



Ambedkar Times

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Ambedkar on the Question of Indian Nationalism

Invited Editorial Article

Indian renaissance, freedom movement and the question of nationalism are deeply interconnected. Indian renaissance, in fact, provided base for the articulation of the narrative of freedom movement as well as the question of nationalism surrounded by multicultural ethos and socio-spiritual philosophical discourses of varied religions, faiths and sects that have flourished over centuries on the vast sub-continent size what traditionally and aptly been called Bharat. The vexed question of nationalism was not only debated along religious lines as it was in the case of political thought of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan, Muhammad Iqbal and Muhammad Ali Jinnah; differences of opinions between the moderate and the extremist sections of the Indian National Congress further complicated its multi-corners contest. The seminal debate on Indian nationalism was equally sharpened by the political thoughts of Swami Vivekananda, Bal Gangadhar Tilak, Sri Aurobindo, Bhai Parmananda, Vinayak Damodar Savarkar, Keshav Valiram Hedgewar and Shyama Prasad Mookerjee. Apart from the mainstream political thinking, specifically from Hindu and Muslim perspectives, there exists, though less emphasised, a third perspective, informally designated as perspective from below. This perspective from below – Lower-caste-Bahujan perspective – had its roots in the social-egalitarian philosophy of Jyotirao Phule, DR. B.R. Ambedkar and E.V. Ramasamy Periyar. A closer reading of the narratives of various Adi movements of South India and Ad Dharm movement of Punjab, led by Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia, provided yet another version of the Indian nationalism – somewhat more similar to that of the perspective from below. However, in the present article, we will confine ourselves only to the views of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar was an iconoclastic social reformer who, at the very formative years of his career, realized what it meant to be an Untouchable and how a struggle against untouchability could be launched. The social-reform movement of the caste Hindus could not win him to its side because of his existential understanding of the horror of untouchability. The issue of untouchability, for social reformers, was a mere problem. This problem was exterior to them in the sense that it affected only the Untouchables but not them. They themselves had never experienced the sinister blows of untouchability. Though they were sympathetic to the cause of lower castes, they belonged to the camp that allegedly imposed this inhuman

system of social segregation.

Dr Ambedkar's analysis of the origins of the untouchability and his action plans for its eradication were different from the approach and practice of the caste Hindu social reformers. What distinguished him from the other social reformers was that he

smashed the mythological basis of untouchability and laid bare its social and economic roots.

He built a strong case against the thesis of birth-based untouchability, which forced untouchability on those kept outside the caste system and made their life hell. He exhorted

tyranny and "a reformer who defies society, is a much more courageous man than a politician, who defies government".



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Ambedkar was of the kind who defied society. In the beginning of his social-reform

crusade, he tried to get respect and equality for the lower castes through reforms within the social set-up of Hinduism. He continued his struggle for empowerment of the lower castes by seeking changes within the fold of Hinduism till 1935. When he realized that the liberation of lower castes within Hinduism was impossible, his scathing criticism and tirade against Hinduism began. Ultimately, he became convinced that lower castes could seek empowerment only outside Hinduism, hence, his conversion to Buddhism. For Ambedkar, lower castes liberation was the foremost issue and he emphasized that lower castes themselves have to come forward for its realization. Thus, Ambedkar provided a subaltern perspective to see through the chameleon of Indian caste-ridden social set-up and the ways to guard the interests of the Lower castes.

Dr B.R. Ambedkar made strenuous efforts to transform the hierarchical structures of Indian society for the restoration of equal rights and justice to the oppressed lot by building a critique from within the structure of Indian society. His was not a theoretical attempt but a practical approach to the problems of untouchability. He tried to resolve this perennial problem of Indian society not by making appeals to the conscience of those who religiously practised untouchability or begging them to transform their outlook but by relentless struggle against the socio-religious and politico-economic structure, where he thought the roots of the untouchability lay. He concluded that until and unless the authority of the Dharmashastras, which provided divine sanction to the system of discrimination based on caste, was shaken, the eradication of untouchability could not be realized.

It is in this context that Dr Ambedkar's views on Indian nationalism needs special attention. His views on Indian nationalism are in
(Contd. on next page)



looked at the evil of untouchability from below, from a vantage point of the socially excluded and the oppressed. This perspective led him to think differently from the ones who belonged to the dominant stream of social and political thought of his time. His major works – *Castes in India: Their Mechanism, Genesis and Development*; *Annihilation of Caste*; *The Untouchables: Who Were They and Why They Became Untouchables?*; *Who Were the Shudras among others* – are testimony to this perspective and his independent, original and rational thinking. He

its victims to oppose it tooth and nail. He said, "It is disgraceful to live at the cost of one's self respect. Self-respect is the most vital factor in life. Without it, man is a mere cipher. To live worthily with self-respect one has to overcome difficulties. It is out of hard and ceaseless struggle alone that one derives strength, confidence and recognition." He drew a distinction between merely living and living worthily. For living a worthy life, Ambedkar said, society must be based on liberty, equality and fraternity. For Ambedkar, social tyranny was more oppressive than political

Ambedkar on the Question of Indian Nationalism

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stark opposition to the dominant discourse of nationalism represented by Mahatma Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru; Hindu nationalism represented by Raja Rammohan Roy, B.G. Tilak, M.S. Golwalkar and Shyama Prasad Mukherjee; and Communist-secular-socialist nationalism represented by M.N. Roy, R. P. Dutt, T. Nagi Reddy and E.M.S. Namboodiripad. His views on Indian nationalism are not only distinct but also original. Hindu nationalism in essence aims at strengthening the brahmanical supremacy in post-colonial India. The communist-secular-social nationalism had the abolition of class as objective, but its ideologues, like that of the Hindu nationalism, also belonged to the upper-castes and were myopic to the question of ending the sufferings of the lower castes.

Dr Ambedkar's conception of nationalism articulated and synthesized the national perceptions and aspirations of the downtrodden. It constructed an anti-Hindu and anti-brahmanical discourse of Indian nationalism. It aimed at establishing a

casteless and classless society where no one would be discriminated against on the basis of birth and occupation. Within the lower castes-bahujan framework of Indian nationalism, Ambedkar built a critique of pre-colonial Brahmanism and the asymmetrical social set-up, the graded caste system, that was central to it, under which the higher up you belonged in the caste hierarchy the more unproductive and exploitative you were.

Ambedkar's understanding of the question of the identity and existence of the nation was based on his incisive analysis of the oppressive character of Brahmanism that pervaded a society built around the caste system. Since the dominant Hindu discourse of Indian nationalism remained indifferent towards removal of the caste system; and the economic analysis of the communist secular socialist school also failed to highlight the issue of caste in its mechanical interpretation of class, Ambedkar – himself an Untouchable and victim of untouchability – formulated his own framework from the

perspective of the Untouchables for the understanding of the system of caste and untouchability. The foundations of lower castes-bahujan nationalism lie in this framework developed by Ambedkar. It aimed at restructuring Indian society into a casteless and classless society – an egalitarian Sangha. Annihilation of caste was its central theme. Caste for Ambedkar was nothing but Brahmanism incarnate. He wrote, "Brahmanism is the poison which has spoilt Hinduism." Ambedkar realized that any form of nationalism whose roots were steeped in Hinduism could not bring relief to lower castes. Any discourse of nationalism bereft of annihilation of caste was just not acceptable to him. The agenda of annihilation of caste was so important to him that it became a central point of his struggle against colonial rule. In the first Round Table Conference, he minced no words in criticizing the British government for its failure to undo untouchability.

Swaraj without extinction of caste had no meaning for Ambedkar. In his undelivered speech to the Jat-

Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore, he said, "In the fight for swaraj you fight with the whole nation on your side. In this, you have to fight against the whole nation and that too your own. But it is more important than swaraj. There is no use having swaraj, if you cannot defend it. More important than the question of defending swaraj is the question of defending Hindus under the swaraj. In my opinion, only when the Hindu society becomes a casteless society that it can hope to have strength enough to defend itself. Without such internal strength, swaraj for Hindus may turn out to be only a step towards slavery." Thus, it was Ambedkar's subaltern perspective, which distinguished his conception of swaraj from that of the protagonists of the various shades of the national freedom movement. In his editorial in the Bahishkrit Bharat, Ambedkar wrote on 29 July 1927, "If Tilak had been born among the Untouchables, he would not have raised the slogan 'Swaraj is my birthright', but he would have raised the slogan 'Annihilation of untouchability is my birthright'."

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia's Contributions towards the Emancipation and Empowerment of Lower Castes

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-In-Chief:

Ambedkar Times (English) & Desh Doaba (Punjabi)

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was one of the pioneers of Scheduled Castes struggle who worked deeply for the annihilation of the oppressive caste system. Through his innovative methods of struggle and exceptional organisational capabilities, he brought forth the hidden strength of his fellow community inmates for their liberation and socio-cultural as well as economic empowerment. He began his struggle towards upward social mobility while working for his livelihood and struggling for the liberation of his motherland - as a part of the Gadhar movement - in the US at the same time when Dr B.R Ambedkar was studying there for higher education on a fellowship from Maharaja of Baroda and preparing himself for a larger struggle against the system of caste and untouchability back home. After returning to his home town in Doaba Punjab in 1925, after spending 16 years abroad, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia saw to his surprise that the social setup as he experienced 16 years before leaving for the US did not change at all. It remained intact and still stared into eyes with its poisonous fangs of social oppression. It was also the time when the Adi movements in South India were building up pressure against caste structures. It was also the time Dr B.R Ambedkar was also preparing himself to launch his lifelong struggle for the annihilation of caste from the Indian society.

In Punjab, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia took Ad Dharm movement to the door steps of his people and built a formidable grassroots Dalit movement



leading to social consciousness among the so-called lowest of the low castes people of the hierarchical society. A time came when Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia extended full support to the struggle of Dr B.R Ambedkar during his tirade against M.K. Gandhi's opposition to the demand of Communal Award for the Scheduled Castes during London Round Table Conferences and later on after the grant of the his fast unto death by against it.

Dr Ambedkar and Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia remained thoroughly involved in their respective struggles for Dalit emancipation and empowerment till their last breath and let behind them a rich legacy of Dalit consciousness and struggle. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia lived almost two and a half decades more after the passing away of Babasaheb Dr B.R Ambedkar on December 6, 1956. He came forward once again to re-lead the Ad Dharm movement started by his namesake Mr. Mangu Ram Jaspal in the 1970s. He gave his people their forgotten heroes, Sants, cultural heritage and separate religion (Ad Dharm). Under his able leadership the SCs of Punjab contested twice the Provincial elections before Independence and won almost all the reserved 8 seats for the SCs.

Read more <http://www.ambedkar-times.com>

What is first, Economic progress or conversion? I will prefer conversion to economic reform. Untouchability is a permanent obstacle in your path of progress. And unless you remove it, your path cannot be smooth and without conversion, this hurdle cannot be removed. - Dr. BR Ambedkar

The Bits and Pieces – As I Please

Mala Ke Teen Moti – I heard of a pamphlet issued by Pritam Ramdasपुरी, a staunch Ambedkarite and a poet of standing and also one of my fellow BootanMandians but could not lay my hand to read it. Now my friend and a fellow BootanMandian, Ram Lal Dass has reissued - Mala Ke Teen Moti with his commentary as a critique and he thoughtfully sent me a copy of it. Mala Ke Teen Moti was first issued by Ambedkar Study Circle in December, 1980. Ram Lal Dass who has edited the piece informed that Pritam Ramdasपुरी was a scholar of Urdu and Persian and knew the English language fairly as well. One of his Persian laced Nazam on Babasaheb Ambedkar which he had the honour to recite in front of the icon at a pub-

concluded his analytical commentary by saying; Babasaheb revived Buddhism with a view to reform the society of the ills of the main-stream Hinduism and 'One of the branches of Boddhism (Bodhibriksh) flourished in India as 'Sant Sampardhya' (Bhakti Movement) in which Guru Ravidass shined like the Sun. The crux of the teaching and path of all the three great personalities – Gautama Buddha, Guru Ravidass and Babasaheb Ambedkar was service of the humanity particularly of the depressed and oppressed segments of the society'. Let us hope the message of Pritam Ramdasपुरी is understood in its right perspective and the oppressed and depressed that is dalits get united, sooner the better, to realize the lofty

ideals of establishing a casteless society and equitable world order at large. By following Mala Ke Teen Moti, we can get and realize true freedom in the year of 75th anniversary of India's independence. Guru Ravidass rightly said in his Vani:

पराधीन का दीन क्या ? पराधीन बेदीन;
खदिस पराधीन को; सब ही समझे हीन

Dalits of Punjab - a Divided House – Much has been written and more remains in the pipeline about the role, weight-age and importance of dalits in the politics, particularly electoral politics, of India. The position has come full circle of the affect and efficacy of the salient feature of populous and functional democracy – 'One vote - one value' as enshrined in

the constitution of India. But the intended and desired dividend of this cardinal principle has been negated both by the vested machinations to keep dalits subjugated and also by the gullibility of dalits themselves to fall prey to these machinations. It is true not only for Punjab alone but for the entire, caste ridden, country and the society at large in spite of the 'empowering' provisions of 'reservations' etc. But I will focus on Punjab alone in view of the forthcoming assembly elections likely to be held early next year, 2022.

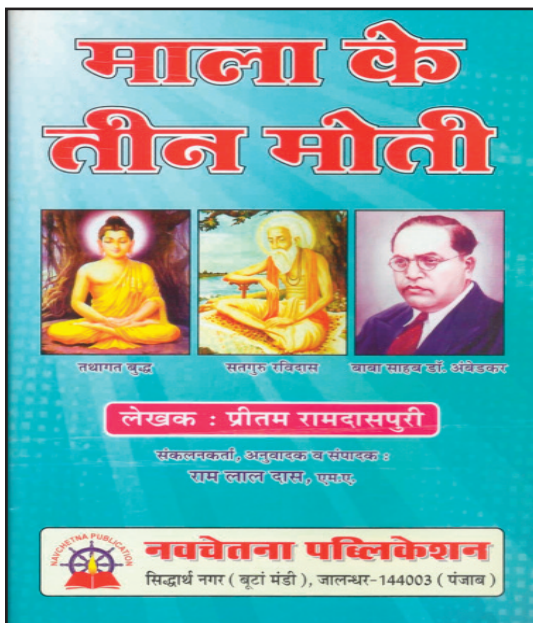
Punjab has about 35% share in the Punjab demographic count of total population of about 3 crores. It may be surprising to note that in the last 7 decades after the first general election held in 1952, no Scheduled Caste could become the Chief Minister of Punjab till recently in September, 2021 when Charanjit Singh Channi was cosmetically made the first CM that too by fluke to make some brownie points by the Congress Party in the wake of internal feuds to occupy the hot seat of power in Chandigarh by the Upper caste Hindus or Sikhs. Ambedkar's vision to gain access to the corridors of power for dalits by constitutional and democratic means and Kanshi Ram's pragmatic approach to demand a due share in the power structures under the doctrine of 'Jis Ki Jitni Sankhya Bhari; Untni Uski Hissedar' are getting roots, it seems, and ground situation is changing accordingly, slowly

but steadily. All political parties are falling on each other to encash the cheques of power on the dalit vote bank – Congress Party has shown the way by appointing Charanjit Singh Channi as CM though for a limited period in the run up to elections early in a few months time, SAD and BSP have joined hands with the promise to have a dalit as the Deputy CM, AAP too which already has a dalit, Harpal Singh Cheema as Leader of the Opposition, will appoint a dalit as a Deputy CM, BJP has already announced that, if they come to power, they will have a dalit as CM. Let us watch what stance the newly floated party, Punjab Lok Congress of Captain Amrinder Singh, takes on the issue. The scenario is changing and it must

share in the population, is playing a second fiddle to Akali Dal in Punjab. New political outfits claiming to be the flag bearers of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Manyawar Kanshi Ram, like Azad Samaj Party of Chandra Shekhar Azad among others, are further compounding the confusion. Dalits are a divided lot as Ad-dharmis, Buddhists, Mahazabis, Kabirpanthis, Balmikis even on spiritual and religious front.



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lic rally on October 27, 1951 at Bootan Mandi in Jalandhar, as given and explained by Ram Lal Dass, was Pritam Ramdasपुरी's excellent recital in reverence to the leader – Hindostan Ko Hasti-e-Ambedkar Pe Naaz Hai. It is a sample to assess the acumen of Pritam Ramdasपुरी Sahib as a literary person. I considered Ram Lal a hardcore zealot, if not irrational, Buddhist (no offence is intended as Ram Lal is one of my close friends) but his assertions in the commentary made on the Mala Ke Teen Moti have set the position in its perspective. Pritam Ramdasपुरी was an intellectual with a wide open approach to address the community matters. His thesis in Mala Ke Teen Moti is appreciable as he tended to reconcile the differing views of dalits on Babasaheb's conversation to Buddhism. Some of the self seekers, with a view to save their own positions on both the sides (both followers of Guru Ravidass and neo-Buddhists), adopted rigid positions which are detrimental to the much needed unity not only among dalits but also societal fraternity visualized in the constitution of India. Mala Ke Teen Moti was an attempt to bridge the gap and provide cohesion and also momentum to the caravan of Babaseb Ambedkar by bringing Tathagat Budh, Satguru Ravidass and Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar on one page, keeping with the crux of their thought and philosophy of bring about Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity in the society. Ram Lal Dass has rightly



change as visualized by our leaders. Ghalib said, "Rang Layegi Hamari Fakamasti Ek Din".

The disturbing factor is disunity and blurred vision of the current dalit leadership and political players. The opponents, let us be candid, the proponent of status quo are exploiting the situation by practicing the Kautilya Neeti – Sham, Daam, Dand, Bhed - to negate the dictum of 'One Vote : One Value' and engage dalits in the structures of power as equal partners. But the dictates of 'real-politic' may not permit it to happen. Dalits ought to do it themselves by getting united and standing up for their due presence in the corridors of power. We should not be oblivious of the fact that it is easier said than done. Punjab has 34 reserved seats in the 117 strong Assembly but they don't have any voice as they are fragmented on party lines. No clear answer to address this question appears to be in sight as long as the political reservation is in place. It is a knotty issue. Political reservation has lost its purpose, to my mind. It may be abolished. The country, both the upper castes and dalits, would know as to where do they stand and where have we reached in bringing about social, economic and political cohesion in the society as stipulated in the constitution. Accordingly, political strategies would be made to meet the challenges of the future. The situation has come to such a pass that BSP, a party said to be of dalits with 35%

The situation has further resulted in more divisive tendencies by the influence of Ravidassia/Ad-dharmi/Chamar (this terminology has been used to explain the point and not for any other reason or motivation) spiritual Deras, Satsang Beas, Nirankaris, Insaan - Ram-Rahim-Singh, to name a few, where the core of their following comes from dalit communities. It suits the main stream parties like Congress, Akalis and BJP to keep dalits divided. Obviously, these political parties and established social and cultural organizations, like RSS and SGPC, are under no pressure to re-visit the issue. Unfortunately, in-spite of much needed awakening, dalit leadership and the general masses are still blissfully silent. It is a real problem which is required to be addressed head-on to meet the challenges of the future. In this regard, the dalit civil society, intellectuals, academicians, community activists, students and the spiritual Deras, to my mind, need to come forward, act and deliver to unite dalits under one umbrella, the umbrella of Babasaheb Ambedkar, seek and solicit the cooperation of liberal elements in the main stream of the society to snatch reins of power from the vested interests in a true democratic spirit – One Vote: One Value. I am reminded of a poetic expression which I heard as a young student in 1960s:

ਮੇਰੀ ਗੱਲ ਸੁਣ ਅਛੁਤ ਭਰਾਬਾ ਬੇ;
ਇਕ ਦਰ ਦਾ ਹੋਕੇ ਬਹਾਜ਼ਿ।



D. C. Ahir

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi youth, who had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again".

Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he,

however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for



taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake, however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his

family as no letters could be written for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower.

The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and



sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion.

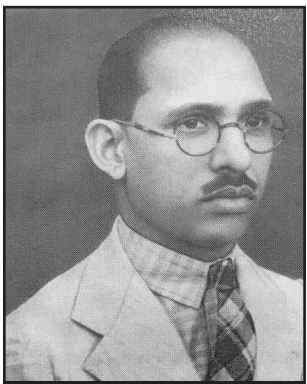
Both believed in self-help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever.

The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis.

This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Juergensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The Death of My Wife

It looked as if my wife, Lakshmi Devi, had some sort of premonition of her departure and was therefore winding up her affairs of life. The children were grown up now. The elder daughter, Kamlesh, had been married to an Indian Foreign Service boy, Vidya Bhushan Soni, and was well settled; and the eldest son, Ramesh, had entered service. The middle one had gone to New Zealand and settled there. The second daughter, Sudesh, had been engaged to an Indian Revenue Service boy, Yoginder Pal.

Two houses had been built in Chandigarh under her strict and constant supervision, and this caused her great mental and physical strain. Incidentally, the second house was built after the first one had been sold. The money for the houses came from government as loans. She had to attend to the household duties singlehandedly as we could not afford to engage a servant. Our financial position throughout remained shaky and sometimes precarious. It needs to be mentioned that she would keep on reminding me off and on that nothing tainted should find its way into the house, as it would have an unhealthy and harmful effect on the family, particularly the children.

And this admirably helpful attitude of her enabled me to keep my vow of leading a clean and straightforward life in the performance of my official duties. Out of the salary, more than one-third would go toward the payment of monthly instalments of the loans. Then with the remaining meagre money, in addition to the family requirements, we had to entertain quite a large number of guests who came to us in connection with the employment of their wards. Simple-minded villagers, sometimes five to six in number, would accompany a lone candidate for a small post as that of driver. Then they would stay on for days together for sightseeing of the coming-up city. My wife had become a legend for her piety, amiable nature, and hospitality. Even now, people remember her with gratitude, reverence, and pride for the way she used to treat and entertain the guests.

Sometimes I would feel embarrassed at the number of guests. Providing them with food, cots, clothes would pose a big problem and hard work. In such moments, she would say to me that it was her job to look after those matters. She would also ask me to go to bed and take rest as I had come back from the office after the day's hard work. The arrangements to be made in this connection remained her duty and responsibility. She did this job with fortitude and a smile on her face. To this may be added the fact that she would not be satisfied with simple food for the guests, saying that they had come to us only by chance, and that they might not have another opportunity to come again.

She had the capacity to work for eighteen hours a day and that, too, without grumbling and showing any signs of fatigue. She had always laid a claim that she was made of steel. But gradually, the hard and tiring duties started telling on her health, at first imperceptibly and then visibly. Despite all this, she persistently continued with her normal chores. From the first quarter of 1973, however, her claims to possessing a body of steel started waning, giving rise to murmurs of physical fatigue. Thus the great store of indefatigability she had begun to diminish by and by and bit by bit. This state of her health became the cause of our serious concern. She had also become diabetic. Medicines given under expert advice did not prove to be of lasting effect. Several months passed, but continuing deterioration in her health could not be

arrested. She was taken to a noted doctor a local hospital for medical checkup. His job did not satisfy us. Therefore, we decided to call him to our residence as payment always pays. He conducted a physical examination and gave an almost clean chit. We still remained unsatisfied. This time we took her to the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Education and Research (PGIMER) to consult the famous surgeon, Dr. B. L. Talwar.

Our two sons, Ramesh and Naresh, accompanied her. It was the Diwali (festival of lights) day, the twenty-fifth of October, 1973. I stayed back as I was not well. I kept waiting for their return. My anxiety grew as the time passed. Many diverse thoughts crossed my mind. I strolled about in the courtyard with eyes fixed toward the direction they were expected to come from. Accompanied by Naresh, she came back at 2:00 PM. As we sat on a cot in the courtyard, I inquired of her as to what the doctor had said. She looked a bit worried and told me that the doctor had advised a major operation. Ramesh had gone directly to Dr. Radha Krishna, a retired civil surgeon who was very close to our family, to show him the out-patient ticket. As soon as he came home, he hurriedly went in, motioning me to come to his room. His face bore deep signs of anxiety. I went in, followed by Naresh. Ramesh could hardly speak. In a choked voice he said, "Mama is in for trouble, she is suffering from a fell disease." Saying so, he started wiping his eyes.

This news came to us as a bolt from the blue. We were stunned and dazed. Then collecting ourselves, we discussed what and how best we could do to save her life. We also decided on another point: she should not know that she was suffering from a fell disease. If her untimely end was inevitable, let her die with grace and dignity. In case she came to know of the deadly disease, it would evidently add to her worry, and thus, she would lose whatever peace of mind she would have in the fond hope of ultimate recovery. She became suspicious over our whispers and facial expressions and, to our surprise, asked, "Why all of you are feeling so worried?" She had not heard what we had discussed inside.

"Why should you entertain such a thought? There is nothing to worry. You will be all right soon," I assured her with an assumed calm.

Simple-hearted as she was, she accepted as true what I had said. She never knew what exactly the disease was. We took care that, within her hearing, nobody talked of the destructive disease, and we did it successfully to the end.

After the tests in the PGIMER, the disease started galloping. Now we had to consider and decide whether to go in for a major operation or not. Medicines could not cure. We consulted our friends as well as some medical experts. We were of the opinion that in case she was operated upon, she would surely die on the operation table. Such was the state of her body and health. We could not accept the advice of a senior doctor, who is a relation of ours, that in case she died of operation, it should be accepted as a case of mercy killing. We found ourselves in a tight corner from where there seemed to be no escape. No word of hope and encouragement came from any quarter. After considering all the pros and cons of the matter, we ultimately decided against an operation. We pinned our hopes on some sort of a miracle that might emerge from the use of homeopathic medicines. It was a hope against hope. Miracles never happen in the hard realities of life, and they really belong to the realm of fairytales. But in our desperation, we hugged the idea of a superstitious miracle.

The next nine months was a period of great trial and ordeal, a period of tribulation, intense suffering, and agony for the patient and of mental torture for us too.

She put up a brave fight for her life. I made it a point to be by her side almost constantly and do small jobs for her. I stopped going to the courts. Even in her worst moments, she felt happy that I was attending to her personally and so carefully. But what was the fruit of my care? Only mental satisfaction! And what else could I do? With the dawn of Saturday, 27 July 1974, the fateful day had arrived. Her condition suddenly deteriorated and became critical. All of us gathered by her bedside and helplessly watched her breathe her last at half past five. What a heart-rending moment! Our association of a happy married life spread over a period of thirty-eight years had come to an end. It stood, turned into a dream that was to haunt me.

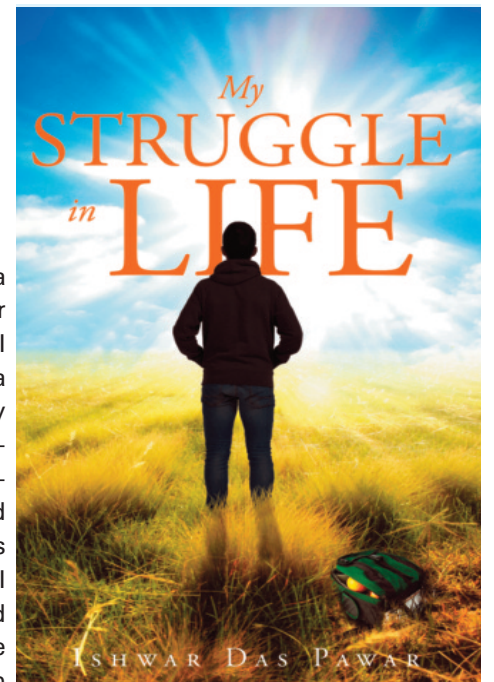
Why did she leave in the mid of her life? I was alone! My elder daughter, Kamlesh, arrived from Delhi along with other relations just a couple of hours before the funeral procession were to start at 4:20 PM. The dead body was given the last bath, was dressed in a shining blue sari and blouse she used to wear on occasions, collyrium was applied to the eyes and kumkum (vermillion) over her well-combed hair, forehead was adorned with bright red bindi (dot forehead decoration), and face makeup too was not missed though it was done for the first and the last time. She had been a model of simple living, and never in her life had she done face makeup. She was grand without the camouflaging cosmetics. But now before her last journey began, she was in the hands of her women and girlfriends that were her admirers and who wanted to give her a bride's send off. After all the necessary parting preparations had been made, the body was taken out to be placed in the funeral van waiting in the compound. To our great surprise, something like a miracle happened, but a miracle with a difference. In her death, she looked younger by twenty years. Age, health, and beauty had come back to her as if to pay their last respects to the person whom they adorned in abundance in her healthful days. This strange phenomenon attracted the notice of all the persons who had gathered. The freshly regained face is so vividly fresh in my mind even today.

We sat in mournful silence by her side in the van on her last journey. On reaching near the shamshan bhoomi (cremation ground), the ultimate destination of us all, the body was taken out; and a few children and young girls of the locality who had collected there exclaimed, "A young woman had died!"

The pyre was ready. Overwhelmed with emotion, Ramesh lit the pyre exactly twelve hours after the end, a most painful duty any person is called upon to perform. Within minutes, the pyre was enveloped by the rapidly developing flames.

Soon we saw the raging flames consuming and reducing to ashes the earthly remains of that brave, affectionate, devoted, and pious woman who had been claiming in her life to be built of steel. We stood there, looking on silently and helplessly. The old world had come to an end. We bade our last goodbye to our dear Lakshmi, turned our backs, and with hearts full of sorrow and grief, returned home.

"This is the way the world ends,
Not with a bang but a whimper."



Returning to Debate: The Future of Flavored Tobacco in Sacramento County

In October two of my colleagues on the Board of Supervisors announced that they are bringing forward an item to our agenda to ban all flavored tobacco products, including menthol cigarettes, flavored e-cigarettes and hookah. I have written in the past about this subject, but it ultimately never came forward for a vote at the Board of Supervisors. Now, with this recent push I think it necessary to update readers on this subject once again.

I want to say at the beginning that I am completely in agreement with the proponents of flavored tobacco bans in the goal of reducing teen smoking. As a former emergency room nurse, I understand firsthand that we should be doing everything we can to keep teens from smoking, and educating them so that when they turn 18 they fully know the dangers associated with smoking. I also recognize that teens are illegally

obtaining and using flavored tobacco products in greater volume, and in many cases transitioning to traditional cigarettes.

But Sacramento County doesn't have a wall built around it, and anyone who wants to buy flavored tobacco products can easily obtain them from other nearby areas that have not banned it. These products will still be readily available in other counties, as well as cities like Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova. A statewide ban would be far more effective so that people in Sacramento County can't access these nearby, and one will actually be on the ballot as a statewide proposition in 2022.

I have also heard from many adults who legally use flavored tobacco products both because they recreationally enjoy it, and because they use flavored e-cigarettes as a less harmful alternative to smoking.

While these adults will still be able to access them in other communities, it will make it more difficult for them to access something that is otherwise legal to use, and they will be sending their tax dollars to other communities instead of spending money in Sacramento County.

Instead of a ban, we could instead solve this problem by increasing the penalty for selling tobacco products to a minor from the current maximum of \$7,500, to a new minimum of \$7,500, accompanied by a ramped up undercover shopper program. This increase in penalties could potentially fully offset the cost of an improved undercover shopper program, but at the very least be substantially less than the loss in revenue we will now be facing under the ban.

Leading up to my vote on this issue, I will be meeting with stakeholders on both sides of the issue to understand their perspectives in more

detail. But more than anything, I want to hear what you have to say. Please e-mail me y o u r thoughts at Supervisor-Frost@sac-county.net. Thank you for reading!



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor

Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes all or part of the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, Rio Linda, Elverta, Gold River, Rancho Murieta, North Highlands, Carmichael, Foothill Farms and Fair Oaks.

HUMAN ANIMAL BONDING DURING COVID-19: A THERAPEUTIC TREATMENT THROUGH CARE AND AFFECTION

Not everything about the COVID-19 pandemic is disheartening and depressing. In the midst of its raging spread, countless deaths and related woes, there appears a silver lining in many a cloud. Small heartwarming occurrences become beacons of light and give us reason to hope, and smile.

Is not just the doctors and nurses, powerful politicians and administrators who make an impact, sometimes it's the simplest of men, going about their duties, whose actions touch the heart far deeper.

A heart-touching bond of love, compassion, care and concern, started growing during the early lockdown days in March 2020, between stray dogs and security personnel. The action ground remained the numerous human-free buildings spread over tens of acres of land in sectors 14 and 25 of the Panjab University Campus, Chandigarh.

This unique relationship has strengthened over time, as these security personnel have continued performing their duties since the lockdown was imposed, and their great canine supporters have actually accompanied them through the tough and lonely lockdown days, during the worst phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

It is very significant to understand that how the foundation of this relationship was laid. As the lockdown was announced, these selfless security guards started bringing food and other eatables with them from their respective homes. Stray dogs were everywhere, and it was only natural to share their morsels with the hungry creatures, longingly eyeing the eatables. Soon they realized that these dogs were in scores and they needed a lot more resources to feed them all. Moreover, they came in shifts. There was a dire need to feed all the stray creatures, but couldn't fathom how to garner resources.

The security personnel were by no means well-off, but even out of their meager resources; they started contributing money to buy dog food for the entire pack of dogs. This came to light accidentally when a faculty member saw them actually at a pet accessories shop. He was overwhelmed by their generous act of compassion and decided to ease and share their expense.

He went about enquiring from one of the security men and discovered that there were 153 canines scattered at 27 different locations. He promised the security men that with the help of his team, he would provide them with dog food and milk

daily. This soon became a routine and the dogs were never left hungry. The campaign's smooth functioning was facilitated by a WHAT-SAPP group comprising of the security guards and volunteers. This ensured transparency and constant updates.

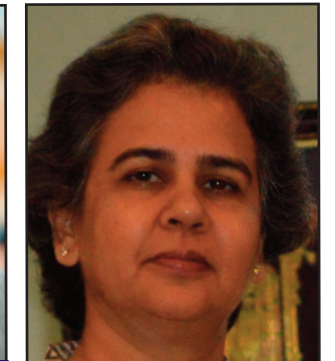
The amazing part is that this noble campaign has completed one year in March 2021, continues till date. Even in the midst of closure, of classes, campus life, canteens, the dogs continue to be fed. It is sad that now only 55 to 70 dogs are left, but every life is important.

This whole journey explains the voluntary public participation at the forefront. The compassion of these selfless security personnel really deserves a salute. It was also revealed by these security personnel that, more than food for their hunger pangs, they like to be pampered, feel loved and cared for. This is one more example of the natural affinity between humans and canines.

This bond of human animal relationships is a living example of sincere partnership, mutual trust and care. What is striking is the large heartedness of the security personnel



Gaurav Gaur



Anu Seth

with small earnings who came to do their duty, but displayed compassion and warmth. They forged strong bonds, made friends, and extended care to those who cannot speak and beg. In their own way, they are maintaining our ecosystem as well.

This unique relationship is like a ray of light in the dark alleys of death and disease, giving us all cues to reach out and extend ourselves with affection and kindness, even as we put up a united front to beat this pandemic. It's true that some of our problems sometimes require no medication but mediation. These selfless souls have proved that as security men they not only protect, but also help to preserve life. We all need to learn how to be human

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg's weekly Program

Last Sunday, November 14, 2021, Jatinder Singh Ralmil and family hosted Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa to thank Guru Sahib for blessing them with a daughter. We wish the new born baby a very happy, healthy and long

life. We are thankful to S. Karnail Singh Sandhu of Sandhu Brothers Farms who visited Gurughar with Harmesh Singh and made a large donation to the Gurughar on Sunday. May Waheguru bless Sandhu family.



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Satguru Nanak Pargateya
Miti Dhund Jag Chanan Hoya



Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's
Parkash Utsav
celebrations on
November 21, 2021



Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurpurab will be celebrated at our Gurughar on **November 21, 2021**. Akhand path will start on Friday 11/19/2021, at 10:00 AM and will be concluded on Sunday morning 11/21/2021 followed by Kirtan. Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by devoted family of Pt. Kewal Krishan Sudhir, Phagwara Wale. Famous Jatha of Bhai Subeg Singh, Giani Ompal /Giani Gurnam Singh will adorn the occasion with Shabad Kirtan.

Nishan Sahib Sewa will be on Saturday, November 20, 2021, at 11:00 AM. Bhai Gurnam Singh Rattu, Bibi Staya Mati Rattu and family will be hosting this Sewa.

Guru Nanak Sahib Ji (The founder of Sikhism) was born in 1469 at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib. His life and spiritual teachings, as enshrined in the holy pages of **GURU GRANTH SAHIB**, are an embodiment of truthfulness and godliness which illuminated the millions of ignorant souls. HIS simple message of "**UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD**" **EQUALITY** and Love of Mankind formed the basic principles of Sikh Religion. His firm belief that God is formless, infinite and all pervasive, dwelling within us awakened the entire mankind.

The entire Sangat is humbly requested to participate in this "Gurupurb" and do the SEWA with TAN, MAN and DHAN. For food & other stalls, please contact the management committee. Many vendors have booked the stalls already, it's not too late to reserve the stall space, please call the management team.

ਜੋ ਮਾਗਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਅਪੁਨੇ ਤੇ ਸੋਈ ਸੋਈ ਦੇਵੈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਦਾਸੁ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਜੋ ਬੋਲੈ ਈਹਾ ਉਹਾ ਸਚੁ ਹੋਵੈ ॥

May Guru Sahib sow his blessings on His Sangat.

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Sangat Sewadars

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Kulwant Kaur Banga

President
Jagtar Singh Bhatia

General Secretary
Abhishek Pal Narabut

Treasurer
Sunita Singh