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Ad Dharm Movement and Dalit Assertion

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Ad Dharm movement began its formal historic journey on June 11-12, 1926 at Mugowal, the native village of its founding father, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. He had the honour of being one of the five chosen members of the Ghadar movement, who were assigned the herculean task of bringing weapons in Maverick ship from America to India. The mission was aborted on the way and death sentence was pronounced on all of the five members of the Ghadar movement. But the destiny had something else in store for Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. He somehow escaped at the last moment of being hanged and after several years of wandering in the Islands of East Asia, he finally joined with his family after a gap of 16 years at his ancestral home in village Mugowal in 1925. To his utter surprise, he did not find any change in the living conditions of his folks even after all these years. But his rich exposure to democratic way of living and rational thinking in the United States of America, on the one hand, and active participation in the revolutionary Ghadar movement, on the other, taught him to fight for liberty, equality and a dignified social existence of his tormented Samaj. After consultation with his leader, Lala Hardyal, one of the founder members of the Ghadar movement, he began organizing his fellow community members to revolt against the centuries old social evil of Untouchability and to reclaim the long denied rights of the lowest of low to lead a life of dignity and prosperity.

It was on this historic day of June 11, 1926 that the maiden convention of the recently enrolled members of the golden Ad Dharm movement was held at the Ad Dharm School of village Mugowal. It was at this, the first ever Dalit gathering of its sort, convention that many historic resolutions were passed for the emancipation and empowerment of the so-called Untouchable people. It was emphasized from the Dias of this historic convention that the people to whom the upper caste contemptuously called untouchables were the natives (Moolnivasis) of this land. Once they were the rulers of this land with their own forts and egalitarian system of governance. It was alleged that the Aryan people snatched their kingdom and made them their slaves and consequently converted them into what called Achhuts.

At this maiden convention of the Punjab Ad Dharm movement, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia gave a clarion call to all sub-castes of the lowest of the low to get united under the flag of "Sohang" and unleash a revolt against the oppressive system of social caste hierarchy while demanding their due share in agricultural land and other sources of power. To achieve their goals of social justice, liberty and equality, the founding fathers of Ad Dharm declared that the lowest of the low were never Hindus, nor Sikhs, Christians or Muslims. Originally, they were the native people of Bharat who had their own distinct religion, which they called Ad Dharm. Within a short span of five years, this grassroots Dalit movement was able to get their separate religion sanctioned from the British Government in 1931 and for the first time in their history of subjugation they were able to register themselves under their separate religion of Ad Dharm in the Census of 1931. Within the next six years, Ad Dharmis of undivided Punjab were able to send Seven of their members to the Punjab Provincial Legislative Assembly in 1937 with a repeat in 1946. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was elected from the Assembly Constituency of Hoshiarpur. This was the same constituency, with its enlargement to the Parliamentary constituency, from where after many years Sahib Kanishi Ram won as Member of Parliament after 50 years in 1996, 11th Lok Sabha Elections.

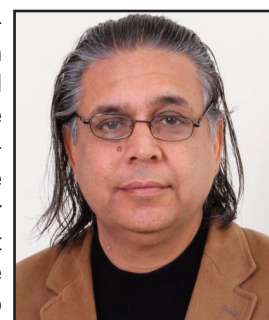
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weekly News-Papers forum congratulates its readers, contributors and supporters on this great historic day of Punjab Dalit Struggle for liberty, equality and dignified life!

"Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Basic Tenets of the Ad Dharm Movement" on the Foundation Day of the Historic Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12, 1926)

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (January 14, 1886–April 22, 1980), the pioneer of the anti-untouchability movement in colonial Punjab, reached California late in 1909 at the age of 23. Like other Punjabi immigrants, he worked hard to earn money, the main objective that pushed them to reach far off foreign lands. But unlike the majority of the Punjabi immigrants, Babu Mangu Ram belonged to a Scheduled Caste community of leather workers (Chamars). Given the poor eco-

– a chronic and sickening evil of Hindu social order. It was quite a co-incidence that during 1913 another ex-untouchable (Mahar) from Maharashtra reached New York, who later on came to be known as Baba Sahib venerably. He was Dr. B. R. Ambedkar who earned MA and PhD from Columbia University, New York. Babu Mangu Ram reached America four years earlier to Dr. Ambedkar. However, what makes the story of Babu Mangu Ram and Dr. Ambedkar different and at the

Ram' so- j o u r n abroad and his active participation in the G a d a r movement looks quite similar to that of Dr. B . R . Ambedkar irrespec-



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Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia
January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980
Founder of the Ad Dharm Movement Punjab

omic background and socially excluded living conditions, it was not easy at all for the members of the Schedules Caste communities to dare reach abroad in search of green pastures. Babu Mangu Ram was fortunate to arrange resources to reach California. In California, he lived in various places like Fresno, Stockton, Sacramento, El Centro, Vacaville and Visalia. However, while working hard in the agricultural fields of the San Joaquin valley of California, he developed close association with the activists of the newly formed (1913) Ghadar movement, a militant nationalist organisation for the liberation of the colonial India from the clutches of British Empire. He became a whole-time member of the Ghadar movement in San Francisco. What attracted him most in the Ghadar movement was its non-cognizance of caste

the same time similar is the context of their coming to America and ultimately the path they had chosen to emancipate the socially excluded sections of the Indian society from the oppressive Brahminical Social Order (BSO) after reaching India.

Babu Mangu Ram remained confined to Punjab whereas Dr. Ambedkar cast his net wide enough to cover almost the entire country. Dr. Ambedkar came to America to do higher studies, while for Babu Mangu Ram it was a mission to earn dignified livings through hard manual labour. Dr. Ambedkar remained

true to his mission despite persuasion by Lala Lajpat Rai who was a close friend of his most adorable professor Edwin R.A. Seligman. After his three years scholarship study term in Columbia University, Dr. Ambedkar came to study economics in London School of Economics and Political Science in UK. He returned to Baroda in the middle of 1917 as by that time the period of his scholarship was over. After reaching India, Dr. Ambedkar came to realise that despite the fact of his being the most qualified person in the country not only among depressed classes but also the higher castes, he was still made to undergo social discrimination for no other reason but his low caste birth. This is what made him fight life-long for the annihilation of caste in India.

The story of Babu Mangu

fact that though the former did not go to America for higher studies. As mentioned earlier, Babu Mangu Ram got thoroughly involved in the radical political activities of the Ghadar and spent the formative years of his prime youth in fighting against the mighty British imperialism in foreign lands. He was assigned the task of smuggling weapons to India to stage armed revolt against the British Empire. The plan was somehow got sabotaged and he was arrested along with his other comrades on the mission. Afterwards, it was a story of long ordeal. However, against all odds, somehow Babu Mangu Ram was able to survive and reached his village in 1925. After reaching his native village, to his utter surprise, he found the same ugly social system of low and high castes intact as he left back in 1909 while leaving for America. He made his mind to liberate the downtrodden from the internal slavery of Varnashramdharma and started organizing a unique battle against the centuries old Hindu system of birth-based social exclusion. Here one can easily find similarities between the contexts in which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Babu Mangu Ram launched their struggle against untouchability during the colonial India. After reaching Baroda, Baba Sahib come to realise that caste was so well entrenched into the Hindu social order that education did not make any difference for a member of a Dalit community as far as his/her social status in the graded hierarchy was concerned. Similarly Babu Mangu Ram found that economic prosperity too failed Dalits achieves upward social mobility.

Babu Mangu Ram founded Ad Dharm movement for the emancipation and empowerment of his people. He organised
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"Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the Basic Tenets of the Ad Dharm Movement" on the Foundation Day of the Historic Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12, 1926)

all the ex-untouchable castes falling under the then category of the Depressed Classes in Punjab and reminded them of their rich heritage. He told them how they were reduced into worse than slaves in their own land by the alien Aryans who brought with them their sick social system called caste and oppressed them with the whip of untouchability. He told his people that for them the real battle is the battle against the Chaturvarna system of Brahminical Hinduism. He reiterated that Scheduled Castes are neither Hindu nor Sikh. They are also neither Muslim nor Christian. They are the original inhabitants of this ancient land called Bharat (he called it Hind). Their real religion (Ad Dharm) was much older than Hinduism, Buddhism, Christianity, Islam and Sikhism. All these religion are born after Ad Dharm, the real religion of the original inhabitants of India. He said that the Hindus did not only subjugate them but also made their religion oblivious; and thus made the ex-untouchables their slaves. He said that real freedom for the indigenous people will be to liberate themselves not only from the British rulers but also from Brahmanism.

He struggled hard to convince British rulers to include Ad Dharm in the Census list of 1931 as a separate religion of the Depressed Classes in Punjab in 1931. A great victory of the Dalits indeed! Babu Mangu Ram became the pioneer of seeking political power as a key to all the problems of the community. In 1937, his Ad Dharm won 7 out of all the 8 reserved seats in Punjab. He also stood like a rock with Dr. Ambedkar in his tirade against caste annihilation at the national level. During Dr. Ambedkar's fight with Gandhi at the Roundtable Conferences in London (1930-32), Babu Mangu Ram sent telegrams in support of the former as the leader of the untouchables in India against Gandhi. In 1946, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia was elected to the Punjab Legislative Assembly and remained in legislature till 1952.

He was clear in his understanding that the real emancipation of the ex-untouchables lies in their efforts to revive their own indigenous religion (Ad Dharm), and in worshipping their own Gurus (Guru Namdev Ji, Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, Guru Valmiki Ji Maharaj, Guru Kabir Ji Maharaj). No other religion can liberate the Dalits from the quagmire of social exclusion in which they have been straddled for centuries except their own original religion - Ad Dharm. He sets a new agenda for the emancipation and uplift of the Dalits. The agenda was to restore the lost indigenous religion of the sons of the soils in order to provide them with a sense of self-respect and dignity. The method to achieve this agenda was cultural transformation and spiritual regeneration. Babu Mangu Ram was not in favour of embracing

any other existing religion including Buddhism. He was in favour of strengthening the Ad Dharm. His views on Hindu religion were very clear. He was of the opinion that since Dalits were not born Hindu where is the need to leave that religion and to embrace some other one. Babu Mangu Ram was of the opinion that the pre Aryan people/the sons of the soil had their own independent religion that was forced into oblivion under the cruel and oppressive rule of the alien Aryan. He thought it appropriate to empower Dalits by carving out a separate Dalit identity on the basis of their original indigenous religious strength rather than embracing any other egalitarian religion. This is what distinguished him from his contemporary social freedom fighters.

In the poster announcing the first annual meeting of Ad Dharm Movement, Mangu Ram devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the untouchables at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the Achhuts (ex-untouchables) to come together to chalk out a program for their liberation and uplift. While addressing members of the Depressed Classes belonging to various castes in Punjab, Babu Mangu exhorted:

We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings; Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us nomadic. They razed down our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. They (Hindus) became lord and call us 'others'. Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago Hindus suppressed us sever all ties with them. What justice we expect from those who are the butchers of Adi race. Time has come, be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals. With the support of sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider us Hindus at all, remember that our religion is Ad Dharm. The way, the leaders of Ad Dharm chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables was to completely detach them from Hinduism and to consolidate them into their own ancient religion - Ad Dharm - of which they had become oblivious during the age-old domination by the 'alien Hindus'. In fact, the task of the revival of

their ancient religion was not an easy one by virtue of the fact that during a long period of persecution at the hands of the Svarnas, the untouchables had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols. In fact they were never allowed to nurture an aspiration to have their own independent religion. They were condemned as profane and were declared unfit to have their own theology. Thus to revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing an altogether a new religion for the Achhuts. Mangu Ram's appeal that the Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on the untouchables who were treated as, even inferior to animals in Indian society. The appeal inspired them to come out of their slumber and fight for their freedom and liberty. The Ad Dharm provided a theological podium to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. For centuries, they were bereft of any identity and remained in the appendage of the hierarchically graded Hindu society.

Ad Dharm movement was instrumental not only in helping the lower castes to get registered as a distinct religion in the 1931 census and providing them the platform to enter into the State Legislature, it also went a long way in bringing a cultural transformation in their life. In fact, Ad Dharm movement, as has been mentioned above, aimed at facilitating a cultural transformation in the life of lower castes that, under the impact of the centuries old system of degradation, had actually internalized a sense of being low and polluted. Mangu Ram wanted to liberate them from such a state of mind and also to inculcate in them the feeling of dignity and self-respect whereby they could start thinking about them as equal to the so-called twice-born people. Report of the Ad Dharm Mandal, 1926-1931 lists a number of moral principles and duties, which the followers of the Ad Dharm are required to adhere to for creating spiritual regeneration and cultural transformation in their lives. Among the most important moral principles and the duties mentioned in the report are: The basic principles listed in the Report are: (1) The essential teachings of the Ad Dharm will always be the same: no one can change them. They can stay alive and persist only through the help of a guru. (2) Every man and woman belongs to the faith, but they may not know it. To live without a guru is a sin. (3) A guru should be someone who truly and rightly knows the teachings of the previous masters. He should be able to distinguish between falsehood and truth. He should be able to bring peace and love within the community. (4) Everyone should be instructed by the lives of previous masters; progress comes from following the masters' examples. The practices of previous masters should not be abandoned. This leads

to progress. (5) There should not be any discrimination in regard to eating with other castes. (6) Ad Dharmis should abstain from theft, fraud, lies, dishonesty, looking at someone else's wife with bad intentions, using anything which brings intoxication, gambling, and usurping other persons' property or belongings. All of these things are against the law of nature and therefore the law of Ad Dharm. (7) Every Ad Dharmi has the duty to teach his children current knowledge and also to teach them to be obedient to the present king. (8) Every Ad Dharmi should read the Ad Prakash and act upon it. This is a foremost duty. (9) Ad Dharm does not believe in the caste system or any inferiority or superiority of this sort. (10) To learn and seek knowledge, and to learn and seek progress is compulsory for every man and woman.

The twelve duties mentioned in the Report are as follows: (1) to publicize and propagate Ad Dharm. (2) To take pride in Ad Dharm. (3) To promote the use of name of the community and to use the red mark as its sign. (4) Ad Dharmis should try to retrieve any property of fellow Ad Dharmi that has been usurped. (5) We should distinguish among Hindus, Ad Dharmis, and other communities of India. (6) Those books, which have created the problem of untouchability and led to discrimination - such as the Laws of Manu and other Shastras - should be completely boycotted and abandoned. (7) We should celebrate the festivals of our gurus and follow our faith to the utmost. (8) Abandon idolatry. (9) Receive education for ourselves and others in the brotherhood. (10) Boycott those who curse us as "untouchables" or discriminate against us. (11) Bring all demands of Ad Dharmis before the government. (12) Abandon expensive marriage and practice of child marriage.

The fifty-six commandments included in the Report are: (1) Each Ad Dharmi should know everything about the faith. (2) For the betterment and salvation of one's body - physical and spiritual - one should recite the word Sohng. (3) Each Ad Dharmi should remember Guru Dev for half an hour each morning or evening. (4) When Ad Dharmis meet, their greeting should be "jai Guru Dev." (5) We should be true followers of the founders, Rishi Valmiki, Guru Ravi Das, Maharaj Kabir, and Bhagwan Sat Guru Nam Dev. (6) a guru is necessary, one who knows about previous gurus and has all the capabilities of being a guru. (7) The wife of a guru should be regarded as one's mother, the guru's daughter as one's sister. (8) Devotion to one's wife should be a part of one's faith, for therein lies salvation. (9) Every Ad Dharmi should abstain from theft, fraud, lies, dishonesty, and usurping the property of others. (11) One should

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IN REMEMBRANCE OF BABU MANGU RAM MUGGOWALIA A CARAVAN OF SOCIAL LIBERATION

Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia's name is again glittering with its lustre on the minds of the down trodden sections of society in particular and the entire spectrum of Indian society in general for his contributions as a patriot, freedom fighter and for his unrelenting struggle by becoming the voice of the voiceless in the first half of the 20th century. Before paying our tributes to his vision and his achievements, let us have a few glimpses of trials and tribulations which he had to go through during the journey of his life. Babu Mangu Ram was born in a small village, (Muggowal) in Hoshiarpur District of Doaba area of Punjab in an untouchable family on January 14th, 1886. His father, being engaged in the leather business inherited from his forefathers, had to confront many hurdles and difficulties in marketing his products because of his limited education. To tide over these challenges he wanted his son to be well educated to help him in making his business flourish further.

SOCIAL DISABILITIES BUILT IN CASTE SYSTEM: -

The stigma of the caste system in Indian society codified by Manusmriti was the greatest obstacle for untouchables to seek higher education. In spite of all the carping humiliations, Babu Mangu Ram though a good student could hardly complete his high school education at three different schools in Muggowal, Dehradun and Bajwara.

MIGRATION TO USA: - Babu Mangu Ram's father who, being financially stable in his business, managed to send his son to USA in 1909 to better his future prospects in life. Babu Mangu Ram who had an impassioned fervour of patriotism in his psyche became an active member of Ghadar Movement in California to fight for freedom from British rule. After a few years of his active participation in the activities of the Ghadar party in USA he was chosen with four other members to smuggle a shipment of weapons to India for use by Ghadarites in India. On being captured by British Agents on his way to India he was lucky and clever to escape from the hands of the British with the help of some German supporters and remained in hiding for many years.

BACK IN INDIA: - On his way back to India Babu Mangu Ram had to travel through Madras and many other parts of South India where he was shocked to find the pains of social discrimination worse than slavery which agitated his conscience to start his crusade for social emancipation. In one of the Hindu temples he visited in Madurai in South India he was warned by Pujaris not to get polluted by touching any untouchable in the temple premises. This ignited a new spark in the

mind of Mr. Mangu Ram to work against social degeneration of Indian society. He wrote back to Lala Hardial and Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna the pioneers of the Ghadar party in USA and told them that the freedom of his brethren in India from the tyrannical subjugation of the upper castes is more important to him than the freedom of the country.

AD-DHARM MOVEMENT LAUNCHED:- On June 11th and 12th, 1926 Babu Mangu Ram convened a large conference of his supporters from every nook and corner of Northern India and announced the foundation of Ad-Dharm Mandal of which he was chosen as President, the title he retained then on during his entire struggle. The conference was held in a primary school in his village where he was a teacher too. This article is specifically dedicated to commemorate the foundation of Ad-Dharm movement launched on the above mentioned dates.

The following are some of the salient and structural features of his movement which became a legacy for future generations. 1. The most important and significant contribution of his movement is that he was able to establish a distinct identity for Ad-Dharmi community, separate from Hindu hierarchy by claiming to be the original inhabitants of India long before the invasion of Aryans from Eastern Europe and Central Asia. Ad-Dharm Mandal became one of the most successful movements for Dalit mobilization and Empowerment with completely a separate identity.

Greeting salutations of Jai Gurudev and Dhan Gurudev were the products of Babu Mangu Ram's brain.

A very authentic book 'India Divided' written by Dr. Rajindera Prasad, First president of Free India, more than seventy years ago (before partition) contains a very vivid description of Ad-Dharm as a separate religion like Jains, Parsees, Jews and Christians based on the reports of census commissioner in 1931 and 1941. This completely negates and invalidates the assertion that untouchables and other lower castes are part of Hinduism. This also reduces their numerical strength which they have always claimed. In 1937 Babu Mangu Ram's party won seven out of eight seats in the provincial legislature.

The element of a separate identity had a deep impact on the thinking of the suppressed section of society which could be deemed as a main factor in the success and the legitimacy of the movement for their liberation from the slavery of the upper classes.

Babu Mangu Ram believed that the real method of breaking the caste system was to destroy the religious notion

upon which the system is based and thrives.

REVELATIONS OF PROFESSOR MARK JUERGENSMEYER

Professor Mark Juergensmeyer, a renowned professor and a scholar of international fame and eminence, now accredited with the University of Santa Barbara, met Babu Mangu Ram personally in India more than fifty years ago and made an extensive research on Babu Mangu Ram's movement as revealed in his Book "RELIGIOUS REBELS IN THE PUNJAB The Ad-Dharm Challenge to Caste".

STAUNCH SUPPORTER

OF BABASAHEB, DR. B. R. AMBEDKAR:- There were some misapprehensions created by some narrow and divisive attitudes to accomplish their own political motives that Babasaheb and Babu Mangu Ram differed in their approach to handle the problem of caste distinctions. On the contrary Babu Mangu Ram stood shoulder to shoulder with Dr. Ambedkar with his strong support and sent telegrams during his crusade in Round Table conferences, reiterating that Dr. Ambedkar was the national leader of the depressed classes and thus rebuffing the claims of Mr. Gandhi that untouchables were a part of the Hindu community. He even started a counter fast unto death against Mr. Gandhi's ending in the signing of Poona- pact in 1932. With the spread of education and awakening among the Dalit Samaj the ideology of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia is coming back with a new spirit, vigor and enthusiasm to reach the new heights in its journey started almost a century ago.

DESH DOABA AND AMBEDKAR TIMES, the two weekly Newspapers owned and edited by Mr. Prem K. Chumber, in circulation among the Indian diaspora in USA and other countries are working ceaselessly to propagate the ideals of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia. Mr Prem K. Chumber has been greatly inspired on the life & struggle of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia by his elder brother late Mr. C. L. Chumber and his voluminous writings.

Congratulations again for celebrating the 98th Anniversary of this great movement launched and pioneered by Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia on June 11th and 12th, 1926.



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"Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia and the Basic Tenets of the Ad Dharm Movement" on the Foundation Day of the Historic Ad Dharm Movement (June 11-12, 1926)

not cause someone else heartache. There is no worse sin than this. (12) Every Ad Dharmi should enthusiastically participate in Ad Dharmi festivals and rituals. (13) There should be equally great happiness at the birth of both boys and girls. (14) After the age of five, every boy and girl should be given proper religious teaching. (15) Extravagant expenses at weddings are useless. Every marriage should be conducted according to rituals of our tradition. (16) Ad Dharmis should marry only Ad Dharmis. To marry someone outside Ad Dharm is not legal, but if someone does marry an outsider, he or she should be brought into the faith. (17) All Ad Dharmis, both men and women, should be obedient to their parents. (18) After the death of both parents it is the duty of each Ad Dharmi to cook food and distribute it among the poor. (19) The dead should be cremated, except for those under the age of five, who should be buried. (20) Ad Dharmis do not follow any other law except their own. (21) In the Ad Dharm faith only one marriage is allowed, but a husband may marry after the death of his wife. Also, if the first wife does not bear children, the husband may take another wife, provided he has the consent of the first wife. If this happens, the first wife remains a legal wife, with all the rights she had before. (22) Ad Dharmis should marry their children to the Ad Dharmis of the surrounding areas. (23) A girl should be more than twelve years old at the time of the marriage. The

boy should be four years older than the girl. (24) It is illegal to receive money for a bride; on the other hand, there should not be a dowry. Those who sell their daughters commit a very great sin. (25) Offerings and sacrifices for prayers should be given only to those holy men who are Ad Dharmi and who have shown themselves to follow Ad Dharmi principles religiously. (26) It is necessary for each Ad Dharmi to provide primary education to both boys and girls. (27) The girls should be educated especially in household work such as sewing and needlework. (28) Young girls and boys should not be sent out to cut grass and gather wood. (29) It is the duty of parents not to allow young widowed daughters to remain in their household, because a young widowed daughter is a cause of disgrace. (30) If an Ad Dharmi widow with children wants to hold a commemoration of her deceased husband, but cannot afford it, then the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur and its members will help her. (31) It is not good to cry and beat oneself at a death or funeral. To do so is to anger Guru Dev. (32) Among the Ad Dharmis sons and daughters should receive an equal inheritance. (33) To eat the meat of a dead animal or bird is against the law of Ad Dharm. (34) To use wine or any other intoxicants is a sin, except in the case of sickness. (35) It is legal to eat food offered at noon - Ad Dharm marriages, but the food should be decent, and not leftovers. (36) Clean-

liness is important. It guaranteed good health. (37) It is forbidden to practice idolatry and worship statues, and one should not believe in magic, ghosts, or anything of the sort. (38) All Ad Dharmis should forget notions of caste and untouchability and work toward the unity of all people in the world. (39) Each Ad Dharmi should help a fellow Ad Dharmi in need. (40) One Ad Dharmi must not work at a place where another Ad Dharmi works until the first Ad Dharmi has been paid his wages. (41) If Ad Dharmis enter into a dispute with one another, they should attempt to come to some agreement by themselves or within the community. If no agreement is accomplished, they should refer the case to the Ad Dharm Mandal, Jullundur, and the Executive Committee will take action. (42) Ad Dharmis should open shops and business in every village. (43) Every Ad Dharmi should be a missionary for the faith. (44) Ad Dharmis should call themselves such and register in the census as "Ad Dharmi". (45) A Red turban on the head is mandatory, for it is the color of our ancestors. (46) Every Ad Dharmi should work hard for the progress and peace of the community. (47) Ad Dharmis should organize themselves into cadres called martyrdom cells.

They should work hard on the Ad Dharm's projects. (48) Each Ad Dharmi should separate himself from Hindus, Sikhs, and members of other religions. (49) Each Ad Dharmi should be a

good citizen, a patriot loyal to the present government, and should follow the law of the land. (50) Ad Dharmis have the obligation to consider the Ad Dharm Mandal of Punjab, city of Jullundur, as their rightful representative, and to recognize that the programs of the AD Dharm are for their benefit. (51) It is the duty of every Ad Dharmi to trust the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur, and to share its work. (52) All local branches of the Ad Dharm should be certified by the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur, and those, which are not certified, should not be considered genuine. (53) All Ad Dharmis should save their fellow Ad Dharmis from fraud and selfishness on the part of other communities. If such a situation arises, the Mandal should be informed. (54) Each Ad Dharmi should report any difficulty concerning the community to the Mandal in Jullundur. (55) Ad Dharmis should subscribe to the Qualm's newspaper, Adi Danka. They should receive it regularly, read it regularly, and help support it regularly. (56) Anyone violating the laws of the Ad Dharm or of the guru, or who insults these laws in one way or another, will be liable to punishment, even the greatest punishment - being banished from the community. The main emphasis of these commandments, principles and duties, in the opinion of Babu Mangu Ram, was to strengthen the social, cultural and religious life of the Dalits so that it could help them build Dalit Solidarity to put an end to social exclusion.



D. C. Ahir

The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

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 down-trodden 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 Jueregensmeyer, "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

Dance of Democracy – Matured Indian Voters

I wrote about the wonders of Indian democracy couple of times earlier in my blogs. In the process of getting mature over the years, Indian democracy has further thrown some more wonders in the just concluded Elections 2024. Let us pick up some of them with a view to analysis the resultant outcome; particularly with regard to the weaker sections of the society, minorities and the core values of the Indian constitution – Equality, Liberty, Fraternity and Secularism.

Before I begin, I will register here that it is a matter of gratification that 'Indian democracy has come of age'. I said many a times in my blogs, discussions, and discourses that 'India is India only because of its constitution'. It has been amply proved in spite of many jerks and challenges on the journey to 'tryst with destiny' as stated by Jawaharlal Nehru. It has further justified the fears and apprehensions expressed by Babasaheb Ambedkar to safe guard our hard earned independence – hero-worship leading to dictatorship, placing self-interests above the national interests, adopting unconstitutional methods resulting in 'Grammar of Anarchy', transforming political democracy into social and economic democracy among others. I would try to list here my personal views on the emerging scenario not as a political analyst or an expert but as an ordinary citizen and humble stakeholder.

The mandate of Elections 2024 is many folds – with political, social, economic and even cultural message to all the political outfits and the incoming rulers of the country. Political: 'We the people of India that is Bharat' completely reject and negate dictatorial tendencies in the polity and support democratic discourse and accommodation; Social: We reject the agenda of religious polarization and communalism; Economic: We tend to support democratic socialism over capitalistic hegemony with well-defined and managed social securities and affirmative action to empower and up-lift socially and economically weaker segments of the society; Cultural: We want social harmony with fraternity and brotherhood among people in accordance with secular and inclusive orientation.

The festival of democracy; the Elections 2024 has underlined some of the basic facts and needs to sustain and keep ourselves on track in the journey with the sense that 'we have come a long way but we are still to go a long way' – We might have arrived but are still to reach. The drums of the dance of democracy have gone silent. The Aam Aadami (Common man) has shown the way as Ira Pande wrote in her write up in the Tribune of June 9, "Finally, a salute to the aam aadmi, the common Indian, who is really the hero of this verdict. Overlooked, despised and dismissed as foolish and illiterate, he has more wisdom in his little finger than all those psephologists who only crunched numbers, and those reporters who thought they had the elections on their plate as they ate and chatted with citizens who spoke fluent English or Hindi." Let us list some of the visible indicators in this regard:-

➤ **Federal State** - India shall remain a 'Union of States' as stipulated in the constitution. People have strengthened regional political outfits like TMC, DMK, TDP, SP, JDU, NCP, ShivSenas among others in their respective regions. The BJP government of PM Narendra Modi tried to concentrate powers at Delhi. It has backfired. The States of Bharat shall have more autonomy and financial muscle. Our constitution is a unique and wonderful document with provisions to have "federal state with unitary bias". The separatist demands of radical elements in Punjab and others in other areas would sub-due in the process. I would tend to agree with Harcharan Bains who commenting on the radicalism wrote in the Hindustan Times, "Instead of seeing radicalism through an alarmist-nationalist prism, it is better regarded as

a sub-conscious call for dignified accommodation through legitimate democratic decentralization." India is Bharat and Bharat is India. There is no need to flag these things for narrow politico-communal agenda.

➤ **Religious polarization** – The uncalled for and undesirable attempts to have religious polarization both by the hardcore Hindu majority and also the largest minority of Muslims have further complicated the scene. Though, it seems, people have rejected these efforts yet it has given chance to have yet another kind of polarization – caste based one that is SC, ST and OBC and even Muslims joining hands against the majority Hindus. The new assertion of Samajwadi Party formulated the social approach as PDA – Pichhde – Dalit – Alapsan khyak (Backwards, Dalits and Minorities) which make lot of sense. One of the major failures of our polity has been that we could not have political polarization on the basis of ideology, agenda and programme which has resulted in Aya Ram and Gya Ram syndrome. Politicos tend to shift here and there without any logic just to cater to their selfish interests. It is a negation of democracy. I think, people are not oblivious of these un-



healthy trends. Elections results in Faizabad and Jalandhar and else where have registered the resentment of people against religious polarization and shifting political loyalties mid-stream.

➤ **Reservations** – It has been registered beyond doubt that reservation for SCs and STs and also for OBCs is going to stay. No party can stop even dilute these provisions even if they want to do so as their narrow agenda. This is a high point of the dance of democracy as Babu Kanshi Ram said "Vote Hamara Raj Tumara Nahin Chalega". Dalit voters are becoming aware of the ground realities. The old order of dalit leaders is fading out giving way to young brigade of new leaders like Minister Chirag Paswan, Chandershekhar Azad of Nagina, Sanjna Jatav of Bharatpur, Shambhavi Chaudhary of Samastipur among others. Babasaheb Ambedkar's lofty vision – Educate; Agitate; Organise is taking effect. Dalits are increasingly getting educated. They have started agitating for their due and rightful space in the polity and society. The third prop of the preposition that is 'Organise' is yet to come about. Dalit youth need to understand this: Divided we Fall and United we Stand.

➤ **Constitution** – We have a dynamic constitution made under the visionary leadership of Babasaheb Ambedkar and others. It has proved itself over the years – in 1964, it answered the question 'who after Nehru'; it upheld the system after PM Lal Bahadur Shastri's sudden death abroad in 1966; it carried the burden of emergency in 1975 imposed by PM Indira Gandhi and smoothly brought in the change through democratic switch over under PM Morarji Desai; it mandated democratically Indira Gandhi again in 1980-81; it faced the after-math of mindless violence eliminating to of our PMs – Indira and Rajiv, it witnessed the unfortunate happenings of Blue Star action on Sri Darbar Sahib in Amritsar and also sad and condemnable happenings involving the Sikh community in Delhi and other places in 1984 in the wake of assassination of PM Indira Gandhi; withstood the after math of Mandal Commission among other important and telling events like the Babri Masjid- Ram Janam Bhoomi issue in the process. India faced foreign challenges on and across borders. We the people of India prevailed as a united India. It could be done only because of the constitu-

tion. It is a clear message of the Election 2024, nobody should try to change the constitution and its lofty fundamentals – Equality, Justice, Liberty and Fraternity. Political class must understand this; sooner the better.

➤ **Coalition Governments** – The ground realities of multi-racial, multi-religious, multi-cultural, multi-lingual society have surfaced in the natural process of political evolution. There is nothing to

worry about. Fortunately enough for us our fore fathers and constitution makers led by Babasaheb Ambedkar were not oblivious of these aspects of the polity and society. Our constitutional framework is fully geared to handle and live with the emerging situations. It seems, the days of so called 'stable governments' with radical and fundamentalist agenda have gone giving way to 'functional governments' with consensual and pragmatic approaches to govern. We need, as Babu Kanshi Ram asserted "Majboor Sarkar not Majboot Sarkar" to carry forward the agenda of the depressed and marginalized segments of the society. There is no difficulty in this as under this premise,

Majboor Sarkar means that the vested interests in the system of 'graded inequality' should not be given unbridled powers to neglect and ignore the interests of the underdog. Let the coalition governments function with a sense of carrying along all as PM Narendra Modi said "Sab Ka Sath; Sab Ka Vikas; Sab Ka Biswas". These coalition governments would be an appropriate instrument to carry forward the policy of accommodation with fair play – Jis Ki Jitni Sankhya Bhari Utini Us Ki Hisedari. This approach would end the exploitation and high-handedness of the vested interest.

All said and done, let me conclude this long piece. The coalition government of NDA under the leadership of BJP is being formed in terms of the mandate of the Elections 2024. The dance of democracy will also halt on June 9 with the swearing in of the new government under the stewardship of PM Narendra Modi and the country will look forward to prepare itself to face the challenges of the future. I only hope that the ruling dispensation has understood the message of the people as PM designate Narendra Modi said at the NDA meeting, "A bahumat (majority) is necessary to run a government. That is the only principle of democracy. But sarvmat (consensus) is very important to run the country. With this I wish all success to NDA – New India; Developed India; Aspiration India as termed by PM designate Narendra Modi. I wish the developed India also remains a democratic India and fraternal (Samras) India to remain on rails in the years to come. We need to contemplate and learn from the poetic assertion of Allmalqbal to transform our democracy from political democracy to social and economic democracy as visualized by Babasaheb Ambedkar.

मस्जिद तो बना दी शब भर में ईमान की हरात वालों ने
मन अपना पुराना पापी है, बरसों में नमाजी बनने न सका

(हालांकि मस्जिद मोमिनों ने रातों रात बना दी थी
हमारा दिल बरसों से पुराना पापी है इबादत करने वालों को नहीं बनाया जा सका)

इकबाल एक उपदेशक है, मन बातों में मोह लेता है
गुफ्तार का ये गाजी तो बना, किरदार का गाजी न बन सका

(इकबाल एक अच्छा सलाहकार है, पलों में दिल को मोह लेता है
बातों में तो वह हीरो बन गया, लेकिन कामों में वह एक नहीं हो सका।)



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Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkaraite Movement: Part -4

Rukminibai Rajbhoj

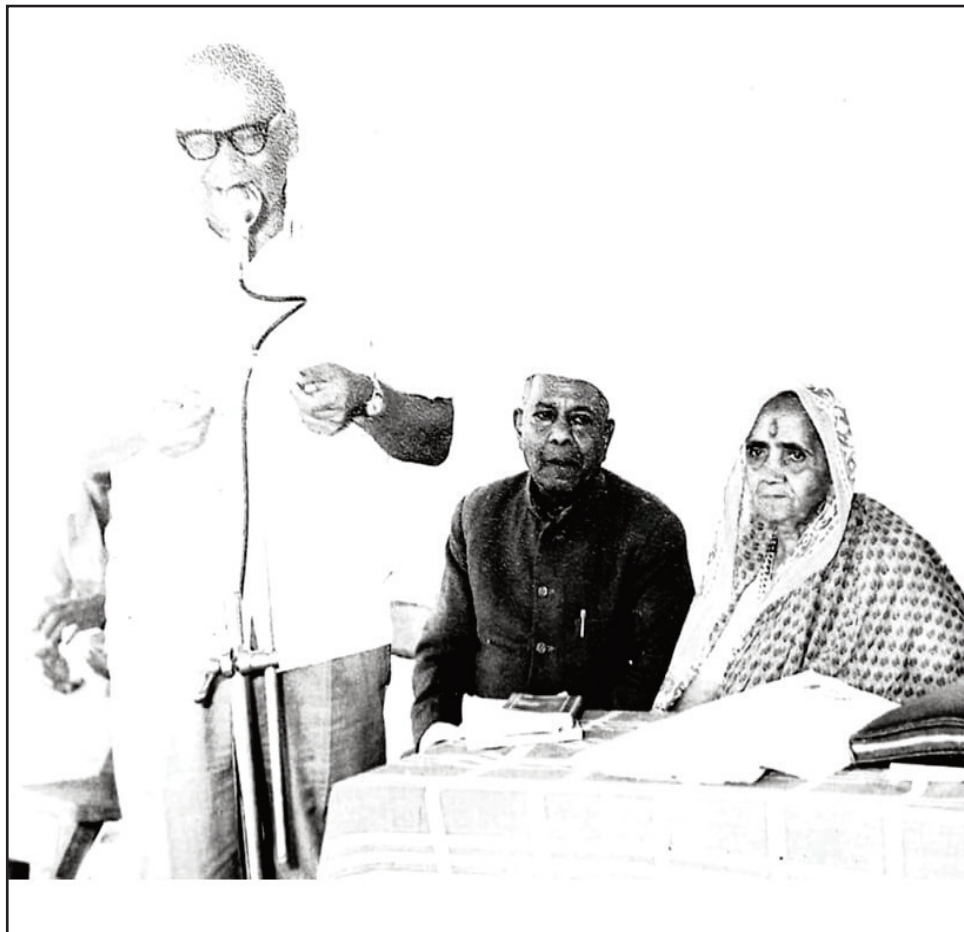
Rukminibai Rajbhoj wife of P.N. Rajbhoj Secretary of the Scheduled Caste Federation played an important role in the Ambedkaraite movement. She also contributed Ambedkaraite movement and the social upliftment of the chamar community movement. It is seen that Rukminibai played a very important role along with P.N. Rajbhoj. Mrs. Rukminibai's 'Patole' is a famous family. Mrs. Vasant Patole, one of Rukminibai's brothers, was a good writer. Another brother Suresh Patole was B.A. Mr. M.R. Patole, B.A., LL.B. These were lawyers." This shows that Mrs. Rukminibai's paternal home was educated.

P.N. Rajbhoj was married at the age of ten to Bhogubai, daughter of Gopaji Gangaram Patole of Palegaon in Kalwan taluka. This first wife died four years after marriage and at the age of 14 he married Bhogubai's sister 'Rukminibai'. Even after this marriage, P. N. Rajbhoj wanted to study. At that time, Rukminibai showed great courage. She said to her husband, 'You continue your education in Pune; I will spend my days with my in-laws till you get your education. Don't worry about me, but don't give up your education.' Rukminibai understands the importance of education and it appears that she also wants Rajbhoj to achieve success in education.

When Rajbhoj was the Secretary of the Scheduled Caste Federation of India, in a session held in Firozabad. It was decided to protest in Lucknow on 25 March 1947. This satyagraha continued till 26 April. P.N. Rajbhoj had given to the satyagrahis Order that 25th April should be observed as protest day at this time, Rajbhoj was arrested. Then he was released from Lucknow Jail on 18th July 1947. After that, Rajbhoj was felicitated everywhere. For this reason at a distance of a few miles from Pune, there is a village known as Kodve-Kopere near the Khadakwasla Lake, the Dalit people of this village gathered a program to felicitation to Rajbhoj. Rajbhoj came with his entire family. When the meeting started, the government was criticized for jailing the Rajbhoja. So the upper caste Hindus who were present in the meeting left the meeting. Then suddenly stones started falling on the untouchables. Someone was hit in the head, someone in the back, on the foot. Screaming, screeching. People shouting continued. Some started running for shelter.

Then Rukminibai took the ini-

tiative of the assembly and said, "Do you run like a woman? I am a woman



and I am still here; my little children are also here. I have not moved yet and you run like a woman when you are a man like a man? Come take my bangles and put them in your hands." Ladies, don't even move. Even if the men run away, we will hold the women's meeting." On hearing this, the entire assembly became stunned. The work of the meeting started even in the rain of stones. This incident shows how Rukminibai stood firm in the emergency and appealed to the manhood of the running men. With her intervention, the meeting resumed smoothly. Contribution of women in the movement of households; If they work hard for the movement at home, they are not seen by anyone; But the wife and daughter of the activist man become a part of the movement without interference. Helping the man in the house; it is only when they come out of the house and participate that the context is created. The hard work done for the movement by staying at home also has value and it is necessary to record it. About her contribution to the movement, in Panchayadhyayi Bhimgita has written about Rukminibai Rajbhoj. The mention of Rukminibai by Sambhu Tayade of Chachondi village in Akola in his poetry is very significant."

(Dalit Bandhu, Special Issue, dated 15th April 1943).



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The letter written by Rajbhoj is very important. In 1947, Shankaran and Shastri organized a non-violent satyagraha of Scheduled Caste Federation workers in Lucknow. As Rajbhoj was the Secretary of the Scheduled Caste Federation, he was leading this Satyagraha. The satyagrahis who did this satyagraha were arrested. This letter gives an idea of what the household situation would be like when the breadwinner goes to jail. Because Rajbhoj's house was not only his children and wife but also a place of refuge for everyone in the village-to-city movement. So after him, the responsibility of the house fell on his wife Rukminibai Rajbhoj in his letter he talks about the money needed to run a household. Not only that, he said about it. Also wrote a letter to Babasaheb Ambedkar. Even if he is a working father, he takes care of his children.

He told Rukminibai that she should not write that she received his letter as he was not allowed to write more letters from jail. A good example of how to give courage to family members is this letter from Rajbhoj. Rajbhoj said his wife from jail should be considered as being on tour. This sentence is very important. Dalit brothers, who will run this letter? Asked to solve this problem too.

In the letter, it is written about the memories of everyone as Jay Bhim.

When this non-violent Satyagraha was going on, he thought that Rukminibai and their children should also go to jail for this satyagraha. All will be arrested. The courage of the entire family for the movement is seen in Rajbhoja's words and he told this to his wife very honestly. Rajbhoj says that Congress is at the root of the arrest. The fact that he tells Rukminibai shows how deeply Rajbhoj's social work was known even to his wife. 'There is a sacrifice for the sacred work of social service. There is no cure for it; If one suffers for good work, one should consider it as one's fate, how great is the sentiment. The important thing in this letter is that, at the beginning of this letter, for Rukminibai, 'Parampriya Mrs. Rukminibai Saprem Jai Bheem' (beloved Mrs. Rukminibai, jay bhim with love) sounds so elegant when reading it. When men and women were husband and wife, they did not speak in front of everyone, even if they did speak, it was a simple conversation. During that period, Rajbhoj used the term Parampriya (beloved) for his wife. This means that their love is strong. Going further, he uses the word Jai Bheem for his wife as well. Even though Rajbhoj was working on the ground Rukminibai knew the importance of everything whatever Rajbhoj did. The ideological unity of those two can be seen in one sentence at the beginning of this letter. We will give this letter in the last article of this series. Rukminibai was aware of the social work that Rajbhoj was doing, so she seems to have always contributed to Rajbhoj's work of social transformation. Rukminibai's cooperation in the social sector is due to her daughter-in-law Sujata Keshavchandra Rajbhoj after her marriage, Sujata continuously helped her mother-in-law in her work. Also, they used to be always with their mother-in-law in social movement events. That is, Rukminibai herself worked hard for the progress of the movement, but she also gave this legacy of hard work to her daughter-in-law and her daughter-in-law has also continuously contributed in the social field after marriage. Rukminibai also participated in the Parvati temple entry movement and always attended meeting social programs she led a girl's hostel in Pune. She visited with P.N. Rajbhoj many Buddhist places. Rukminibai died on 17 January 1983 at Pune.

Truth

Every one knows the truth,
Yet, keeps searching for it,
In nooks where it may never visit !
It is so easy to mark ,
Yet tough to acknowledge!
The politician
And the man of religion
And the man of wealth
And the owner of large tracts of land...
All know what the Truth is!

Yet each one of them pretends,
And publicly sets about a fact finding hunt,
To camouflage his cunning
Lest he be branded
As a thief of people's dreams, or
A usurper and man of bad intent,
Or a tyrant!

Be it a leader,
Or a Landlord ,
Or a trader ,
An Industry magnate,
Or a Head Clergy,
A husband ,
A wife,
A child,
A citizen or a public servant...Whoever it be !

All know the truth of ideal human living
In a world of temporary joys
Whether these be Power or Money or Youth,
Or Authority wielded in the name of religion.
Yet , they all remain
Willingly ignorant of the Truth
Which they keep wrapped in enquiries!
That's the escapist's craft
To perpetuate authority
Which may erode
If truth is uncovered
And made known to One and All !
Hence keep it gagged!
Keep it wrapped!
That's the 'Success Mantra' of the day !

Craft....

Craft is so well embellished,
Crude stuff is so nicely polished,
That it passes for elite refinement...
With the simple folk easily taken in
Not only for a ride,
But even for a flight,
To a promised dreamland!

Be these the dreams
Sold by the ruling or aspiring leader,
Or by the Clergy promising the Elysium,
Or the travel offices
Exporting people to job havens,
Or human traffic handlers
Sitting in imposing offices!

All of them know
How to look imposing,
Convincing and impressive,
In their exterior,
And their speech,



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Born in 1951 and brought up and schooled in Kangra district of erstwhile Punjab (now Himachal Pradesh), Desh Bir did his M.A. in English from DAV College, Jalandhar and topped the GND University, Amritsar. Taught at DAV College, Jalandhar for three years before joining Punjab Govt. Education Service in 1976 as a Lecturer at Govt. College Hoshiarpur. He was selected in Central Services based on combined UPSC exam for IAS etc in 1978, but chose to stay in Education. He was promoted as Principal, Govt. College, Hoshiarpur, in July, 2006 and retired in October, 2009. After retirement, he was appointed as Ombudsman, NREGA for five districts of Punjab for four years. Has nearly 170 creative articles published in English Newspapers like Daily Post, Deccan Herald, The Tribune, Daily World, Punjab Advance and Kashmir Vision. Lately, he has taken to poetry for pouring out his intensely felt perceptions

And their polite manners,
And assurances of a bright tomorrow!
So that the poor victim
Just bows in awe,
Before he has any suspicions!
But, then it is too late to retract !

That is what happens,
Whenever you are cheated.
Whether it is done
By your own folk,
The nearest of the near,
Or by total strangers...
The truth is that
They know their craft
Of hiding their truth
Behind a dazzling aura!
And that is their Art !

Pattern in seeming Chaos

Behind every event
Human or natural
There is a pattern!
A kind of programming
Behind the visible chaos!

The formula may seem enigmatic
Yet its working is ever unfailing.
The alternating day and night,
The movements of the stars and planets,
The cycle of coming and going
Both of things , situations, phenomena,
Life and its shades
All happen in a pattern well laid out,
Once for all!

Pollination , fruiting , sowing ,germination,
Growth , aging , ripening and fall
Leading to another round of seed-time and so on!
Infancy, toddling , childhood , youth
Age and departure

All come in a sequence
No faltering in the Divine Plan !

Disease does afflict,
And disturb the smooth journey of body!
Sometimes slightly, sometimes grievously !
Sometimes an invited one,
Sometimes in genes received !
The invited one has a cause
And there can be a course
For reversal , if tried
Through the medical science!
Genetic ones have some remedy, too!

Nothing happens without a rationale
Howsoever mysterious !
Loss is fruit of miscalculation!
War is a product of ego,
Ego is a child of undeserved power!
Death is a product of birth
And also a gate to rebirth !
Where is disorder then in the Scheme Divine ?
Surely the incapacity to see is mine and thine !

Emotional Senility

You never admit
That it has crept in.
Yet with passage of years
This child of your fears
Comes to cloud your vision
And creates phantoms like
Suspensions,
Misinterpretations,
Assumed hostility,
Attempts by others to cheat,
Or wrong presentation of things
Especially by those once very intimate!

Siblings become
Parties to long silences.
Once they never parted
Beyond a few minutes!
And now they avoid each other....
May be , don't want to see each other!
Who is the culprit in this change ?
Only cooling off of our relations by Time –
The Big robber of your joy !

As you and we,
Go past the fifties or sixties
We tend to harden in our attitudes
And lose all sense of tolerance !
Start doubting,
Start fearing,
Start being defensive,
Start accusing others of motives
Which may have no existence at all .

We kill our chances of comfort
And lose the joie d vivre
Because we become doubting folks !
In place of discussing
We tend to nurse grudges
Simply because we turn emotionally senile!
This –because we cease to think young
Feel young and take life
As a child takes it !

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report



Assemblyman Hoover

2024 Sacramento County Homeless Count

Every two years Sacramento County conducts a count of sheltered and unsheltered people experiencing homelessness on a single night in January. This report, called the Point-in-Time Count, was released earlier this week.

The report shows an overall homeless population of 6,615, with 3,944 of those being unsheltered. Folsom had 133 unsheltered, Citrus Heights had 62, and Rancho Cordova had 52.

While the report shows that the overall county numbers are moving in the right direction, there is still much work to do. As my recent audit on statewide homelessness spending revealed, the state has failed to systematically track homelessness spending and is not adequately positioned to collect data and assess outcomes.

After receiving these audit results, I authored Assembly Bill 2903 to require homelessness programs to annually report cost and outcome data to the California Interagency Council on Homelessness and the public. That bill was unanimously passed by the As-

sembly and is now awaiting a hearing in the Senate. I will keep you up to date on its progress.

Nonprofit of the Year Ceremony

This week I was pleased to give a resolution to Sacramento Splash, who I chose as the 2024 Nonprofit of the Year for Assembly District 7. The annual ceremony in the Assembly took place on Wednesday.

Sacramento Splash stands as a beacon of commitment and dedication in the realm of environmental education. Comprising a dedicated team of nature enthusiasts, scientists, and educators, Sacramento Splash works tirelessly to ensure that every child has the opportunity to forge a profound connection with the natural world.

At the heart of Splash's mission is their innovative approach to science education. Through comprehensive training programs, they empower teachers to deliver science curricula in a manner that is both engaging and enjoyable for students. By focusing on water pollution prevention, Splash not only imparts knowledge but also instills a sense of responsibility towards preserving our natural habitats.

California Aerospace Day

I was proud to coauthor SCR 154 this month proclaiming June 5, 2024 as California Aerospace Day. I enjoyed presenting a resolution to aerospace industry leaders at this week's celebration hosted by the California Manufacturers & Technology Association and the Aerospace Museum of California. Our state is lucky to have some of the best scientists, engineers, and innovators in the world and it's important that we continue to expand our STEM educational offerings to prepare the next generation of aerospace leaders.

California Family Justice Network

On Monday I met with representatives from the Sacramento branch of the California Family Justice Network as part of their annual advocacy day.

The California Family Justice Network is a dynamic alliance working to strengthen, support, and advocate for the important work of family justice centers across California. They provide education, training, and coordinated assistance to Family Justice Centers as well as to new and developing centers

throughout the state. Every year, they support more than 70,000 victims of domestic violence, elder abuse, child abuse, and human trafficking. Their strength lies in a collaborative model of services and support that ensures increased safety and comprehensive care for those in need.

New Podcast Episode

In this week's episode of the Point of Order Podcast I was joined by Assemblymember Joe Patterson to discuss a number of topics including our favorite bands, the NBA finals, the Supermajority's proposed budget plan, Governor Newsom's warning against the over-regulation of AI, rents dropping in large cities, California's abysmal performance on taxpayer ROI, and the recent Elex Michaelson interview with Speaker Rivas.

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