

Speech of Hon'ble the Chief Justice in Full Court Reference held on July 15, 2022 on the sad demise of Shri Bhim Singh, Senior Advocate.

- Distinguished guests;
- My esteemed Sister and Brother Judges;
- Learned Addl. Advocate General, Sh. S. S. Nanda;
- Sh. M. K. Bhardwaj, President, High Court Bar Association, Jammu;
- Learned Senior Advocates;
- Learned ASGI, Jammu & Srinagar;
- Worthy Members of the Bar;
- Judicial Officers;
- Officers of the Registry;
- Mrs. Jay Mala W/o Sh. Bhim Singh;
- Ladies and Gentlemen.

We have assembled here today to recall the memories of, to pay our tributes and to mourn the sad demise of Sh. Bhim Singh, Senior Advocate of this Court who left for the heavenly abode on 31st May, 2022 after a prolonged illness at Jammu.

Sh. Bhim Singh was born in Ramnagar Town on 17th August, 1937, in the clan of a renowned Dogra warrior General Zorawar Singh. Sh. Bhim Singh received his early education at Ramnagar and passed his Matriculation in the

year 1956 from Government High School, Ramnagar. He did his LLB in 1965 from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh, Uttar Pradesh. He completed his Masters of Law in the year 1971 from University of London.

Sh. Bhim Singh got himself enrolled as an Advocate on the Rolls of Bar Council of Delhi in the year 1972. Later on, his Roll was transferred to Jammu & Kashmir Bar Council. He was designated as a Senior Advocate of this High Court with effect from 11th June, 2011.

As we all know, Sh. Bhim Singh was a person of varied interests and excelled in every field he pursued. Apart from being a fine human being and an accomplished lawyer, he successfully pursued his career in politics and throughout his life he remained socially active. He loved adventures and pursued global outings in furtherance of his interests.

Since he belonged to the Dogra warrior family, he was inherently a fire brand leader. During his College and University days he remained very active in student politics. He headed the local youth wing of a National political party and became its National Vice President in 1977, and then a National General Secretary of the party. Subsequently, he followed his own course and formed a separate political party. He fought many electoral battles, some of them successfully. He was elected as a member of the Jammu &

Kashmir Legislative Assembly between 1977 to 1987, from Chenani constituency in Udhampur district. In 1988, he had unsuccessfully contested the Parliamentary election from Udhampur constituency but was declared successful by this High Court on an election petition. Unfortunately, by that time the term of the Parliament had expired.

He was instrumental in getting laid down a landmark historical precedent of the Supreme Court of India regarding personal liberty of an individual, in the case '*Sh. Bhim Singh, MLA Vs. State of Jammu & Kashmir*' reported as *AIR 1986 SC 494*'. The judgment emanated from an incident where Sh. Bhim Singh while he was on his way to attend Assembly proceedings to participate in some important voting in the Assembly, was detained and kept at undisclosed place without obtaining a remand from the Magistrate. In the writ petition filed by him, he was awarded an amount of Rs. 50,000/- as compensation for his wrongful imprisonment which was held to be per se unconstitutional and illegal. It was for the first time, that compensation for violation of fundamental right was awarded even in exercise of writ jurisdiction.

He was immensely fond of travelling. He conducted a world tour on motorbike from 1967 to 1973. He visited as many as 130 countries and is credited to be a first person to cross the Sahara Desert on motorcycle from Tan-Tan,

Morocco to Senegal through Spanish Sahara and Mauritania. He had made friends with many world leaders of the time and had close association with Mr. Yasser Arafat a famous Palestinian leader, Mr. Saddam Hussein then President of Iraq and Mr. Muammar Gaddafi a famous Libyan leader. For many years he remained as Chairman of Indo-Palestine Friendship Society and worked for the rights of the Palestinians.

He worked vigorously as a human rights activist and rendered his professional services to innumerable persons especially Pakistani refugees, with a motive of securing their human rights. He was nominated as Chairman of the Executive Committee of the Legal Aid by Justice Bhagwati when the later was Chief Justice of India. Justice Bhagwati described Sh. Bhim Singh 'as crusader for truth and justice'. He also remained senior Executive Member of the Supreme Court Bar Association in the year 2016.

He worked tirelessly for the upliftment of professional standards and for dignity and honour of the Bar. His efforts for securing Bar Council for Jammu & Kashmir were materialized in the Supreme Court of India when a petition filed by him regarding establishment of Bar Council of Jammu & Kashmir was allowed.

In all the delegations and meetings with various Prime Ministers and Parliamentary delegations regarding political

solution of the Jammu & Kashmir problems, he would be considered an important person to represent the people of Jammu & Kashmir.

He has authored many books of contemporary importance and one of these titled "*An examination of documents on which the State of Israel is based*" published by PLO Research Center became very popular. His another book "*the Murder of Democracy in Jammu and Kashmir*" was also a hot seller. He has also authored his travelogues "*Unbelievable-Delhi to Islamabad*" and "*Peace Mission-Around the world on Motorcycle*".

There are numerous aspects of the personality of Sh. Bhim Singh which would need quite a long time to narrate. His life and work shall remain an inspiration for many of his followers, friends and admirers.

With passing away of Sh. Bhim Singh the Bar has lost a tall leader, a true friend and a crusader for dignity of the Bar. He exhibited knowledge of law, wisdom and professional excellence and worked tirelessly throughout his life in that pursuit.

Sh. Bhim Singh is survived by his wife Smt. Jay Mala and son Mr. Ankit Love, who are now reported to be settled in London.

On the demise of Sh. Bhim Singh, we have lost a noble soul and a lawyer of eminence. His demise is an irreparable loss to the family and to the legal fraternity equally.

I, on behalf of my esteemed colleagues and on my behalf express heartfelt condolence on the sad demise of Sh. Bhim Singh and pray to the Almighty to grant eternal peace to the departed soul and bestow immense strength to the members of the family to bear the irreparable loss.

Om Shanti! Shanti! Shanti!

(Pankaj Mithal)
Chief Justice

We shall stand in silence for a minute as a mark of respect to the departed soul.

The Court work shall remain suspended for the rest of the day.

The Registrar General shall send a copy of this condolence reference speech to the bereaved family.