He was a courageous, disciplined, and farsighted commander. But unfortunately, some members of the royal court ignored his advice — and that proved to be the gravest mistake.

Eventually, the British recaptured Delhi. Bakht Khan fought bravely, retreated when necessary, but never surrendered. In the years that followed, he continued to fight against the British. In the end, he **attained martyrdom on the battlefield**. His death brought relief to the British — for a hero like Bakht Khan was their greatest threat.

Today, no one knows where his final resting place is. But as a valiant warrior of the First War of Independence in 1857, his name is immortal in history. Many soldiers and common people drew inspiration from him to fight the British.

**Lesson:** Patriotism is not proven through speeches — it is proven through action and sacrifice. Bakht Khan dreamt of freedom and fought for it until his last breath. If we live in a free India today, it is largely because of the countless unknown heroes like him. By remembering his sacrifice, we too must work for our country with honesty, courage, and a spirit of service.

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### Babu Genu – The 22-Year-Old Fearless Revolutionary

*Place: Pune, Maharashtra*

Today, I am going to tell you the story of a young man — only 22 years old, yet so courageous that the British Raj itself was shaken!

His name was **Babu Genu**. He was born in 1908 in a poor Dalit family in Pune. The family's financial condition was extremely difficult. From childhood, he worked as a laborer in a textile mill. He could not complete his education, but in his heart, the flame of patriotism always burned brightly.



Mahatma Gandhi's **Swadeshi Movement** deeply influenced him. He developed a strong opposition towards foreign goods. In 1930, the boycott of foreign goods was in full swing across India. People wore khadi and burned foreign cloth in protest.

One day, a truck was passing through the streets of Pune. It was carrying cloth imported from England, guarded by British officers. At that moment, Babu Genu arrived there. He stopped the truck and said in a firm voice — ***"This foreign, treacherous cloth will not be sold on our land! If you want to sell it, you will have to crush me first!"***

The British officer was enraged. He ordered the truck driver to move forward, but the driver refused. In a fit of anger, the officer climbed onto the truck himself and shouted — ***"I will crush this Indian under the wheels!"*** And then, he drove the truck over Babu Genu. He was martyred on the spot!

The news spread like wildfire. Thousands of people took to the streets, burning foreign cloth in protest. **The sacrifice of an ordinary laborer stirred the entire city of Pune.**

**Lesson:** Babu Genu teaches us that patriotism does not require wealth or high status — it comes from the heart. If a simple laborer could give his life to stop the British, then surely, we too can do something for our country.

Today, when you wear khadi or use any Swadeshi product, remember — you are carrying forward the unfinished dream of Babu Genu.

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### Ashfaqullah Khan

*Place: Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh*

India was under British rule — it was a time long ago. In 1900, in the city of Shahjahanpur, Uttar Pradesh, a brave boy was born — his name was Ashfaqulla Khan. He came from a Pathan Muslim family, but in his heart, love for the nation was far greater than any religion.

From childhood, the dream of a free India

fascinated him. The injustices of the British deeply disturbed him, and his greatest wish was to see India independent.

Gradually, he came into contact with revolutionaries like Shaheed-e-Azam Bhagat Singh and Ram Prasad Bismil, and joined the revolutionary organisation ***Hindustan Republican Association (HRA)***.

In 1925, he and his companions made a daring plan — to loot the British treasury and raise funds for the revolution. This plan became famous in history as the Kakori Conspiracy. On 9th August, **they stopped a train and looted the British treasure.** This bold act shook the British, who intensified their search for the revolutionaries.

A few months later, Ashfaqulla Khan was betrayed by one of his own acquaintances and arrested. In prison, he faced inhuman torture, yet despite all interrogations, he never revealed the name of any comrade. He was kept in Faizabad Jail.

On 19th December 1927, he was hanged. Before his execution, he firmly declared: ***"I am a Muslim, and I do not believe in rebirth. But still, I wish to be born in India again and again, and each time, I want to sacrifice my life for the nation."***

**Lesson:** Ashfaqulla Khan proved that a true patriot rises above religion, caste, or creed — he lives only for the motherland and lays down his life for her.



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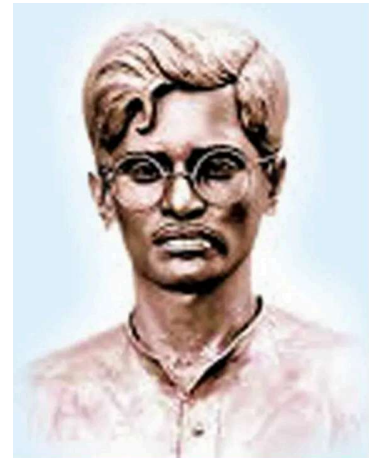
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### Bhai Kotwal – The Revolutionary of Matheran

*Place: Matheran, Maharashtra*

In the lap of the mountains lay the village of Matheran, where a brave young man named Bhai Kotwal was born. His heart beat not only for Matheran, but for the whole of India.

Bhai Kotwal was an intelligent student, a lawyer, and a social worker. To help farmers and poor families, **he started schools**, and **opened grain shops** so that the needy could get food at affordable prices. He inspired people to forget the walls of caste and religion and to become friends with one another.



At that time, British atrocities were increasing day by day, and anger was rising in the hearts of the youth. Bhai Kotwal decided — ***“Enough is enough! Now we must raise our voice!”*** He joined the Quit India Movement and began working underground in Thane district against the British.

His greatest contributions included delivering secret information, cutting British telephone lines, and disrupting British vehicles — acts that gave new energy to the freedom struggle. The British were chasing him, but Bhai Kotwal kept working, sometimes hiding in the forest, sometimes in the hills, and sometimes in villages.

One day, however, due to betrayal, the British caught him and threw him into Thane jail. **They thought that fear of death would make Bhai Kotwal reveal everything.** But he did not utter a single word, keeping all secrets buried in his heart. Frustrated, the British sentenced him to death.

On 22 August 1943, his death sentence was announced, and on 10 May 1945, Bhai Kotwal kissed the hangman's noose with a smile — but never let the tricolour bow.

**Lesson:** Bhai Kotwal taught that the fight for freedom is not won only with swords, but also with courage, intelligence, and loyalty. He is a true unsung hero — whose sacrifice allows us to breathe freely today.