

## Course correction – Judgment day

### Asaram's rise and fall is reflective of the lives of some self-styled godmen of our times.

In sentencing Asaram Bapu to imprisonment for the rest of his natural life for the rape of a 16-year-old girl in 2013, a Special Court in Jodhpur has **reinvigorated** faith in the criminal justice system. Two aides who facilitated the crime have been sentenced to 20 years in prison. At a time when sexual offences against women and minor girls are being reported with **benumbing** regularity, a **verdict** of this sort reinforces public trust. Holding powerful and influential heads of religious institutions is not easy in the country, given the wide public support and political **patronage** they enjoy. Fortunately, neither the investigators nor the **prosecutors** in the case of the 77 year old Asumal Harpalani, who named himself Asaram, seem to have been overawed by his large following or **intimidated** by his **belligerent** supporters. High-ranking police officers received letters and phone calls threatening them and their families with **dire** consequences, and witnesses were killed or attacked in the course of the investigation and trial. Against this **back drop**, it took courage and determination for the victim and her family to seek justice. The facts are chilling. The victim's parents, who were Asaram's devotees, were asked to take her from the ashram's residential school at Chhindwara to the godman's home in Manai, near Jodhpur, **ostensibly** to **exorcise** 'evil spirits' that had possessed her. The parents were asked to leave, and the girl had to be alone with him. She was sexually assaulted and threatened against speaking out. Fortunately, her father managed to get a police complaint registered in New Delhi. It was later transferred to Jodhpur.

It is also a sign of the times that every time the final verdict is set to be delivered in a criminal case involving a self-styled godman, the State concerned has to be on high alert and massive police deployment is required to **quell** possible trouble by followers. After the violence and **mayhem** that **gripped** Panchkula town in the immediate aftermath of the sentencing of Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh last year in a rape case, this time the police took no chances, and the judgment was delivered in **makeshift** courtroom in a prison. There is nothing more **mortifying** to the **devout** than witnessing jet-age-godmen betraying the trust of their followers. Asaram fits into the template of the self-styled godman : graduating from running a liquor business to peddling spiritual succour, leading a lavish lifestyle, expanding into business and the enjoying the patronage of the rich and powerful, and, ultimately, misusing his power to exploit his unquestioning devotees. Special Judge Madhusudan Sharma has underscored how the accused had broken the victim's trust in him. Verdicts such as these are needed at a time when sections of society see **tainted** men as guardians of India's age old spiritual tradition.

### WORD LIST

1. **Reinvigorated** : (refresh)

Synonym : enliven, modernize, rejuvenate, renew, renovate, restore, revitalize, revive, stimulate

2. **Aides** : (Person who helps, assistant)  
Synonym : abettor, adjutant, attendant, crew, crewman, deputy, helper, lieutenant
3. **Benumb** : (desensitize)  
Synonym : blunt, chill, cumber, daze, numb, stun, deaden
4. **Verdict** : (law judgement)  
Synonym : answer, award, conclusion, decision, decree, finding, opinion, ruling, sentence, deduction
5. **Patronage** : (support of a cause)  
Synonym : aegis, auspices, backing, encouragement, financing, sponsorship, subsidy
6. **Prosecutor** : (person who checks thoroughly)  
Synonym : agent, analyst, auditor, detective, examiner, inspector, police, researcher
7. **Overawed** : (influence)  
Synonym : affect, awe, excite, faze, inspire, sway, thrill, touch
8. **intimidated** : (frightened)  
Synonym : browbeaten, bullied, cowed, daunted, terrified, afraid
9. **Belligerent** : (nasty, argumentative)  
Synonym : aggressive, antagonistic, bellicose, combative, contentious, hostile, quarrelsome, fighting
10. **Dire** : (urgent, crucial, terrible, ominous)  
Synonym : acute, critical, desperate, drastic, extreme, burning.
11. **Backdrop** : (setting for something)  
Synonym : scenery, scrim, décor, landscape, spectacle, terrain.
12. **Ostensibly** : (apparently)  
Synonym : evidently, officially, seemingly, supposedly, externally.
13. **Exorcise** : (free from evil spirit)  
Synonym : drive out, dismiss, expel, purge, purify, remove, cast out.
14. **Quell** : (defeat, suppress, alleviate, calm)  
Synonym : annihilate, conquer, crush, extinguish, overcome, put down, quench, silence, stamp out, stifle, subdue
15. **Mayhem** : (chaos, confusion)  
Synonym : anarchy, commotion, destruction, havoc, fracas, pandemonium, violence, disorder, trouble
16. **Gripped** : (hold tightly)  
Synonym : Clutch, grasp, clasp, clench
17. **Makeshift** : (temporary)  
Synonym : alternative, expedient, make-do, stopgap, substitute, temp, throwaway.
18. **Mortifying** : (embarrass)  
Synonym : annoy, chagrin, confound, deflate, disgrace, displease, humiliate, subdue, vex.
19. **Devout** : (sincerely believing ; devoted)  
Synonym : adoring, ardent, faithful, fervent, passionate, pious, religious, sincere, adherent, deep
20. **Tainted** : (spoiled)  
Synonym : contaminated, corrupted, dirty, infected, polluted, rotten, decayed, impaired, diseased

## Course correction – Unpersuasive

### The Centre's arguments for its stand against elevating Justice K.M. Josephs are flawed

The Centre's objections to the **elevation** of Uttarakhand High court chief Justice K.M. Joseph to the Supreme Court are **unpersuasive** and raise **suspicion** whether his appointment is being blocked for **extraneous** reasons. Basically, there are two broad reasons **proffered** for **freezing** the appointment. First, that Justice Joseph is much too junior in the all India list of judges, with 11 Chief Justices ranked above him. Second, that there is an imbalance in the regional representation in the Supreme Court, something that his appointment will only skew by adding another judge from Kerala. Neither of these reasons holds good. Seniority is not the sole consideration while elevating a High Court judge to the apex court. Inter se seniority is a consideration when a **puisne** judge is made a Chief Justice, but it is not **sacrosanct** in elevation to the Supreme Court. There are quite a few instances of senior judges and Chief Justices being overlooked in favour of a more deserving candidate of outstanding merit. Some of these decisions may **evoke** criticism, but there is no laid down norm under which the Supreme Court **collegium** should draw fresh talent for the highest court only in the order in which an all India seniority list of High court judges has been drawn up. That merit is and has been a factor in selection addresses the other argument, that Kerala will have two Supreme Court judges were Justice Joseph to be appointed. There was a time when Kerala had three judges in the **apex court**; also, other courts have been routinely 'over-represented'.

While it is desirable that regional imbalances and under representation are not **glaring**, this cannot be **cited** as a factor to shoot down the candidature of a person otherwise qualified and validly recommended. Not surprisingly, the Centre's decision has been accompanied by suspicions and allegations that Justice Joseph is being targeted for his 2016 judgment **quashing** the **proclamation** of President's rule in Uttarakhand. What happens from now on will depend on how the collegium reacts. In the light of its strong recommendation that Justice Joseph is "more deserving and suitable in all respects than other chief Justices and senior puisne judges", it will be no surprise if it **reiterates** the recommendation. Then the government is bound to abide by the collegium's decision. In that event, the Centre should not **prolong** the controversy further by seeking to block his elevation again. There is a strong perception, even within the judiciary, that the government is much too slow when it comes to approving judicial appointments. A conflict between the judiciary and the executive over particular appointments is not in the public interest. Besides allowing Justice Joseph's appointment to go through, efforts must be made to finalise a revised memorandum to procedure for appointments so that the case of one judge does not turn into a **flashpoint** for a sustained conflict between the two branches.

**WORD LIST**

1. **Elevation** : (height; high ground) (advancement, promotion)  
Synonym : altitude, ascent, mountain, activity, boost, eminence, levitation, platform, top, roof
2. **Unpersuasive** : (feeble, weak)  
Synonym : flimsy, faltering, faulty, flabby, inadequate, ineffective inefficient, unconvincing
3. **Suspicion** : (doubt) (hint, trace)  
Synonym : Conjecture, cynicism, distrust, impression, jealousy, misgiving, mistrust, notion, skepticism, uncertainty, wariness, chariness, dubiety
4. **Extraneous** : (unneeded; irrelevant)  
Synonym : additional, immaterial, incidental, nonessential, superfluous, supplementary, unconnected, unnecessary, unrelated, accidental, extra, foreign, impertinent, inadmissible.
5. **Proffered** : (suggest, offer)  
Synonym : Propound, extend, gift, give, hand, pose, present, proposition, set forth, broach, affirm, introduce, invite, prefer.
6. **Freezing** : (very cold)  
Synonym : biting, chilly, frigid, frosty, glacial, icy, numbing, polar, wintry, arctic, chilled
7. **Puisne** : (in the UK and some other countries)  
(denoting a judge of a superior court inferior in rank to chief justice.
8. **Sacrosanct** : (Sacred)  
Synonym : revered, venerated, blessed, consecrated, divine, godly, hollowed, holy, pious, pure, religious, saintly, spiritual.
9. **Evoke** : (induce, stimulate)  
Synonym : arouse, conjure, elicit, invoke, provoke, recall, awaken, induce, evolve, evince.
10. **Collegium** : ( a group in which each member has approximately equal power and authority.)
11. **Apex court** : (Supreme court)
12. **Glaring** : (obvious, unconcealed, bright, dazzling is flashy)  
Synonym : blatant, conspicuous, egregious, flagrant, noticeable, outrageous, brazen, gross, manifest.
13. **Cited** : (note, quote)  
Synonym : allege, allude to, indicate, mention, name, offer, point out, present, recount, refer to, repeat, specify, spell out, tell.
14. **Quash** : (destroy, defeat) (nullify, cancel)  
Synonym : crush, put down, quell, repress, squash, suppress, beat, extinguish, overcome, quench, subdue.
15. **Proclamation** : (advertisement, announcement)  
Synonym : decree, edict, manifesto, notification, promulgation, pronouncement, publication, broadcast, declaration.

16. **Reiterates** : (say or do again)  
Synonym : echo, renew, repeat, restate, ditto, iterate, recap, recapitulate, rehash.
17. **Prolong** : (extend, draw out)  
Synonym : continue, delay, drag out, lengthen, perpetuate, protract, stall.
18. **Flashpoint** : (a place, event, or time at which violence or hostility flares up).  
Example : "the conflict reached the flashpoint last year)  
Synonym : crucial moment, turning point.

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### **SOME IMPORTANT PHRASAL VERB**

1. **Block off**

Meaning : To separate using a barrier.

Sentence : The police **blocked off** the street after the explosion.

2. **Brush up on**

Meaning : To improve, refresh one's knowledge of something

Sentence : I must **brush up on** my French before going to Paris next month.

3. **Come forward**

Meaning : To present oneself

Sentence : Has the owner of the winning lotto ticket **come forward**?

4. **Deal with**

Meaning : To handle, take care of (problem, situation)

Sentence : Catherine is not good at **dealing with** stress.

5. **Dress up**

Meaning : wear elegant clothes

Sentence : Their wedding gave us a chance to **dress up** and get out of the house.

6. **Account for**

Meaning : To explain, give a reason

Sentence : I hope you can **account for** the time you were out!

7. **Allow for**

Meaning : To take into consideration

Sentence : We need to **allow for** unexpected charges along the way.

**8. Back down**

Meaning : To withdraw, concede defeat

Sentence : Local authorities **backed down** on their threats to build on that part of the beach.

**9. Hang out**

Meaning : To spend time in a particular place or with a group of friends

Sentence : Which pub does the team **hang out** at after the game?

**10. Hurry up**

Meaning : To be quick, act speedily

Sentence : **Hurry up** and finish your lunch or we'll miss the train.

**11. Get away**

Meaning : To escape

Sentence : I think we should **get away** for the weekend.

**12. Get rid of**

Meaning : To eliminate

Sentence : Please **get rid of** that old t-shirt. It's so ragged.

**13. Move in**

Meaning : To arrive in a new home or office

Sentence : Did you hear? Our new neighbours are **moving in** this afternoon.

**14. Pass out**

Meaning : To faint

Sentence : He didn't drink enough water so he **passed out** at the end of the race.

**15. Put out**

Meaning : To extinguish

Sentence : The fire fighters were able to **put out** fire in ten minutes.

**16. Join in**

Meaning : To participate

Sentence : Yes David, you can **join in** the discussion any time you like.

**17. Kick off**

Meaning : To begin, start

Sentence : The rugby match **kicked off** at 3 o'clock.

**18. Look for**

Meaning : To try to find something

Sentence : Harry went to the shop to **look for** a new computer.

**19. Take care of**

Meaning : To look after

Sentence : Please **take care of** my cat when I'm away.

**20. Tell off**

Meaning : To reprimand/criticize severely

Sentence : The coach **told her off** for not trying hard enough.

**21. Watch out**

Meaning : To be careful

Sentence : Watch out! There's a dog in the road.

**22. Run away**

Meaning : To escape from a place or suddenly leave

Sentence : He **ran away** from home and joined the circus.

**23. Set up**

Meaning : To start a business

Sentence : They **set up** their own company when they were still in high school.

**24. Show off**

Meaning : To brag or want to be admired

Sentence : He's such a **show off**. He has to tell everybody about his new computer.

**25. Use up**

Meaning : To finish a product (so that there's none left)

Sentence : Your parents **used up** all the coffee!

**26. Take on**

Meaning : To hire or engage staff

Sentence : I hear they're **taking on** extra staff for this event.

27. **Show up**

Meaning : To appear/arrive

Sentence : I don't think she'll **show up** tonight. Her daughter is sick.

28. **Run into**

Meaning : To meet by accident or unexpectedly (also: bump into)

Sentence : I'm so glad I **ran into** you. I need to ask you something.

29. **Pass away**

Meaning : To die

Sentence : Your grandfather **passed away** peacefully in his sleep last night.

30. **Leave out**

Meaning : To omit, not mention

Sentence : Please check your form again and make sure nothing is **left out**.

*"Every day do something  
that will inch you  
closer to a better tomorrow."*