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CONGRATULATIONS ON 647th THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SAHIB SRI SATGURU RAVIDASS JI

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, whose 647th birth anniversary is being celebrated throughout the world in February and March, was a great Guru of medieval Bhakti movement of North India. He belonged to the lowest of the low castes in India whose touch used to be considered polluting to the So Called Savarnas. He opened a frontal attack against the system of Untouchability. He rejected the tradition of Brahmin mediator to reach the Supreme Being. He also said that one need not to hide his caste or leave his low profession to reach God. He became a model for his fellow beings to overcome the hierarchical barriers of Brahminical Social Order and to establish Begumpura - a state without fear and sorrows. Guru Ravidass elevated the status of the Labour by emphasizing on the fact that honest Labour is empowering. He completely rejected the concept of living on charity or miraculous wealth obtained by Paras.

By defeating the famous Kashi Pundits in a formally organized Shastrartha, Guru Ravidass proved that merit is not the fiefdom of so called upper castes alone. Everybody is capable of worshipping Him. The fourfold division of Hindu society is a big lie and a trick to make and keep a large section of the Indian society under the cruelty and control of the few in the name of purity-pollution principle made by the so-called Brahmins. It is against this very system of religiously sanctified social differentiation that Guru Ravidass envisioned establishing a state where there would be no place for untouchability and social oppression.

For the social transformation of the society, Guru Ravidass laid emphasis on Labour, compassion, virtue, prohibition of alcohol and all bad deeds. He also reiterated on the urgent need of remembering the formless God whom he addressed by varied names. Some scholars are of the view that Guru Ravidass did not form an organization nor he launched any consistent and systematic agitation against the system of untouchability. This is true. But to raise a loud voice at his times was no less than a clarion call to dismantle the unjust system of Brahminical social order. It is also true that the path told by him has become the beacon light for the Dalit movement in the country and abroad.

SRI GURU RAVIDASS GURPURB CELEBRATION- A MARVELOUS SUCCESS IN PITTSBURG (CALIFORNIA)



Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (California) and the entire Sangat from different parts of California celebrated 647th Birth Anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj at its Pittsburg Gurughar with recitation of three days Akhand Path Sewa, ending with Bhog ceremony on Feb. 25th, 2024 (Sunday), with a great spirit of enthusiasm and devotion. Sacred ceremony of Nishan Sahib (Hoisting of flag and change of Chola Sahib Ceremony) was performed with the help of a huge Sangat gathering on Feb. 24, 2024 (Saturday). Sangat is a dynamic force behind the success of a function of this magnitude. More than five thousand devotees from different areas of California participated on the final and bright day of this momentous and historic celebration. Besides Gurughar Jatha, other prominent Jathas led by Bhai Onkar Singh Una wale and Bhai Sweg Singh of San Jose glorified the occasion with their melodious Shabad Kirtan and God-gifted talents.

Consulate General of India San Francisco was also represented by honorable consul, Mr. Jaswant Singh, Consul. Other speakers who addressed the congregation included Mr. Santokh Singh Jhingran, Mr. Baljit Singh and Mr. Vinod Kumar (President Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg). Three days continuous Langar Sewa hosted by Gurughar

with unrelenting help and day and night voluntary efforts of Sewadars in the kitchen services were highly commendable and appreciated by Sangat for which the Managing Committee is also very grateful.

Managing Committee of Gurughar also conveys its hearty thanks and appreciation to Sangat for their lavish donations to the congregation. Various voluntary food stalls with varieties of delicious foods and drinking items was a significant feature of this sacred occasion. Commercial stalls from different business owners of the area also added to the attraction and glamour of the event on this beautiful sunny day.

Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Editor-in -Chief Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba weeklies, as always, provided his professional coverage for full two days for the entire proceedings including the Nishan Sahib ceremony. With prayers for continued unity among the entire Sangat for Gurughar's Chardikala in the years ahead."NANAK NAAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

SANGAT SEWADAR, Feb.26th,2024

O. P. Balley

Founder Member

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA)

(See more on next page)

SRI GURU RAVIDASS GURPURB CELEBRATION- A MARVELOUS SUCCESS IN PITTSBURG (CALIFORNIA)



Homelessness In Sacramento: Challenges and Opportunities

We've just wrapped up the 2024 Point-In-Time Count in Sacramento, a vital snapshot of homelessness in our community. Conducted on a single night in January, this count provides a clear picture of both sheltered and unsheltered individuals facing homelessness, as mandated by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. The latest findings underscore a troubling trend: Sacramento County is witnessing a dramatic rise in homelessness, with the 2022 count revealing nearly 9,278 people without homes in one night, a 67% surge from 2019 and the highest figure on record, translating to 59 out of every 10,000 residents. The issue of homelessness is more visible and pressing than ever, with encampments and individuals in need becoming a common sight. Legal rulings, such as the *Martin v. Boise* decision by the 9th Circuit Court, have tied our hands in some respects, preventing us from taking punitive measures against homeless-

ness when there aren't enough shelter options available. This limitation was felt even more acutely during the pandemic, constraining our ability to manage and maintain public spaces.

Addressing homelessness goes beyond just providing roofs over heads. The journey to permanent housing starts with temporary shelters and outreach programs designed to build connections and guide individuals to necessary services. The complexity deepens when considering those in our community struggling with mental health and substance abuse issues, who might lose their belongings, be unaware of their situation due to conditions like anosognosia, endure the difficulties of outdoor living, or become victims of crime.

Despite these challenges, there's a ray of hope with new legislative initiatives such as AB2417, introduced by Assembly members Hoover and Patterson. This bill advocates for a "Beyond Housing" approach, under-

standing the complex needs of the homeless population and emphasizing the need for mental health and substance abuse treatment. It aims to address the underlying issues of homelessness, not just the surface problems. This move is a response to the limitations of the "Housing First" model, which hasn't fully tackled the root causes of homelessness, leaving many without crucial services.

In the County, especially in the unincorporated areas in my district, we're taking proactive steps to address these issues. Our comprehensive strategy includes Navigator outreach, Park Rangers, Sheriff's Homeless Outreach Teams, and clean-up operations. These programs are not only about engagement but also about assessing needs, ensuring safety, and facilitating access to crucial resources. Sheriff Cooper's approach to law enforcement, which calls for the consistent enforcement of laws, mirrors our commitment to a compassionate yet effective response.

Tax payers deserve better. Residents of Sacramento County and the City shouldn't have to deal with illegal encampments every day. More importantly, everyone deserves a chance at a stable and secure future.



Sue Frost

Thank you for Reading – and as always if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@sacounty.gov. Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta.

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS

647th Birth Anniversary, Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj

On the auspicious occasion of celebrating 645th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj at Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg on 23rd, 24th, and 25th February, 2024, I convey my heartiest congratulations to the entire Sangat.

A glimpse in the pages of history during the middle ages reveals that social degeneration based on caste system, fanaticism, bigotry, hypocrisy and ritualism was alarmingly high and was eating into the very vitals of civilization and human dignity. At such a critical juncture of social decline appear prophets of spiritual awakening to create a just and equitable social order. It was this dark period of history when Guru Ravidass Ji was born at Seer Goverdhanpur in 1377 AD in Kashi, Varanasi. Guru Ravidass Ji, Satguru Kabir Sahib and Guru Nanak Dev ji were contemporaries and were in the forefront of a Bhagti Movement which had started to bring the degenerating social order to the path of righteousness.



O.P. Balley
(Founder Member)
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha
Pittsburg, CA
1-925-252-6085

dass Ji's teachings were based on equality and universal brotherhood and were not meant for any particular section of society. Guru Ravidass Ji reminds us of the fact that human birth is a rare privilege obtained as a result of meritorious deeds of innumerable lives primarily for the purpose of God realization. The very basic purpose of human life is defeated if one remains lost in the quagmire of material possessions and worldly delusions. God is always within us and can be seen with our inner vision. We need not have to wander around in mountains and forests to find Him.

CASTE, CREED AND RELIGIOUS DISTINCTIONS:

- As we learn from Guru Ji's teachings all men emerge from the same divine flame and the same creator pervades through them all. The four-fold classification of society into Varna system of Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaish and Shudras is all man-made to maintain the fake and artificial superiority of priestly classes which has infected the entire society with a vicious disease ruining the very core of the entire social. The sacred hymns of Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, as enshrined in

Guru Granth sahib Ji, are simple and intelligible and full of devotional sentiments going straight to the heart and soul of the reader. The Brahmins and higher priestly class who initially opposed him with their thinking of superiority complex were dazzled and humbled to see Guru Ravidass Ji tear open the skin on his chest to show them the gold-like sacred thread (or his inner light). This made them recognize his real and spiritual greatness and many of the Brahmin priests and rulers like Maharani Mirabai and Jhallanbai of Chittor-Rajasthan became his followers and bowed before him in reverence.

"AISA CHAHUN RAJ MEIN
JIS MEIN SABHAN KO MILE
ANN

CHHOT BARE SAB SAM BASEIN
RAVIDASS RAHE PRASANN"

In the end I wish and pray that the rays of Guru Ji's philosophy and teachings may keep illuminating our minds and souls as long as the sun shines and the stars twinkle. Our best tribute to the nobility of his life and to perpetuate his ideals is to follow them as a way of our daily life.



I gratefully appreciate this opportunity for expressing my respectful homage to the memory of our great Satguru Dhan Dhan Sri Guru Ravidass Ji through the esteemed columns of "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" Weeklies USA.

"JO BOLE SO NIRBHAJI SHRI GURU
RAVIDASS MAHARAJ KI JAI"

DIVINE TEACHINGS: -Guru Ravi-



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The Ad Dharm in Dr. Ambedkar's writing!

STATEMENT "E" [f1] NOTE BY Dr. B. R. AMBEDKAR TO THE INDIAN FRANCHISE COMMITTEE (LOTHIAN COMMITTEE) ON THE DEPRESSED CLASSES SUBMITTED ON MAY 1st, 1932

Depressed Classes in the Punjab

In connection with the population figure for the depressed classes given in the census of 1931 I wish to draw attention to two facts:

(1) The population of those who caused pollution by touch was according to the census of 1911, 2-8 Millions while in the census of 1931 the population of untouchables is given as amounting to 1.3 million.

(2) The census of 1911 gives a list of 23 castes which are deemed to cause pollution by touch. The census of 1931 mentions only castes as forming the untouchable population in the Punjab. 12. Why the total population of the untouchables and the list of castes included in that category should have shrunk so much between 1911 and 1931 I am not able to ascertain. It is however necessary to state that among the untouchables of Punjab there has been going on for some years past a strong movement called the Ad-Dharm Movement the object of which is to separate from the Hindu fold and form themselves into a distinct community under the new name of "Ad-Dharmis". Such has been the strength of the movement that the untouchables decided to return themselves as "Ad-Dharmis" instead of

AD DHARM IN PUNJAB ELECTIONS

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies

Ad Dharm movement of Punjab gained tremendous importance within a short period after its foundation in 1926. That it got recognition for a separate religion for the so called lowest if the low from the British Government speaks about its great strength. In 1931, about 500,000 Scheduled Castes (SCs) got recorded Ad Dharm as their distinct religion. Thereafter, its record victory in the 1937 Punjab Provincial Assembly elections reinforced its popularity among the SCs. Its victory in the 1946 Punjab Provincial Assembly election to the Punjab Legislative Assembly assigned it an independent political identity. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the Ad Dharm movement, was elected from Hoshiarpur constituency. It contested both the above-mentioned assembly elections in collaboration with the Unionist Party.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia also contested the Punjab Legislative Assembly Election of 1951, but as an Independent contestant from the Garhshankar Constituency.

He was offered a ticket by the Congress to contest the assembly elections as its nominee but Babu Mangu Ram Ji refused to contest the election on the Congress ticket and the same was given to Mr Kartar Singh of village Langeri of Hoshiarpur District.

Hindus in the census of 1931, and the Government gave recognition to this feeling and allowed the Census Superintendent of Punjab to open a new category of Ad-Dharmis. This led in some parts of the Punjab to riots between the Hindus

and the untouchables. As a result the untouchables in some parts returned themselves simply as "Ad-Dharmis" without mentioning their respective castes, and in other parts where they were prevented from doing so returned themselves as Hindus under their caste names. I am mentioning these facts to show that the difficulties created in the enumeration of the untouchables and which are admitted by the Government of Punjab may be responsible for this shrinkage in the number and list of untouchables in the Punjab. The matter therefore requires to be carefully looked into.



C. L. Chumber

Courtesy: C. L. Chumber
Editor-in-Chief: Kaumi Udarian
(Monthly Journal in
Punjabi/Hindi/English)
Jalandhar City

Assemblymembers Hoover and Patterson Introduce "Beyond Housing" Measure to Address Homelessness

SACRAMENTO - Today Assemblymembers Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) and Joe Patterson (R-Rocklin) announced Assembly Bill 2417 to expand and improve California's response to our state's homelessness crisis. This legislation increases funding flexibility for treatment and service oriented programs by repealing the state's existing one-size-fits-all "Housing First" approach to homelessness.

"Our current approach to homelessness is failing to get the results our communities are asking for," Assemblyman Josh Hoover said. "We need a renewed focus not just on housing, but on getting people the necessary treatment they need to get

out of the cycle of homelessness. It's time for our state to support programs that are driving real change and getting people the help they need."

Since 2018 California has spent over \$20 billion taxpayer dollars to solve the homelessness crisis. During that same period the state's overall homelessness population has increased by 32 percent and today half of the nation's unsheltered homeless live in California.

"If we are serious about fully addressing the growing homelessness crisis, we must ensure we are treating the root causes of homelessness," said Assemblyman Joe Patterson. "Shelters without accountability

have proven to be ineffective. AB 2417 will allow the existing successful programs in my district, and statewide, to focus their efforts on providing proven effective services to assist individuals in restoring and rebuilding their lives."

AB 2417 shifts California's focus "Beyond Housing" by recognizing that individuals experiencing homelessness have diverse needs and may require different pathways to stability. The bill would allow state agencies and departments to allocate funds to programs that prioritize mental health and drug treatment as a prerequisite for participation.

The proposed legislation comes in response to growing con-

cerns over the shortcomings of the "Housing First" model, which has failed to adequately address the root causes of homelessness in many cases and has left many individuals without access to essential services. Moving "Beyond Housing" offers another tool in the toolbox for local governments as they seek to develop more holistic approaches to addressing homelessness.

Josh Hoover represents Assembly District 7, which includes the cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova and the unincorporated communities of Carmichael, Fair Oaks, Foothill Farms, Gold River, Mather, McClellan Park, North Highlands, Orangevale, and Rosemont.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD