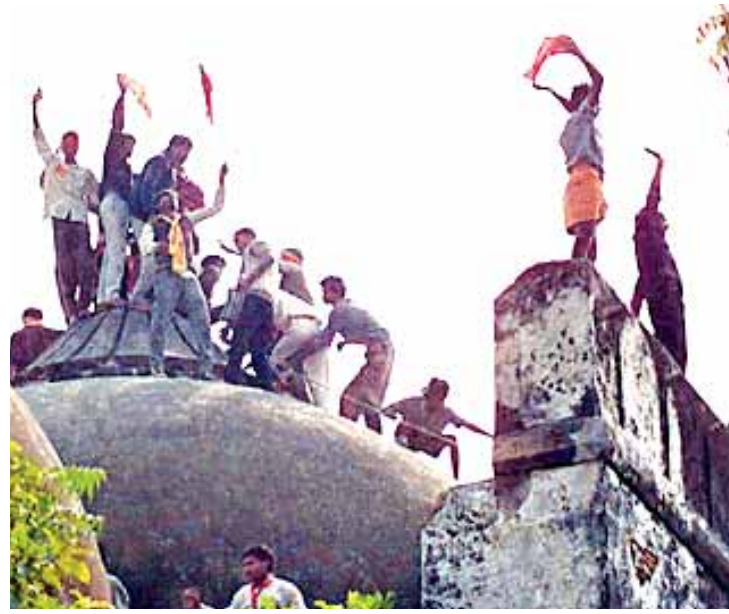


Sach Kanwal Singh

When shame of defeat haunts, political parties start thinking of shameless somersaults. Here are the ones that India's right wing ultra nationalist brahmanical Hindutva inspired BJP went through in the last one week:

- The RSS said the BJP can leave Hindutva agenda and go and befriend its so-called demi-secular allies once again. Sarcasm dripped in the article that RSS ideologue M G Vaidya wrote in the Marathi daily Tarun Bharat.
- L K Advani's soulmate and mouthpiece Sudheendra Kulkarni said the BJP lost because of excessive influence and interference of the RSS
- Everybody except Advani and Rajnath went to town saying Varun Gandhi was responsible for loss of many seats to the BJP since his hate speeches pushed away the middle class voters
- LK Advani made Arun Jaitley the Leader of the Opposition in Rajya Sabha; the rest of the BJP leadership spent the week sharpening knives for both Advani and Jaitley
- BJP vice president Yashwant Sinha resigned from all posts and said now the load was off his chest. In his resignation, he said there was a premium on failure.
- Jaswant Singh said there was no connection between results and rewards
- And Jaswant Singh dropped a bombshell saying he has never understood what the hell did Hindutva mean
- Arun Shourie said party leaders like Sudheendra Kulkarni and Arun Jaitley have no business to go about writing articles in newspapers about why the BJP lost when the party itself was yet to analyse the reasons for defeat
- Jaswant Singh and Yashwant Sinha both said there was never any analysis of why the party lost in 2004
- And Sushma Swaraj, just recently appointed by Advani as the Deputy Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, said the situation in the BJP was now like a volcano which could erupt any time and anything anyone says can become the proverbial spark
- Now party chief Rajnath Singh, who had tried to gag the leaders behind closed doors, had to go public with his strategy and officially issued the gag command. "Anyone saying anything in public against party leadership will face action," he said. No one stopped. Rajnath has stopped saying anything now.



While being in a highly selfdestructive mode, the BJP is hurtling into a dark pit and there is no one whose writ can run.

# RSS speaks Truth to BJP, Color is Deep Saffron



## See, who is silent!

At a time when even the most communal in the BJP are trying to unlearn some lessons of Hindutva and BJP allies have dumped it one by one, Punjab's ruling Akali Dal led by the father-son duo of Parkash Singh-Sukhbir Singh Badal remains tied to the apron strings of the saffron party. Naveen Patnaik dumped the BJP before the elections, Nitish Kumar kept his distance till he knew he was safely home and virtually everyone tried a line more moderate, the Akali Dal has maintained complete silence on the BJP's humiliating defeat and there is no murmur that the RSS and Hindutva ideology has done the BJP in. At one stage, the SGPC President Avtar Singh Makkar had said that the RSS was enemy number one of the Sikhs but after a gag order from the Badal Jr, he has not opened his mouth. The Akali Dal takes no umbrage at the BJP's formulation that the Sikhs are part of the larger Hindu samaj, the BJP in Punjab openly backs many self-styled godmen like the Noormehlia Ashutosh baba and defends Gurmit Ram Rahim but the Akali Dal pushes the entire issue under the carpet.

because "come what may, the Sangh isn't going to quit Hindutva".

Well, who did not know? The Sangh has been the fountainhead of hatred in India for so long that there is hardly a claimant to the crown in sight. Vaidya wrote: "The BJP hasn't been able to impress on peoples' mind the comingprehensive purport of Hindutva despite its rule at the Centre and in many states perhaps because they found it narrow-minded or they did not find it useful in ascending the throne of power."

But its parent RSS has refused to blink. RSS ideologue M G Vaidya chided the party publicly; in fact, he wrote an article virtually daring the BJP to try and dump Hindutva and see how "its umbilical cord with the RSS will automatically fall". He maintained this would not impact the RSS

the brahmanical levers of power so entrenched, it can swing around the country's politics once again given half a chance by fanning communalism, anti-Muslim feelings or pushing anti-minority agenda.

"This will have no adverse effect on the RSS. I feel those honouring the Hindutva ideology are in huge numbers. The only thing needed is to touch hearts. The response will be such that it will act as a source of strength and energy. But it should be done with honesty." So, the Babri Mosque demolition was an act of honesty, as were the attacks on Christians in Orissa or the genocide of Muslims in Gujarat!

Referring to the BJP vacillation on Hindutva, Vaidya pointed out that the "dilemma" has existed ever since Jana Sangh days. "In the 1980 elections, it was suggested that Bharatiya Jana Sangh be called Bharatiya Janata Party. The flag was also changed. The saffron part became two-third and the green part became one-third. Bharatiyatva and integrated humanism lagged behind and socialism came to the fore. Various formats of socialism, democratic and Gandhian, surfaced. The BJP chose the Gandhian version. Did that absolve it of the communalism charge? Did Muslims make a

beeline to join it," he wrote.

Obduracy is something that comes easy with a hate agenda in one's back pocket. Here is a defeated, trounced ideology but the first things the man wants to fix is the color of the BJP flag. He wants it saffron, he wants the agenda a straight "All For Hindu" style and he wants to go for a completely anti-Muslim stance. "After the 1984 poll stunner, the BJP again remembered Hindutva. The BJP kept growing and power started getting closer to the party. But it wasn't close enough to propel it to power. The party could have gained strength to win the elections on its own, but the party had no patience — the temptation of power was too strong. The BJP fell for it and left its core ideology again. In 2004, when it lost power, it was once again reminded of Hindutva. It was included in the 2009



The rising star after sinking the party, Arun Jaitley was chief strategist. After the BJP lost, he won the spoils of defeat.



manifesto. This, however, failed to impress people," he said.

At least the RSS is more honest than the BJP. It lives with the communalism animal, and is proud to proclaim it. The BJP wants to keep the communalism animal as a pet and tame it. The RSS is telling it no point in trying. Live with the beast, and the best way is to live in beastly ways. That is why the RSS is comfortable with Hindutva, while Jaswant Singh says he does not understand what it means, and Brajesh Mishra finds it an aberration.

Now some intellectuals feel the BJP has lost because it went back to Hindutva. Jaithirh Rao, Dhiraj Nayyar and Meghnad Desai have all advised in The Indian Express over the past few days that BJP should disengage itself from Hindutva. All these are neutral writers. But Swapan Dasgupta and Sudheendra Kulkarni are not known to be like them. They have also written that the BJP should look beyond Hindutva. My advice is that the BJP should really quit the Hindutva agenda. Its umbilical cord with the RSS will automatically fall."

Thank you, RSS, for at least telling us that Swapan Dasgupta and his ilk, often passing themselves off as journalists, are actually saffron flag carriers.

But he also had a poser: "If acceptance of the Sachar report were to attract Muslims, then why did Muslims reject Mulayam Singh and Lalu Yadav?" The conclusion? Reject Sachar, do not think of poor Muslims' welfare, dump the minority concerns and turn towards aggressive Hindutva.

BJP president Rajnath Singh, brought up in a completely communal culture of the RSS shakhas and ideology, was quick to respond that he would remain wedded to the core ideology of Hindutva for all times to come. "I want to put this bluntly that I still abide by the ideology of Hindutva which I have followed ever since I commenced my political career. And I will remain wedded to it for all times to come," he said.

So much for analysing the election results.

# Brajesh Mishra finds culprit: It is Varun, not BJP

There are two ways of ducking responsibility. One is to refuse to analyse the failure, the other is to make a deliberately far fetched and wrong analysis and then project it as the divine truth. Top BJP think tank Brijesh Mishra has gone for the latter. As the BJP grapples with the growing internal chorus questioning its failed strategy in the general elections, Mishra, former National Security Advisor and one of the closest aides of former Prime Minister Atal Bihari Vajpayee, has come out with the first categorical denunciation of Varun Gandhi's hate speech in Pilibhit saying it caused the "greatest amount of damage" to the party's electoral fortunes.

In a TV interview to The Indian Express newspaper's Editor-in-Chief Shekhar Gupta, Mishra, throwing to the winds the gag order issued by BJP president Rajnath Singh, said the BJP committed a mistake by not censuring Varun Gandhi's "repugnant" statements.

The right course for the BJP would have been to "completely dissociate itself from him and not give him a ticket," he said. Asked how Vajpayee would have handled the situation, he said, "He may have called him and advised him. But I am sure he would not have liked it."

Although not formally associated with the BJP, Mishra was considered extremely influential in the NDA government, mainly because of his proximity to Vajpayee which he continues to enjoy to this day. Underlining that the continuance of BJP as a major political party was good for the nation, Mishra put his critique in context. "I want the BJP to survive and thrive," he said. "This country

# BJP's deepening crisis

Nothing fails like failure, judging from the upheavals in the Bharatiya Janata Party following its worst electoral performance in two decades. A defeat on this scale was bound to lead to some discord but the profound unrest points to an existential crisis in a party whose claimed strengths have been its discipline and its rock-solid faith in Hindutva. Today these ideals appear under serious challenge, with dissidents rising in open rebellion against the leadership and questioning the mobilisational utility of Hindutva. At the centre of the storm are former External Affairs Minister Jaswant Singh and former Finance Minister Yashwant Sinha. Both have hit out at the leadership quartet of Lal Krishna Advani, Rajnath Singh, Sushma Swaraj, and Arun Jaitley. Significantly, the anger seems directed more at the last three than at Mr. Advani who was re-elected party leader in the Lok Sabha. The reason for this is twofold. Mr. Advani, who went into the election as the party's prime ministerial candidate, owned up responsibility for the defeat, although he was quickly



persuaded to stay on. Secondly, the dissidents know that the 80-year-old leader's re-appointment is a holding operation and that the real jockeying for power will start later this year when a successor will be chosen.

Naturally, last week's key decisions — the appointment of Ms Swaraj as deputy leader in the Lok Sabha and Mr. Jaitley as leader in the Rajya Sabha, with Mr. Rajnath Singh continuing as party chief — have raised hackles in some quarters. Mr. Jaswant Singh and Mr. Sinha, who lead the BJP's middle rung, feel outmanoeuvred by the 'gang of three' who seem to have promoted the impression that one among them would lead the

party into the 16th general election. But there is more to this churning than the personal ambitions of a handful of malcontents. The BJP's rout has brought home the brutal truth that Hindutva — and by extension the Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh — has little purchase among today's young voters. That the RSS has been pitching for a younger leadership underscores the irony. The BJP's biggest problem is the stifling relationship in which it is trapped with its ideological and 'social' mentor. Sections of the party want a rethink on the association — Mr. Jaswant Singh has gone so far as to claim that he did not know what Hindutva meant — yet predictably the leadership has squashed speculation through loud reiterations of loyalty to the command centre. With the revolt gathering force, the party can take one of two courses: take the RSS bull by its horns and move away from the disruptive influence of Hindutva — or fall back on its Jana Sangh pre-history of ideological obscurantism, isolation, and political stagnation. (From the editorial in English daily, The Hindu, dated June 16, 2009)

unnecessarily attacking Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, saying the strategy only helped in consolidating support for Congress and the Prime Minister. "By calling the Prime Minister weak, more publicity was given to him than he himself could arrange. It also resulted, for the first time, in the Congress announcing that so and so would be its Prime Ministerial candidate. This benefited the Congress and gave strength to Manmohan Singh," he said.

Mishra said instead of running a highly negative campaign, the BJP should have concentrated in telling people how it could have performed better than the UPA government. "The negativism was not liked. The BJP could have run a positive campaign and concentrated on telling people that it could have done much better on biji, sadak, paani issues," he said.



"Top BJP leadership had not moved away from that moderate agenda but in these elections, however, the impression went out through the voices of Varun Gandhi and Narendra Modi that the party stood for a very strident form of Hindutva which was exclusivist in nature."

needs the BJP. It needs two national parties. Otherwise if BJP were to, God forbid, disappear, then within four to five years, regional forces will come close to the fore and we will again be faced with very very unstable situation," he said, adding that not just the BJP but its ideological parent, the RSS, too, needed to reassess its strategies and bring moderation in the ranks.

Mishra said the BJP had come to power, with the help of allies, only by moderating its agenda and people had accepted that. He said the top leadership of the party had not moved away from that moderate agenda but in these elections, however, the impression went out — through the voices of Varun Gandhi and Narendra Modi — that the party stood for a very strident form of Hindutva which was exclusivist in nature.

"I am absolutely clear that the Varun episode did the greatest amount of damage to the BJP...his speech and his behaviour...The BJP should have totally moved away from him," he said, adding that such statements did not go down well with the masses. "The kind of statements Varun Gandhi made...people were completely

