



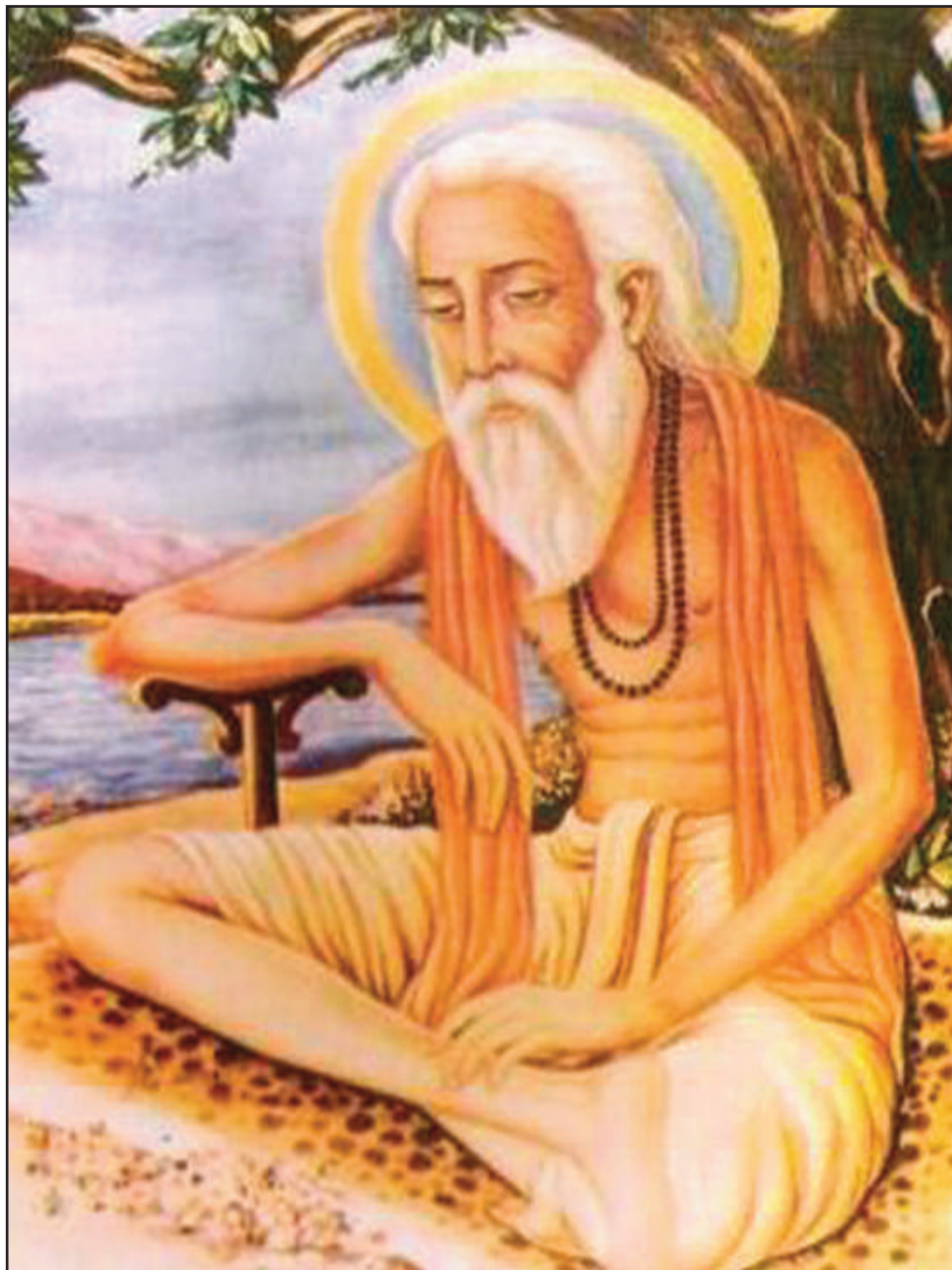
Guru Ravidass and His Vision of an Audacious and Egalitarian Social Order

Invited Editorial-cum-Article

Guru Ravidass was one of the most renowned lower caste Sant-poets of the bhakti movement, especially the *nirguna sampradaya* or *santparampara* (sect or tradition of devotees of a formless God), of the later medieval centuries in Northern India. He was a cobbler, sage, philosopher and social reformer, all rolled into one, who coined *bhakti* (devotion of non-anthropomorphic God) as a method of social protest against the centuries old oppressive system of social hierarchies and inhuman practice based on low-caste birth. As with all low-castes, he too fell victim to such all sorts of pernicious social restrictions and practices emanating from *Chatur-Varnavyavastha* (four-fold social order). It was owing to such socio-religious practices that Guru Ravidass was not allowed to practice conventional form of bhakti of Hindu Gods/Goddesses. His most refereed hymn, *Naam Tero Aarti Majan Murare, Hari Ke Naam bin Jhutte Sagal pasaare*, not only alludes to such social exclusionary practices and unravels their inner hollowness, but also articulates a voice of revolt against them. He dubbed all brahminical rituals and religious ceremonies as *Jhutte Sagal pasaare* (fake activities). Guru Ravidass refused to surrender before such oppressive social structures. To move upward on social hierarchy, he did not discard the religion he was born into, nor abandon his so-called 'polluted' hereditary occupation of making and mending shoes. He devised a new form of bhakti based on deep faith *innirakar* (formless) God and continued with of his hereditary leather-work. This unique middle path – free from religious rituals and sectarian formalities, and dignity of labour – was novel and daring given the rampant religious bigotry of his time.

Guru Ravidass laid emphasis on devotion to a formless God, self-respect, dignity of labour, fearlessness, and compassion for all. It reflected the democratic and egalitarian traits of his social philosophy and deep faith in the just order of God. His fearlessness is evident from the fact that he adopted the forbidden iconography of upper castes as a symbol of social protest. He challenged the tyranny of brahmins and defied their hegemony by wearing *dhoti* (cloth wrapped around the waist), *janeue* (sacred thread) and putting *tilak* (sacred red mark on forehead) – prohibited then for the untouchables. Despite adopting the prohibited dress code, Guru Ravidass continued with his hereditary occupation of leather working. He did not

discard/hide his caste at all. Rather, he became very vocal as well as proud of it and raised his voice against the oppression perpetrated in its name on lower castes. In presenting himself in such an



innovative manner, Guru Ravidass probably tried to demonstrate how lower castes could achieve upward social mobility without sacrificing or compromising their distinct Dalit identity on the one hand, and resorting to violent agitations on the other. In his widely appreciated scared scriptures, one can easily find ample references to his caste. He also underscored on the importance of being peaceful and cultivating compassion for all, including ones' opponents. This is what made him the principal prophet of Dalit consciousness in North India and distinguished him as the originator of a 'middle path' towards social transformation based as it was on democratic means and peaceful ways. His middle path approach liberated Dalits from what Schuetz called the dilemma of 'a man without a history'. Spiritually and socially

oriented revolutionary teachings of Guru Ravidass provided new vistas for upward Dalit social mobility. It facilitated the lowest of the low to rise up against the perennial injustices heaped upon them, and to

of carrying away the carcass and skinning the dead cattle. He earned his livelihood by the sweat of his brow and refused help from all quarters. That made him self-reliant and free from any bondage of



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upper castes obligations. "He was probably the only saint in Kashi," as articulated by Chandra Bhan Prasad, "who neither sought nor accepted patronage from kings; that's the reason Ravidass continued with his business his entire life. He enjoyed financial freedom and did not live on alms" (*The Print*, April 12, 2018). To quote him further, Guru Ravidass "could travel more widely than any of his contemporaries – Kabir for instance – because he generated revenue from his business." That means Dalits need to have their own business too if they want to liberate themselves from the cobwebs of social exclusion and economic exploitation that they have been suffering for generation after generation. On the whole, this has become more meaningful given the large scale shrinking of the public sector domain.

In the popular calendar culture of Punjab, Guru Ravidass is often presented in the above-mentioned dress code which was (and for many still is) anathema, especially for the upper castes. His non-violent social defiance method of social transformation has effectively worked as a suitable pedagogic tool to convey the message of self-respect and the dignity of labour to the downtrodden who were not only debarred from entering into the spiritual sphere of the Hindu society, monopolized by the priestly class of Brahmins, but were also treated worse than animals for no other reason except for their so-called low caste birth and the allegedly polluted nature of their hereditary occupation. It is in this context that his emphasis on devotion to God and adoption of a unique iconography, together produced a new text of peaceful social protest for lower-castes. Many of his lower caste followers in Punjab take pride in publicly exhibiting their caste titles – *Ravidassia/putt chamaran de*
(Contd. on next page)

reclaim their lost indigenous socio-cultural and religious heritage.

However, what made Guru Ravidass the most venerable among his fellow community folks was his steadfast determination to proudly exhibit his otherwise degraded caste identity and to challenge the dominant structures of social oppression. Though he used to attire himself like a priest, he did not hide his caste. By attiring like that he did not intend to convey the superiority of the profession of priesthood at all. Nor he pretended to show any pride in the dress of the priestly Brahmin caste *per se*. His only motive to dress like priests, it seems however, was to challenge the hegemony of the high-caste people. He did not feel any shame in earning his livelihood by his 'polluted' hereditary occupation of leather-work. He boldly wrote about his caste and its related occupation

Guru Ravidass and His Vision of an Audacious and Egalitarian Social Order

(Continue from page 1)

(sons of Chamars)/SC Boys! This unique phenomenon of articulation of caste-based social identity among the larger section of the SC population of Punjab can also be witnessed in mushrooming Dalit pop songs in Punjab.

Guru Ravidass became prominent because he unleashed a frontal attack on the long tradition of social oppression and untouchability in Hindu society. Though born and brought up in the Uttar Pradesh province of North India, Guru Ravidass came to command large followings among the lower castes of Punjab, which he was believed to have visited during his journeys to Rajasthan. Another factor that made him further popular in Punjab is the inclusion of his Bani (spiritual poetry 40 hymns and one Shloka) in Sri Guru Granth Sahib – the sacred scripture of the Sikh faith. His stature grew still further when the Ad Dharm movement made him its patron Sant and a political rallying point. The Ad Dharm movement which came into existence in 1920s used his pictures as its emblem, hymns as its sacred text and legends about him as illustration of lower caste pride and power. The fact that Guru Ravidass came from one of the lowest castes, acted as a catalyst in the emergence of Dalit consciousness in Punjab. His fellow low caste followers, who consider him their Guru, dedicated to him temples, memorial halls, educational institutions/chairs, cultural organizations, and hospitals. They founded several missions to accurately establish facts about his life and works, and to disseminate his message of compassion, equality, and brotherhood in India and abroad. In fact, his lustrous image played an instrumental role in mobilizing the outcastes, especially the Chamars (leather workers) who also joined the Ad Dharm movement in large numbers. Consequently, the Chamars of Punjab and Punjabi Chamar diasporas organized themselves into various Guru Ravidass Sabhas (societies) and established a large number of Ravidass shrines popularly known as Ravidass Deras within the state and abroad.

The sacred *bani* of Guru Ravidass eventually emerged as a vehicle of social protest during the early decades of 20th century colonial rule in India. His bani, written in the vernacular of common man, is full of radical fervour. It provides what Gail Omvedt hailed as "hope for a better world and a fight against exploiters, power-holders and oppression going on under the name of religion". It reflected his vision of the social and spiritual needs of the downtrodden and underlined the urgency of their emancipation. He therefore, is regarded as a messiah of the downtrodden who revere him as devoutly as Hindus revered their Gods and Goddesses, and Sikhs their Gurus. They worship his image, celebrate his

Jyantis (birth and death anniversaries), recite his hymns every morning and night, raise slogans like *Ravidass Shakti Amar Rahe* (the spiritual power of Ravidass live forever) and repose faith in his spiritual power.

The unique 'middle path' and bhakti-based model of Dalit social mobility was well received in Punjab for the following interrelated reasons: (a) Majority of Dalits in Punjab are followers of Guru Ravidass, (b) Ad Dharm leadership consistently worked towards the formation of alternative Ravidass culture based on the life and teachings of Guru Ravidass, (c) the fact that Guru Ravidass himself belonged to one of the lowest castes (the Chamar caste) acted as a catalyst in the adoption of his unique path, (d) the widespread influence of Ad Dharm movement in Punjab prevented conversion of a large number of Dalits to other religions. It also worked as a bulwark against the cultural assimilation process for fear of losing indigenous Dalit culture, and (e) popularity of Ad Dharm (indigenous Dalit religion) among a large number of Dalits in the state and their faith in its capacity to salvage them from the abyss of social exclusion and oppression caused by the asymmetrical and oppressive structures that have emerged within the mainstream religions in the state. Since Guru Ravidass himself did not embrace any other religion nor try to escape social exclusion by assimilation into the mainstream social system of the upper castes, Dalits of Punjab found in him an exemplar of the 'middle path'. The presence of simple but sharp elements of social protest in his teachings along with the commonality of his caste provided the basis for the rise of radical consciousness among Dalits in the state. The mere mention of his name evokes a sense of confidence and self-respect among them. So much so that a large number of them prefer to identify themselves as 'Ravidassia' rather than to be known by their customary caste titles coloured with derogatory connotations.

Thus, it is for such reasons, as mentioned above, that Guru Ravidass was embraced by the leadership of Ad Dharm movement as an exemplar of the 'middle path' in whose life and teachings the Dalits of Punjab found the necessary ammunition for the ignition of radical Dalit consciousness in the state. The establishment of a large number of Ravidass Deras by the Dalits in Punjab and in other parts of India over the last few years is a case in point. Ravidass has become very popular among Punjabi Dalit diasporas as well, who 'have built Ravidass temples

in almost all the towns of the world wherever they happened to live even in small numbers' in order to assert their separate caste identity. The number of Ravidass Deras has been multiplying very fast, and has taken the form of a sort of alternate socio-cultural Ravidass Deras movement. It

has generated a sense of confidence among them and provided them with an opportunity to exhibit their hitherto eclipsed Dalit identity. These Deras, in fact, have been functioning as missions to sensitize Dalits and to facilitate their empowerment. In order to look different from the shrines of Hindu and Sikh religions, and to project a distinct religious identity, Ravidass Deras have formulated their own religious symbols, ceremonies, prayers, rituals and messages of social protest against the oppressive structures of caste domination in the agrarian society of Punjab. Led by varied Ravidass Deras, Guru Ravidass movement has offered new hope to those who have also been empowered by the constitutional provisions of state affirmative action. The goal-motivator of the Ravidass movement, based as it is on the teachings of Guru Ravidass, is rooted in the ideal of *Begumpura* (a city free from sorrows and sufferings of all sort).

The *Begumpura* city of Guru Ravidass promises a social order free from all sorts of hierarchies and buttressed by the principles of fraternity in the real sense of the term. *Begumpura* promises freedom from all sufferings and sorrows, worries of paying taxes, and ensures an abode of everlasting safety. Except the sovereignty of the eternal God, none would be authorised to exercise any power on the inhabitants of the city of *Begumpura*. Its inhabitants would be free to stroll throughout its length and breadth as they please without any fear of caste-based restrictions and punishments. Guru Ravidass concludes the description of his prescient joyful city by underlying that all those who live there would be his (an emancipated cobbler) friends. Thus, in a social order of *Begumpura* fame, there would be no space for boundaries whatsoever between lower and higher classes and all would be treated equally without any difference of small or big – Aisa Chahu Raaj Main Jaha Mile Sabhan ko Ann, Chot Bade Sabh Sam Base Ravidass Rahe Parsan. In fact, the very binary of low and high would cease to exist within the joyful city of *Begumpura* of Guru Ravidass. And the absence of caste hierarchies and social binaries would eventually warrant the dignity of labour and realization of its genuine remuneration.

The establishment of an egalitarian social order, based on dignity of labour, presupposes caste-class solidarity. Caste-class solidarity, in fact, depends upon what Dr B.R. Ambedkar pithily articulated as the 'annihilation of caste'. Caste has not only divided the lower and upper castes into seamless boundaries of mutual antagonism, the lower and upper castes are further deeply divided within their own social segments. All castes follow the principles of endogamy and exogamy. They marry within their respective social cocoons and limit themselves to their biradari (blood relationship) and

rishtedari (family ties) during formal family functions and community social gatherings. Inter-caste marriages are not only a taboo among the upper castes. Lower castes too are equally afflicted with this divisive caste malady. Ravidassias, Ramdassias, Valmikis, Ad Dharmis – are just some of the total 39 Scheduled Castes categories in Punjab – follow their respective biradari traditions and customary social bindings in deciding their matrimonial and other social practices and ceremonies. Territorial social divisions in the rural setting are posing a formidable challenge to caste-class solidarity. Villages are divided into two social settings: mainstream village (*pind*) and the segregated Scheduled Castes neighbourhoods. The latter are contemptuously called *chamarlees*, *thathees*, and *vehras* in Doaba, Malwa and Mazha regions of Punjab respectively.

Dalits in Punjab constitute almost one third of the total population of the state. Majority of them earn their livelihood through various kind of manual work, including daily wage work on the agricultural fields of the farmers. Farmers too constitute about one third of the total population of the state. Majority of the Dalits and farmers are rural-based and many of the former earn their livelihood while working as manual labour (popularly known as *kirtis* – landless agriculture workers) at the agriculture farms of the latter. *Kirtis* and *kisans* (farmers) together formed a potent social force despite the fact of their being belonging to different class/caste categories. There is a general impression that the recent Farmers' protests on the doorsteps of Delhi has put the *kirtis* and *kisans* on a single platform as they perceived that contentious farm laws in question would affect them in their respective domain in terms of the sustainability of their livelihoods. Landless agriculture workers are dependent on availability of manual work at the agriculture farms. They are equally worried about the allegedly long-term adverse impact of these three agriculture reform laws on their work conditions, which have motivated them to join the farmers' protest at Delhi borders. However, for a long-term sustainability of the current circumstantial coming together of the various *kirtis* and *kisans* organizations, the teaching of Guru Ravidass and his vision of *Begumpura* are of critical importance. For a durable association between *kirtis* and *kisans* to transcend their entrenched caste fault lines and to articulate fresh and long-lasting narratives of their newly formed unity, the spiritual vision of *Begumpura* – free from caste, class, religious hierarchies, spatial boundaries, taxes, unjust laws and fear of state officials – seems to be a most appropriate ideal in current circumstances!

Read more:

<http://www.ambedkartimes.com/Dr%20Ronki%20Ram.htm>

HEARTIEST CONGRATULATIONS

on the 646th Parkash Utsav of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji

On the auspicious occasion of celebrating the 646th Birth Anniversary of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj at Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (CA) on 3rd, 4th, and 5th February, 2023, the Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA congratulates the followers of Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj all over the globe. 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 human civilization and dignity. At such a critical juncture of social decline, appear prophets with spiritual awakenings to create a just and equitable social order. It was this dark period of history when Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj was born at Seer Goverdhanpur in 1377 AD in Kashi, Varanasi.

BHAGTI MOVEMENT:- Guru Ravidass Ji, Satguru Kabir Ji and Guru Nanak Dev Ji were contemporaries and were pioneers of the Bhagti Movement in the 14th and 15th centuries which had started to bring the degenerating social order to the path of righteousness. As the history stands in evidence, there was a spiritual discourse among these spiritual sages of the time, in Varanasi. Guru Ravidass 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 realization of God. 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 awake within us and can be seen with our inner vision only. We need not have to wander around in mountains and forests to find Him.

SYMBOL OF GODLINESS:- Satguru Kabir Ji and Satguru Nanak Dev Ji recognized the spiritual enlightening and greatness of Guru Ravidass Ji which had made him an undeniable symbol of godliness when social segregation was rampant



everywhere in Indian society. In spite of deliberate attempts on the part of Brahminical concept and ideology to keep his spiritual preachings hidden from the common masses, they could not hide it too long. The dazzling luster of this Spiritual JEWEL was finally visible in the holy pages of Guru Granth Saheb Ji Maharaj, compiled by the 5th Master Guru Arjun Dev Ji in 1604.

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 organism. 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 Jhallan Bai of Chittor Rajasthan, became his devoted followers and bowed before him in reverence.

In the end we do feel that with the spread of education and the untiring efforts of our modern luminaries like Babasaheb, Dr B.R Ambedkar, Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia Ji and Babu Kanshi Ram Ji, the message of equality and humanitarianism is going across the man-made social barriers of human segregation. We hope that the hardened crust of caste based separatism will start breaking apart and the dream of Sat Guru Ravidass Ji will turn into reality.

Our best tribute to the sanctity of his life and ideals is to follow them as a way of our daily life.

Supreme Council also expresses its thanks to Mr. Prem Chumber, Chief Editor Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba (Weeklies) for, as always, publishing this respectful homage in remembrance of Satguru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, in the esteemed columns of his Newspaper.

**"JO BOLE SO NIRBHAI
SHRI GURU RAVIDASS MAHARAJ KI JAI"
"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA
TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"**



O.P. Balley
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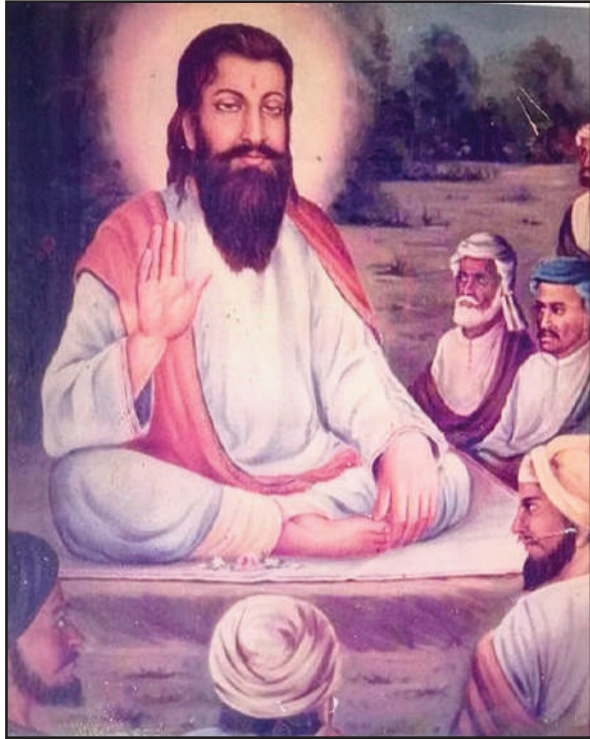


Goodie Takhar, PhD

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE 646th PARKASH UTSAV OF SATGURU RAVIDASS JI MAHARAJ

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba
Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, whose 646th birth anniversary is being celebrated throughout the world, is revered as Shiromani Sant of the medieval Bhakti movement of North India. He was born in the so called lowest of the low castes, in Seer Goverdhanpur near Varanasi (Uttar Pradesh), whose touch was used to be considered polluting to the Savarnas. He opened a frontal attack on the system of Untouchability and spoke against the system of hegemonic Brahminical mediation for an access to spirituality. He also said that one needs 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. Sri Guru Ravidass elevated the status of the labour by emphasizing on the fact that manual labour is the best way to lead a pious life. He vehemently opposed living on alms and charity of others.



He defeated the famous Kashi Pundits in a formally organized Shastrartha and proved that merit is not the fiefdom of the so called

upper castes alone. Everybody is capable of obtaining knowledge and to worship. He underlined the fact that the fourfold division of the Hindu society is a sham and a gimmick keep a large section of the society under the cruel control of a few Upper castes in the name of purity-pollution principle cunningly devised by Brahmins. It is against this very system of oppressive social differentiation that Guru Ravidass envisioned an egalitarian socio-political order where there would be no place for untouchability and social oppression. For the social transformation of the society, Sri Guru Ravidass Ji laid emphasis on labour, compassion, virtue, prohibition of alcohol and all bad deeds. He also reiterated the urgent need of remembering the formless God whom he ad-

ressed 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.

REMEMBERING C.L. CHUMBER ON HIS 7TH ANNIVERSARY

We deeply remember Mr C. L. Chumber on his 7th anniversary. His valuable contribution towards highlighting the importance of the Ad Dharm Movement for developing Dalit consciousness in Punjab has generated a lot of interest not only in Punjab but in other parts of the country as well as among the diaspora. Mr. C. L. Chumber was one of the few Dalit activists who consistently worked for popularizing the legacy of Ad Dharm movement. He highlighted the contributions of Great Freedom Fighter Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia towards the formation of Ad Dharm and the legacy of this historic Dalit movement in North-Western India. He launched Punjabi Monthly journal "Kaumi Udarian" (National Flights) to keep the legacy of the movement alive.



In 1985 he brought a well-documented "Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia Souvenir" on the formation and achievements of the Ad Dharm movement and the sterling contribution of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia in awakening of self-respect among the Moolnivasees of the region. The title 'Muggowalia' after Mangu Ram Muggowalia, in fact was appended by Mr. C.L. Chumber. His legacy is being kept alive in the pages of two weeklies (Ambedkar Times in English and Desh Doaba in Panjabi) published from Sacramento (California) USA. Ambedkar Times www.ambedkartimes.com and "Desh Doaba" www.deshdoaba.com weekly newspapers pay floral tribute to Mr. C.L. Chumber Sahib on his 7th Anniversary.

Prem K. Chumber

(Editor In Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba)

In Sweet Remembrance of Late Mr. C. L. Chumber

My dear Mr. Prem Chumber,

It is with a heavy heart to remember your elder brother, Mr. C. L. Chumber on the occasion of his 7th death Anniversary falling on February 6th, 2023. Because of his undaunted courage and unforgettable contributions to espouse the noble cause of the neglected sections of society, Mr. Chumber has deeply carved a place of honor in innumerable minds who knew and admired him.

In fact he was among the pioneers and torch bearers to revive and revitalize the legacy of Ad-Dharm movement founded by Babu Mangu Ram Ji Muggowalia in 1926. Besides Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia Ji, Mr. Chumber will always be remembered as a staunch believer in the philosophy and vision of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji.

In the face of many political hurdles and challenges he kept up his motivational spirit and courage to publish his monthly Journal "KAUMI UDARIAN" (National Flights) to keep his vision alive. It was he who brought out maiden "Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia Souvenir" in 1985 which symbolized his dynamic force to keep the spirit of the Ad Dharm movement alive with a renewed vigor and momentum.

As learnt from his younger brother, Mr. Prem Chumber, Editor-in-Chief, "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" (Weeklies) in California (USA), the late Mr. Chumber was such a great admirer of Prof. Ronki Ram, the then Dean (Arts Faculty), Panjab University, Chandigarh that he wanted to weigh him with Gold Coins at the first centenary celebra-



tions of the foundation of Ad Dharm Mandal in 2026 for his sterling academic contribution towards the research of this historic movement of the lower castes. Mr C. L. Chumber also admired Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, an eminent scholar and a retired professor from Santa Barbara University of USA, who wrote extensively on Ad Dharm movement in his book "Religion as Social

Vision" based on his PhD thesis. He met Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia many times during his visits to India in 1971-72.

Mr. Prem Chumber is also a great admirer of Prof. Ronki Ram and Prof. Mark whom he met recently in Santa Barbara (California). He carried an editorial about his meeting with Prof Mark in Ambedkar Times Weekly and also published his interview with him.

Had Mr. C. L. Chumber been alive today, he would have been so happy to learn that his younger brother, Mr. Prem Chamber, is carrying forward his legacy.

CONCLUSION: - In the end I must say that a person with dynamism and spirit of Mr. C. L. Chumber will never die and will continue to live with his legacy in the hearts and souls of those who knew him. He will always be remembered for his ideals to which he remained committed till his last breath.

I pay my due respects in remembrance of the departed soul with prayers to Almighty God to bless him with peace and tranquility.



O.P. Balley
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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on Faith

"For indeed there is no country in which religion has played so great a part in its history as it has in the history of India."

Whenever we talk/think of a religion, the word faith emerges abruptly in our mind. Indeed, to imagine any religion without having faith in its scriptures or sayings would be a lie. Having faith is not a wrong thing and it is difficult to imagine the survival of any religion without a certain quotient of conviction. But when this faith loses its transformative zeal, it not only becomes regressive but always remains eager to impose itself on others. When faith loses its tendency of self-progress and becomes a bigotry, it becomes a crime to not to voice

against it.

To have or not to have faith in any idea or thing is a person's personal choice and he cannot force anyone to believe or not to believe in any such thing or ideology. If someone argues on the relevance of a faith on reason, he cannot be held guilty. For example, according to the (Hindu) scriptures, God Indra is believed to be the power behind the causation of rain, while science has revealed the fact that rain is a part of an evaporation process. So would it be right to punish all the scientists if someone's faith gets hurt by saying something contrary to the (Hindu) scriptures or any other religious book? Faith should not be so weak in itself that it

must have to object to others who choose to speak or follow the path of truth or rationality. Speaking the truth or choosing to walk on the path of truth can also be someone's faith. Is today not the right time to evaluate the elements of faith according to Buddha's Majjhima Patipada or the Middle Path?



Dr Amritpal Kaur
(Dental Surgeon)
Writer on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism
Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders

USA Entrepreneur and his delegation met Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh

Mr. Pamas Rai Bhatti an NRI entrepreneur from USA met the Honorable Chief Minister of Himachal Pradesh Mr. Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu on 25th January in Hamirpur. Based on Chief Minister's keen interest in promoting tourism in



the state, Mr. Bhatti presented to the CM a tentative proposal to promote tourism in the state. Mr. Bhatti apprised the Hon'ble CM that investment in tourism sector will give

a big boost to the economy of the State and potentially generate em-

ployment opportunities to thousands of people.

Honorable CM invited Mr. Bhatti and his delegation to his headquarters at Shimla to further

discuss the comprehensive proposal of various projects. The CM assured



the delegation that his Government is very much interested in fully exploring all possibilities to give boost to tourism in Himachal.

Mr. Bhatti also extended an

invitation to the Chief Minister and his delegation to visit the US to personally meet

the interested investors to discuss all possibilities in detail. The government and the interested investors agree that foreign investment will certainly increase tourism in the State of Himachal Pradesh. Mr. Bhatti assured

the Chief Minister that he will arrange this meeting with investors in the US when it would be most convenient to the Chief Minister and his delegation. - **Vivek Bhatia**



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Hearty Congratulations to Suman Kalyanpur on her being conferred 'Padma Bhushan'

Warbling Voice: Suman Kalyanpur

Suman Kalyanpur, a shy girl, has fragile and thin voice as sweet as the honey. She carved herself a secure niche as a singer with her sonorous voice and accurate use of vocal octaves. Her soft warbling voice suited to the romantic ditties. Her singing of melodies like 'Dil Gham Se Jal Raha' (Shama), 'Mere Mehboob Na Ja' (Noormahal) and 'Haal-e-Dil Unko Sunana Tha' (Fariyad) reminds us of an era when songs were sublime and filled with purity. She has a mild tremolo in her voice which made her singing huskier and more enchanting. Her skills and tastes were both towards soft, melody-based numbers.

She never sang Cabarets, Mujras or any songs with lyrics or situations wherein the visuals would have offended one's sensibilities. She has a special knack for folk based songs. Even with a relatively limited repertoire, she has given some evergreen nuggets: The zingy 'Aaj Kal Tere Mere Pyaar Ke Charche' (Brahmachari), the dreamy 'Theheriye Hosh Mein Aa Loon' (Mohabbat Isko Kehte Hain), The party-rocker 'Tumse O Haseena (Farz) and the evocative 'Na Tum Hamein Jaano' (Baat Ek Raat Ki). It is sad that a singer with such enormous talent did not have her due probably her uncanny similarity to Lata's voice became her curse.

Suman Kalyanpur was born as Suman Hemadi on 28 January, 1937 in Dacca. Her father Shankar Rao Hemadi was an elite Saraswat Brahmin from Udipi district of Karnataka. He held a high position in the Central Bank of India and spent a long time in Dhaka. Suman was the eldest of five sisters and a brother. Her family came to Mumbai during World War II. Suman sang for the first time at a neighbouring Ganpati Mahotsav. After completing his schooling from Mumbai's famous St. Columbia High School, she joined Sir JJ School of Arts for further studies.

Suman got training of light music from Yashwant Deo and Keshavrao Bhole of Prabhat. Later, she learnt nuances of classical music from Tawde Bua, Professor Navrang and Khan Sahib Abdul Rehman. Once Talat Mahmood listened to her in a musical concert, highly impressed, he recommended her name to HMV. But HMV found her voice 'amateurish'. In 1952, she got the opportunity to sing on 'All India Radio'. After watching her performance at a cultural programme, D.B. Jog offered her to give playback in a Marathi film "Shauchi Chandni". But the film never took off.

Music director Mohammed Shafi, recorded three songs for the

movie "Mangu" (1954) in her voice. However, this film was also not destined to kick start her career yet, as Shafi was midway replaced by O. P. Nayyar. He retained her one lulla by 'Koi Pukare Dhire Se Tujhe'. What an irony! Shortly thereafter, Suman rendered 5 songs including a duet with Talat Mahmood 'Ek Dil Do Hain Talabgaar' under Nashad's music direction for the film 'Darwaza' (1954). This film was released earlier so it is generally considered to be Suman's first film.

Then Suman got the opportunity to collaborate with Rafi and Geeta in the hit song 'Mohabbat Kar Lo Ji Bhar Lo' (Aar Paar-1954), the

and superbly orchestrated song 'Chand Kanwal Mere Chand Kanwal' (Sanjh Aur Savera) depicted her singing prowess.

Suman Kalyanpur has sung with all her contemporary male and female singers. She excitingly balanced her singing with stalwart singers like the angelic singer Mohammed Rafi, the velvet voiced Talat Mahmood, the classic Manna De, the golden voiced Hemant Kumar and the nasally rich Mukesh. While many of her duets with Mohammed Rafi are breezy in Shankar Jaikishan or Laxmikant Pyarelal style, there are several others which are extremely soulful and melodious. The song

songs 'Chicho Cheech Ganeriyani' and 'Been Kahnu Sajna Vajana Aein' under the music direction of Sardul Kwatra. Next year, she came out with the popular song 'Raatan Ne Hanerian Chann-Maithon Door' (Billo-1961) and

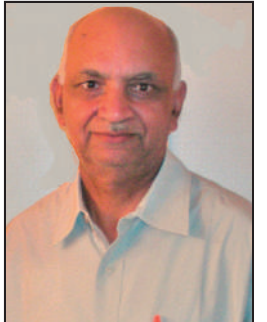
there was no looking back. In the same year, she gave playback in three more Punjabi films: Guddi (Kise Di Tute Rabba), Jatti (Baithi La Ke Udeekan) and Jeeja Ji (Main Kundal Waliyan Zulfan). All these songs were musical chart busters and Suman became a household name on both sides of the border.

In 1962, she gave playback in five Punjabi movies: "Dhol Jani" (JaVe Chana LukJa, Thaggi Mitran Naal); "Khedan De Din Chaar" (Yaadan Chhad Chale, Lammiyan Te Kaaliyan); "Banto" (Dasso Mere Chann Ji); "Chaudhary Karnail Singh" (Aaja Ve Aaja, Meri Tut Gayi Jadau Gani) and "Pardesi Dhola" (Vekhiya Pishore Vai, Keeta Si Vachan). Next year her songs like 'Raahe Raahe Jaandeya Raahiya' (Lado Rani) and 'Mainu Tere Pichhe Sajna' (Pind Di Kuri) fortified her position in the Punjabi film music. She also rendered 'Hass Ke Mahi Ne.' in Chhadian Di Doli (1963). During 1964, Suman created a niche for herself when she gave a series of super hit songs in films like "Kiklee" (Main Aar Chann Ve); "Mamaji" (Tera Vichhoda Zalima, Dhuppan Vi Udaas Ne); "Sat Saliyan" (Taran Ni Taran, Roop Tere) and "Main Jatti Punjab Di" (Mainu Chhad Ke Na Jaavin).

In 1965, Suman regaled the audience with her mesmerizing voice in four movies namely: "Chambe Di Kali" (Chun Chun Taariyan Nu and title song); "Dharti Veeran Di" (Vekho Ni Mahi, Badalaan Dian Thandian Chhanvan); "Sassi Punnu" (Jag Sara Taahne Marda, Rabb Rakha) and "Sapni" (Ranjha Ranjha Kehandi Ni). In 1966, her renderings were in "Dulla Bhatti" (Gall Sun Heere Ni) and "Gabroo Desh Punjab De" (Bhann Sutti Ae Bedarda, Ki Mileya Tainu). Next year she sang for "Khed Preetan Di" (Thandi Thandi Pippalan Di Chhan) and "Lava Phutiya", "Pardessan" (1969).

However, in the seventies her engagements in Punjabi Cinema were few and far between: 'Babul Phire Ghar Lod Da' (Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam); 'Haaye Main Kalam Kalli'

(Contd. on next page)



Bhim Raj Garg

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Sri Guru Ravidass Ji – a Social Revolutionary

The Gurburab of Guru Ravidass falls on February 5 this year. The followers of Guru Ravidass celebrate and observe the day throughout the world with all solemnity and gaiety and rightly so as Guru Ravidass's mission and thought gave them a sense of confidence that they were no less or inferior as the main stream of the society made them to be. Guru Ravidass was a great Saint of the Bhakti Movement of medieval times in the 16th century along with his contemporaries; Satguru Kabir, Guru Nanak among others. Guru Ravidass was a widely recognized and revered personality of his times not only spiritually but also as a revolutionary social reformer as a voice of the underdog and discriminated segments of the society who were condemned to inhuman behavior by the so called upper castes on the basis of the then prevailing (sadly this social ill still persists to date) caste system (Varna Vibastha). Guru Ravidass's teachings and philosophy, obviously, got wide spread acceptance and recognition throughout India and proved itself revolutionary to reform the society of its ills on one hand. He also propounded canons of good governance, on the other hand, which is called 'democratic socialism' propounded on the basis of known principles of 'Equality, Liberty, Justice and fraternity which later were adopted as the fundamentals of the Indian constitution, and rightly so. It was a matter of great satisfaction that the Sikh Gurus, fully understanding and following, the social philosophy of Guru Ravidass, thoughtfully, included the Vani (poetic teachings) in the Guru Granth Sahib and as such the teachings of the great Guru got further currency and acceptance as a potent voice to reform the society and live a pious life as honourable citizens and good human beings.

I thought of sharing some of the thoughts of Guru Ravidass particularly on the casteless society, social harmony and also good governance which are as relevant today as these were before as my humble tribute to

the great Guru on his Gurburab on February 5 and to greet my fellow countrymen in these days of increasing social animosity and eroding moral values.



Like his contemporaries like; Guru Nanak, Satguru Kabir among others, Guru Ravidass following the social dictum of Toil and Share 'Kirat Kar Te Band Sak' of Guru Nanak, he remained a commoner and a family man socially throughout his life unlike some of the traditional Godmen shouting from the rooftops to carry forward their vested agenda to keep subjugated a large chunk of the society by terming them as Shurdas (low castes) and Achutas (untouchables). I am no authority on the Gurburab but, as a follower Guru Ravidass, try to understand and adopt some of the lofty ideals as a humble man; particularly the ones which are relevant in the contemporary times with regard to our day to day living:-

- Guru Ravidass's very apt, famous and potent Sabad (poetic message) – Begumpura Shehar Ka Naon

(the city of joy) is a treatise on the form and functioning of a state based on the lofty ideals of a modern state which we call 'Democratic Socialism' in constitutional and political parlance. The English rendering of the Sabad done by Prof. Joginder Singh Bedi in the booklet 'The Hymns of Sri Guru Ravidass ji', written and compiled by Dr. Lekh Raj Parwana, reads as follows:

“The city of joy is the name of the city
Suffering and sorrow abide not there
Neither is there worry of paying taxes
Nor does any hold property
Neither fear of punishment for error of decline
This fine place of habitation have I found
Brother, there weal perpetually reigns
Eternally fixed is the kingship therein
No second or third are there; all are alike
Ever fully populated famous is that city
Those abiding therein are prosperous opulent
There people disport themselves as they please
All are inmates of that mansion; none bars any
Sayeth Ravidass, the cobbler, freed from all bonds
Whosoever is the citizen of that city is our friend”

Guru Ravidass was a social revolutionary of the first order. He said in this vani:
Aisa Chahun Raj Mein; Yahan Mile Saban Ko Ann,
Chot Bade Sab Sum Vasen; Ravidass Rahe Parsan
(I want that form of polity and administration in which no one should remain hungry. All, rich or poor, should be equal before the law; Ravidass will only be happy then)
During his life time he suffered the tyrant of suppression and

subjugation and stood against any kind of slavery or serfdom in the society. Guru Ravidass candidly said:

Pradhinta Paap Hai; Jaan Lyo Re Meet,
Ravidass Pradheen Se Kaun Kare Hai Preet.
(Slavery is sin. You should know this my friends. Nobody loves subjugated people).

Opposing the caste based discrimination and openly spoke against the caste system and said, "Ravidass Janam Ke Karne Hot Na Koi Neech" (Nobody is low only because one was born in a low caste family)

Guru Ravidass's social philosophy is potent and carries considerable weight in these days of strife and animosity in the society. Apart from this, I like and try my best to follow the pragmatic approach of humility and good company in life as thought by the great Guru:-

Tum Chandan Hum Rind Bapure; Sang Tumhare Vasa,
Neech Rukh Te Unch Bhaye Hain;
Gandh Sugandh Niwasa
(English rendering by Prof. Joginder Singh Bedi) –

You the sandal tree; we the poor castor plants
Nearby you we abide
From a lowly plant have I become a noble tree

With this, I take this opportunity to pay my hearty tributes to the great social reformist, Krantikari Guru and harbinger of a just and equitable social order and greet my fellow countrymen on the Gurburab of Guru Ravidass.

Let us transform India that is Bharat into Begumpura, as visualized by the Great Guru.



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
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Warbling Voice: Suman Kalyanpur

(Continue from page 6)

(Patola); and 'OorhaAaraEedi' (Man Jeete Jag Jeet); 'AajaMeriye Mast Bahaare' (Change Mande Tere Bande) and 'Mundeya Ve Mundeya' (Main Papi Tum Bakshanhar); 'Ja Ve Bedarda' (Shaheed Udham Singh) and 'O Meriya Rabba' (Yamla Jatt).

Due to family pre-occupations, she declined singing offers in 1976-77. Thereafter, she did some occasional Hindi films like Badaltery Rishtey, Naseeb, Jay-Vijay, Dillagi, Unnees Bees, Ek Aur Sikandar, Waqt Ki Pukar, Veerana and Aapas Ki Baat. Her last hit Hindi song was 'Zindagi Imtihan Leti Hai' (Naseeb-1981), though she last recorded the song 'Saathi Re O Mere Saathi' (Veerana-1988).

Suman's first song in Marathi 'Bhaatuklichhaa Khel Maandila' for the film 'Pasant Aahe Mulgi' was a super-hit. 'Putra Vhawa Aisaa', 'Ekti', 'Manini' and 'Annapoorna' were her other memorable Marathi movies. Her hits are legion and include over 50 timeless gems of Marathi films, Bhavgeet and Bhaktigeet. She sang 'Ashtavinayak'; an album of Sant Tukaram's abhang and albums like 'He Govind He Gopal', 'Te Sur Aikataa' and 'Kaise Karu Dhyam'.

Suman Kalyanpur perhaps recorded far less frequently than her talent commanded. Yet she spawned



an enviably percentage of immortal songs and hits. Her repertoire of 740 film and non-film songs is not only confined to Hindi and Marathi songs but is brimming with many renderings in Regional languages like Gujarati, Bengali, Punjabi, Kannada, Maithili, Oriya, Rajasthani, Assamese, Bhojpuri and Chhattisgarhi etc.

Suman was married to Ramchand Kalyanpur, a Mumbai-based businessman in 1958. She wasn't good at negotiating contracts, so he handled all her financial matters. Her sister Shyama Chittarhas also given

playback in films like Purab Aur Paschim and Shor etc. Mangala Khadilkar has written a book "Suman Sugandh" about the story of her life. Suman is one of the first female playback singers to represent India and perform in the US and West Indies. She is no old-fashioned puritan but favours technological advances. Suman's interests include painting, embroidery, flower arrangement and gardening.

She has been bestowed with the Padma Bhushan in the 2023 National Honours by the Government of India. Is it a coincident that singing talents like Suman Kalyanpur and Vani Jairam could get recognition only after the departure of 'Singing Donna'?

Constituent Assembly of India Debates (Proceedings) - Volume V

Thursday, the 28th August 1947

[The following extracts are from the Debate with reference to Dr. B.R. Ambedkar]

Shrimati Dakshayani Velayudan (Madras: General) Mr. President I find that for the Motion four Members have given their names and first comes the name of the Honourable Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. I am surprised to find that a Member who came in as result of a joint electorate came forward to move this amendment whereas a member who, was all the while standing for separate electorates and for the so-called percentage is not to be seen in the House to-day. If there was any sincerity in moving this amendment we could have found the person who headed the list and I do not know why another member took up that responsibility. There may be some reason behind the scene. The Mover of the amendment, Mr. Nagappa, said when they come to the Assemblies as a result of joint electorates they may not be coming with the votes of the community and so they are not entitled to represent the community. If Mr. Nagappa thinks that he has come here as a result of such an election, the wisest and the best thing that he ought to do would be to withdraw his candidature or his membership from this Assembly and the Provincial Assemblies (Hear, hear). If anybody thinks that he is unfit to speak for the community when he comes on the vote of the community or the vote of the people in general, the best way to do service to the community is to disappear from the scene and not to take part in any political activities whatsoever and I think Dr. Ambedkar was wise enough to be absent on the occasion because he knew that this is not going to be carried in the Assembly today or on any day. As the Chairman of the, Minority Committee spoke yesterday these things were passed in the committee by majority of votes and, whatever reasons that he may bring forward here, it may not be carried out. So without wasting his time, he has gone for his work as he is engaged in Cabinet work. Somebody has come forward with an excuse that if this form of electorate exists, the real representatives of the people will not be able to come. If we analyse the demand for a percentage of the votes of the community, we will come to the conclusion that it is nothing but unadulterated separate electorates (Hear, hear). I must ask the Honourable Members who moved the amendment whether they are giving any meaning to the votes that will be cast by the members of other communities In practice, we have to take into account only the votes that will be cast by the community. If a candidate gets 34 per cent. and another date 35 per cent. of the votes of his community, if the first candidate gets 200 cites from the general public and the next candidate gets

100 votes from the general public, and if we take into account the percentage of votes cast by the community, certainly the second candidate Should be elected. Then it comes to this that there will be no meaning to the votes cast by other communities though it amounts to double the number of votes which the second candidate gets from the general people. Then there is another reason for my opposing this amendment. Even if the Harijans are given this percentage of votes, and this kind of electorate system, the Harijans are not in a position



and because when the system is put into actual working it will be standing in the way of Harijans, getting a correct ideology. It is lack of correct ideology among Harijans that has led them to bring this sort of amendment here. If they think that they can better their lot by standing apart from the other communities, they are in the wrong. They can do better by joining with the majority community and not depending on the votes of their own community. I must assure the Mover of the amendment that the Harijans are not going to gain anything if you get this sort of electorate system. So I oppose I this amendment and I hope that nobody in this House will support the amendment. (Cheers.)

Mr. H. J. Khandekar :
*[Mr. President, Sir, I stand to oppose the amendment which has been placed before you by my friend Mr. Nagappa. This amendment stands in the name of four Members. The first name is that of Dr. Ambedkar, and you all know that from the time of the Second Round Table Conference till the Minority Sub-Committee, of the Advisory Committee assembled, he relinquished the demand for joint elec-

torates and continued the demand for separate electorates. On the question of this demand his message to all Harijans of his country, who belonged to his party, went to the extent that they were not even Hindus that they wished to have a colony separate from the Hindus, that they were not within the fold of Hindu religion, and it was for this reason that they desired separate electorates. This thing has been going on in the country for the last fifteen years with the result that a sort of discord has been created between Caste Hindus and Harijans of Ambedkar party do not wish to converse with Hindus. But I feel happy to state that when this matter relating to joint and separate electorates came up before the Minority Sub-Committee, Dr. Ambedkar did not press the claim further but withdrew it on the ground that he had no argument in support of the principle.

For the last 15 years, I have listened with interest to the speeches of Dr. Ambedkar and read them in newspapers too, but there was no argument in them in support of the demand for separate electorates. In this way, as the demand did not stand to reason, lie did not press it but withdrew it. It is a great victory for us. Having withdrawn the demand, separate electorate was thought of by

to withstand the attractions that they will have to face at the time of elections. So many parties can set up candidates and they can purchase the Harijans and put up any candidate they desire, and any candidate can come up in the assembly and certainly he may not represent the community though he may get percentage of votes that is desired by this system.

Along as the Scheduled Castes, or the Harijans, or by whatever name they may be called, are economic slaves of other people, there is no meaning demanding either separate electorates or joint electorates or any other kind of electorates with this kind of percentage. (Cheers). Personally speaking, I am not in favour of any kind of reservation in any place whatsoever. (Hear, hear). Unfortunately, we had to accept all these things because the British Imperialism has left some marks on us and we are always feeling afraid of one another. So, we cannot do away with separate electorates. This joint electorate and reservation of seats also is a kind of separate electorates. But we have to put up with that evil because we think that it is a necessary evil. I wanted to oppose this amendment because it will be standing in our way

which the plea for percentage could be pressed. Speaking plainly it means that he desires separate electorates in a different form. I may explain to you the effects of separate electorates in this country. It was because of Lord Morley Minto that Muslims got separate electorates and the result was that our country was divided into two. The same separate electorates are being brought before us in the form of percentage. If this is accepted either for Harijans or for our Muslim brother, then it would mean the fulfilment of what my friend Mr. Jinnah has always said "Muslims of India and Muslims of Pakistan"--which means the preparation for Pakistan within India. Much suffering, has been caused already. India has been divided into two. Brother Muslims have got what they wanted and was for their benefit. Having got that, they should be good enough not to try to create Pakistan within India and should not bring an amendment of this sort in this House. It has come to my notice that our Muslim brothers, who in this country are about 3 crores, have got and are going to get on the report of the Advisory Committee all the facilities which they should get. Even then they say that they should get percentage of votes in order to enable them to elect their representatives. Once again, my friend Mr. Nagappa too, who is an ally of Dr. Ambedkar and is dancing to his tune on some expectations, says the same thing, i.e., that it is in this way alone that our true representatives will be chosen. I want to ask these brothers, what is the meaning of a true representative? I want to cite the example of this Assembly. If my friends are not true representatives of Harijans, if Kazis are not here as true representatives of Muslims then, what will happen to this Assembly? If these honest Muslim brothers shout "Jinnah Zindabad", we shout "Bharat-Mata-ki-jai"; or other slogans and such sort of pin pricks continue, what will be the result? I would like to ask Mr. Nagappa and Kazi Sahib, who will suffer then, the majority or the minority? Any declaration of this sort is most improper and therefore I do not agree with the amendment of Mr. Nagappa. The other thing which I have just pointed out is that this percentage of votes is through the medium of separate electorates. Even after the present amendment, a few more are coming before you (in support of the percentage of votes) which is in fact a child of separate electorates. It is improper to bring amendments of this kind within this House. It is merely wasting the time of the House. I wish to state that whatever has happened as a result of percentage of votes is before us. I am very to say that the result of separate electorates and the Poona Pact has been that in Nagpur and in Bombay, there

(Contd. on next page)

Constituent Assembly of India Debates (Proceedings) - Volume V

Thursday, the 28th August 1947

(Continue from page 8)

is considerable agitation today against the Hindus and there are differences between one caste and another. The Poona Pact provided for primary election and cumulative voting which indirectly meant separate electorate. Do Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Nagappa want to aggravate or eliminate this mutual conflict? If they want to eliminate they should withdraw the amendment. If the tension between the caste Hindus and the Harijans is aggravated the latter would be the loser not the gainer. Because of this mentality of Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Nagappa the Harijans will permanently remain Harijans and their position would gradually deteriorate. There are sub-castes within castes. There are several sub-castes among Harijans. In fact Harijans are not a part of any community but are spread throughout India in 132 sub-castes. If percentage of 35 is passed, the 3 per cent. "Chamars" who live in Nagpur will not come within the orbit of this election. If election is fought community-wise then "Mahars" who are 80 per cent. will get 35 per cent votes. Therefore "Chamars", "Bhangis" and the other sub-castes will not be able to return their representatives in elections because they are in minority among Harijans. In that case only the 'Mahars', to which section Dr. Ambedkar and I belong and which has a predominating majority in Bombay and Nagpur, will capture all the seats of the Harijans in those provinces and other Harijans will get no seat at all. Besides, I have to request Mr. Nagappa to withdraw the amendment. The reason being that contrary to his belief the percentage of votes is not in favour of Harijans. Harijans will not benefit by it, in fact it would be very bad (for them). Today we have achieved freedom for this country. We the inhabitants of this country have become its masters. Under than circumstances, if we do not take the majority community into confidence, and if the majority community does not take us to its confidence, then the government of this country cannot go on. For preserving peace in the country I have to request Mr. Nagappa to kindly withdraw the amendment.

Friends, only a few days back we the Hindus, the Muslims, the Sikhs, the Christian, the Parsis and the Harijans all acclaimed with one voice that we are one nation. We all gave our respectful salute to this tricolour. It would be a pity, if today we put in this amendment which seeks separate electorates.]*

The Honourable Sardar Vallabhbhai J. Patel : Sir, I am sorry to see that so much time has been taken on this amendment which I thought

was going to be withdrawn and on which there would not be much debate. So far as the Scheduled Castes are concerned, I do not think very much has to be said on this amendment, because I got a representation from a large majority of the Scheduled Castes representatives in this House, except one or two or three, that they were all against this amendment (Hear, Hear), and Mr. Nagappa knew about it. But Mr. Nagappa wanted to move his amendment to fulfil a promise or undertaking or at least to show his community that he was not purchased by the majority community! Well, he has done his job, but other people took him seriously and took a lot of time.

So far as the amendment moved by the representative of the Muslim League is concerned, I find that I was mistaken in my Impression and if I had believed this, I would certainly not have agreed to any reservation at all. (Hear, Hear). When I agreed to the reservation on the population basis, I thought that our friends of the Muslim League will see the reasonableness of our attitude and allow themselves to accommodate themselves to the changed conditions after the separation of the country. But I now find them adopting the same methods which were adopted when the separate electorates were first introduced in this country, and in spite of ample sweetness in the language used there is a full dose of poison in the method adopted. (Hear, Hear). Therefore, I regret to say that if I lose the affection of the younger brother, I am prepared to lose it because the method he wants to adopt would bring about his death. I would rather lose his affection and keep him alive. If this amendment is lost, we will lose the affection of the younger brother, but I prefer the younger brother to live so that he may see the wisdom of the attitude of the elder brother and he may still learn to have affection for the elder brother.

Now, this formula has a history behind it and those who are in the Congress will be able to remember that history. In Congress history this is known as the Mohammad Ali Formula. Since the introduction of separate electorates in this land there were two parties amongst the Muslims. One was the Nationalist Muslims or the Congress Muslims and the other the Muslim League members, or the representatives of the Muslim League. There was considerable tension on this question and at one time there was a practical majority against this joint electorate. But a stage was reached when, as was pointed out by the Mover of this amendment in Allahabad a settlement was reached. Did we stand by that settlement? No. We

now have got the division of the country. In order to prevent the separation of the country this formula was evolved by the nationalist Muslims, as a sort of half-way house, until the nation becomes one; we wished to drop it afterwards. But now the separation of the country is complete and you say, let us introduce, it again and have another separation. I do not understand this method of affection. Therefore, although I would not have liked to say anything on this motion, I think it is better that we know our minds perfectly each other, so that we can understand where we stand. If the process that was adopted, which resulted in the separation of the country, is to be repeated, then I say : Those who want that kind of thing have a place in Pakistan, not here (Applause.) Here, we are building a nation and we are laying the foundations of One Nation, and those who choose to divide again and sow the seeds of disruption will have no place, no quarter, here, and I must say that plainly enough. (Hear, Hear.) Now, if you think that reservation necessarily means this clause as you have suggested, I am prepared to withdraw the reservation for your own benefit. If you agree to that, I am prepared, and I am sure no one in this House will be against the withdrawal of the reservation if that is a satisfaction to you. (Cheers.) You cannot have it both ways. Therefore, my friends, you must change your attitude, adapt yourself to the changed conditions. And don't pretend to say "Oh, our affection is very great for you". We have seen your affection. Why talk of it? Let us forget the affection. Let us face the realities. Ask yourself whether you really want to stand here and cooperate with us or you want again to play disruptive tactics. Therefore when I appeal to you, I appeal to you to have a change in your heart, not a change in the tongue, because that won't pay here. Therefore, I still appeal to you : "Friends, reconsider your attitude and withdraw your amendment". Why go on saying "Oh, Muslims were not heard; Muslim amendment was not carried". If that is going to pay you, you are much mistaken, and I know how it cost me to protect the Muslim minorities here under the present condition and in the present atmosphere. Therefore, I suggest that you don't forget that the days in which the agitation of the type you carried on are closed and we begin a new chapter. Therefore, I once more appeal to you to forget the past. Forget what has happened. You have got what you wanted. You have got a separate State and remember, you are the people who were responsible for it, and not those who remain in Pakistan. You led the agitation. You got

it. What is it that you want now? I don't understand. In the majority Hindu provinces you, the minorities, you led the agitation. You got the partition and now again you tell me and ask me to say for the purpose of Securing the affection of the younger brother that I must agree to the same thing again, to divide the country again in the divided part. For God's sake, understand that we have also got some sense. Let us understand the thing clearly. Therefore when I say we must forget the past, I say it sincerely. There will be no injustice done to you. There will be generosity towards you, but there must be reciprocity. If it is absent, then you take it from me that no soft words can conceal what is behind your words. Therefore, I plainly once more appeal to you strongly that let us forget and let us be one nation. To the Scheduled Caste friends, I also appeal: "Let us forget what Dr. Ambedkar or Ms group have done. Let us forget what you did. You have very nearly escaped partition of the country again on your lines. You have seen the result of separate electorates in Bombay, that when the greatest benefactor of your community came to Bombay to stay in bhanga quarters it was your people who tried to stone his quarters. What was it? It was again the result of this poison, and therefore I resist this only because I feel that the vast majority of the Hindu population wish you well. Without them where will you be? Therefore, secure their confidence and forget that you are a Scheduled Caste. I do not understand how Mr. Khandekar is a Scheduled Caste man. If he and I were to go outside India, nobody will find out whether he is a Scheduled Caste man or I am a Scheduled Caste man.

There is no Scheduled Caste between us. So those representatives of the Scheduled Caste must know that the Scheduled Caste has to be effaced altogether from our society, and if it is to be effaced, those who have ceased to be untouchables and sit amongst us have to forget that they are untouchables or else if they carry this inferiority complex, they will not be able to serve their community. They will only be able to serve their community by feeling now that they are with us.

They are no more Scheduled Castes and therefore they must change their manners and I appeal to them also to have no breach between them and the other group of Scheduled Castes.

There are groups amongst themselves, but everyone tries according to his own light. We are now to begin again. So let us forget these sections and cross-sections and let us stand as one, and together.

Created by Neeraj Paul



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

Roads Help With Storm Recovery and Preparation

"I'll be right back," Chuck Noland told his wife in the movie Cast Away. But then a storm stranded him on an island for so long that he started talking to a deflated volleyball.

The storms in Sacramento



didn't strand people on a deserted island, but tree-falls and flooding did cut off access to many communities - some of them for days. Dozens of roads and major thoroughfares were closed due to flooding. We even saw closures on Highways 99 and 5. Some roads are still closed or restricted more than two weeks later.

Teams of county employees, utility workers, and private citizens have been doing heroic work to restore access and clean up the damage left in the wake of storm damage and disruption.

But this won't be the last storm, and we can do more to prepare for the next one.

Part of that preparation is ensuring there are more and newer roads that not only improve emergency access and response, but also boost the economy and reduce air pollution and commute times.

We can't leave our citizens stranded - literally or metaphorically - when we have the ability to provide relief not just from storms, but from the everyday trials of crumbling infrastructure, traffic jams, and growing commute times that reduce productivity and rob us of time with our families.

Roads and highways are how we get goods & services - not to mention people - around Sacramento County. Roads and highways are how farmers get their products to market. It is how most people get to work and parents get their kids to school. It is how patients get to our hospitals - not to mention the doctors and nurses who have to get there to save lives. Roads are how we get workers in to restore your utilities and get your life back to normal.

But repairing, improving, and expanding our roads is about more than just making them better or reducing traffic and commute times - it's also how we connect our commu-

nities and keep our economy growing.

Over the next few months, I will be sharing my plans for repairing and improving our road system. Meanwhile, I wanted to share a few resources that every resident in Citrus Heights should be aware of:

- Sac County 311 helps residents report most non-emergency issues in the unincorporated communities in Sacramento County. Citizens reporting downed trees, issues with street and traffic lights, and road or sidewalk obstructions, the county knew where best to deploy response teams. More than 600 reports of downed trees came in from citizens using the 311 system, which has representatives available twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. You can also download the app or use the 311 website. Learn more at <https://311.saccounty.gov/>
- Local Assistance Center (LAC) are established following disasters to bring Federal assistance for those who suffered related losses or damages. One has already been opened in Galt, and we are asking federal government for additional help. Until that decision is made, you should contact your insurance provider to file your claim and report your damage through the link provided. The more people report their damage to the Sacramento County Office of Emergency Services or OES, the better the chance of another LAC in the County being activated. To report damage go to <https://report-ca-sacramento.orion-central.com/>
- Sacramento Alert is the Office of Emergency Services (OES) state-of-the-art alert system. This system allows officials in the Sacramento region to disperse public safety information quickly. Please visit the Sacramento Alert Citizen Opt-In portal and provide your contact information to receive notifications. The Opt-In Portal is strictly confidential, and your private information is secured. To learn more at <https://sacramento-ready.saccounty.gov/Pages/Emergency-Alerts-Notification-System.aspx>

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@saccounty.net.

For a complete list of all my past newsletters, which each contain a commentary like this one, click here.

Join Subcommittee To Help Justice-Involved Youth

Are you interested in an exciting opportunity to make a positive impact on justice-involved youth in our community? The Sacramento County Juvenile Justice Coordinating Council (JJCC) Subcommittee is looking for community members like you!

JJCC Subcommittee members help educate the public about Senate Bill 823, also known as Juvenile Justice Realignment, which gradually transfers the responsibility for managing youth, housed at the California Division of Juvenile Justice, from the state to local county jurisdictions.

As a community member, you will work directly with the Chief Probation Officer and representatives from Behavioral Health Services, Child Protective Services, the District Attorney's Office, the Public De-

fender's Office, Sacramento County Office of Education and the Superior Court to develop and provide program updates for the Sacramento County's local Juvenile Justice Realignment Plan.

Current JJCC Subcommittee members hope to find individuals who have an interest in providing and leading program ideas to implementation, thereby positively influencing justice-involved youth residing in Sacramento County's Youth Detention Facility.

Providing appropriate rehabilitation and programs strengthening pro-social skills, confidence building, problem solving, decision-making and enhancing academic performance, approached in a trauma-informed, evi-

dence-based and culturally responsive manner will create a successful reentry into the community.

"Being a member of the JJCC Subcommittee allows you to make a positive impact in the County and a difference in helping to improve the opportunities for justice-involved youth," said Chief Probation Officer Marlon Yarber.

JJCC Subcommittee community member's valuable life and/or lived experience can provide impactful insight to help our youth have a successful reentry into the community. By joining, you will make a difference in the lives of our youth.

There is no term limit for JJCC Subcommittee Community Members. We are looking to fill two Community Member seats. Meetings are held during business hours. The next community workshop will be held on Thursday, Jan. 26, 2023, at 5:30 p.m. via zoom. Applications and additional information can be found on the Probation website.

5 Over 50 Award Nominations Now Open

If you know someone in Sacramento County who does amazing volunteer work and is over 50, you can recognize their efforts by nominating them for The Sacramento County Adult and Aging Commission's 5 over 50 Award. The award honors volunteers over the age of 50 who contribute to the health and vitality of the Sacramento County community.

The ideal nominee is someone who makes our County a great place to live, work and play. This award aims to recognize those who make a difference in our community. The candidate must be 50 or older and a Sacramento County resident. Members of the Adult and Aging Commission are not eligible for the award.

Applicants will need to provide information about the communi-



ties that benefited from the volunteer's work and how the volunteer positively impacted those communities. Applicants will also need to include information on how to contact the nominee. You can find more information and the application on **(Contd. on next page)**

My fellow Bootan Mandian Behari Lal of Delhi – an Obituary

I feel saddened that it is the second time in this month that I am writing an obituary of people who made some difference in my life. I wrote about a known public figure Chaudhary Santokh Singh last week and today I thought of writing about one of my fellow Bootan Mandians, Behari Lal ji who passed away on January 19 at 85 (January 1938 – January 2023) in Delhi. I did not know Behari Lal ji before my migration to Delhi for a job in the Ministry of External Affairs in March, 1970. He was already in Delhi working as an Engineer in the P&T Department and was living in Moti Bagh where I also landed to enjoy the kind hospitality and care of Mama Shiv Ram, a cousin of my mother Pretto in my initial days of my first job. Mama Shiv Ram, an Under Secretary at that time in the Ministry of Agriculture, in the process of making me comfortable and know some more people in the circle, took me to Behari Lal ji. He with his gracious and caring wife, the name sake of my mother, received us warmly and welcomed to Delhi. He spoke high of my family back home and reminisced about the general living in Bootan Mandi. I was over whelmed by their sense of belonging and quick adoption of a young lad away from home. It was a love at first sight. I started calling them Chacha ji and Chachi ji. Their children Baboo (Devender) and Baby (I am sorry my memory has failed to recollect her name) were equally good and loveable. They started calling me Bha ji. The rest is history the memories of which we cherish till today in spite of the fact that we had almost lost formal touch with each other in the later years of our lives due to some uncalled for and trivial reasons which I tend to forget as a bad dream. Devender, who retired recently from a coveted position of a highly placed professional in the ONGC, was kind enough to remember us on the sad day of the demise of Chacha Behari Lal ji and informed

me about the sad news. We were shocked and saddened. I thought of writing these lines as a tribute to respected Chacha Behari Lal ji and



stand with the family in their hour of grief.

Chacha Behari Lal, like me, belonged to an ordinary family of Bootan Mandi in Jalandhar, said to be the nerve center of dalit consciousness. I think he did his F.Sc. (Fellow of Science) from one of the colleges in Jalandhar in financial constraints and joined government service in the P&T. With sheer grit and steadfastness, he climbed the ladder and retired as a highly placed Executive Engineer, with the BSNL/Delhi Mahanagar Telephone in 1998. After 1991, I met him and Chachi ji in 1999 after his retirement at the marriage of one of our common connections in Gobindpuri in New Delhi. We again went incognito

till my retirement in December, 2010. We bumped into each other at Bootan Mandi on the auspicious occasion of the Gurpurab of Guru Ravidass in 2011-12.

We both were happy to revive our vibes of intense emotions. Later, Devender was also thoughtful enough to pick up the threads and restarted connection on social media. The fact remained that, it seems, both the sides were keen to revive the connection and rightly so.

Chacha Behari Lal was a well involved in community affairs in and around Moti Bagh and was highly respected. During my early days in Delhi when Vidya, my wife, was still

to join me, Chacha ji's home was almost my second home. With or without any invitation or notice, I will often drop in for a meal cooked by Chachi ji, an accomplished housewife. I still relish the taste of mouth-watering Rajmah and Kala Chana curries with piping hot chapattis served with love. When Vidya joined me with a toddler Naresh, our son, the family bonds were further strengthened. I cannot forget a couple of magnanimous gestures made towards us by the family as our benefactors around – at the birth of my daughter Vaishali in May, 1975; it was Chachi ji who accompanied Vidya to the maternity center at Sarojini Nagar for delivery in the early hours of the day. It was a great

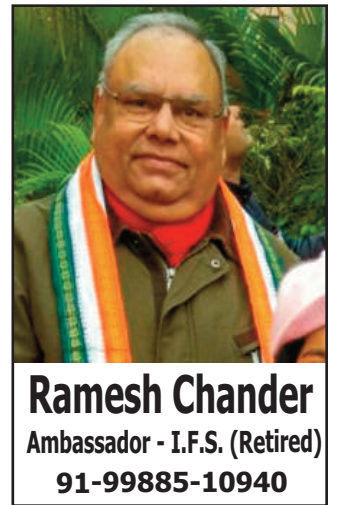
help to a novice like me

– Chacha ji showed concern and did everything possible to help my younger sister, Kamla in getting her a job in the Delhi Mahanagar

Telephone and extended both social and financial help at the time of her marriage in April, 1977 – extended appreciable hospitality at their residence in 1981 on our return from Beijing (China) on transfer to Delhi and made us comfortable till we moved to our regular accommodation – Devender, a young University student at that time, helped Vidya and children to in moving to Sanaa (Yemen) in March, 1982 as I had joined their alone a few months earlier and the family joined me later after completing the school year. We remained in good contact and touch, in thick and thin, during our home-leaves in India during my diplomatic sojourns till 1990 till our return from Kandy (Sri Lanka) to Delhi. With a view to cut the story short, both Chacha Behari Lal ji and Chachaji and the family always remained good to us. Vidya and I and also my children often talked about them and felt like meeting them. But that could not be.

Life goes on. With the departure of Chacha Behari Lal, I felt like losing a dear one, a fatherly figure. May God grant peace to the departed soul? Our thoughts go to Chachi ji, Devender, Baby and her husband, Bakshi, too an old friend. Bootan Mandi also lost a son of the soil, Behari Lal, a self made man.

न हाथ थाम सके न पकड़ सके दामन ,
बहुत करीब से उठ कर चला गया कोई.



Ramesh Chander
Ambassador - I.F.S. (Retired)
91-99885-10940

(Continue from page 10)

the Adult and Aging Commission's webpage.

Applications are due by Feb. 15. Applicants will know the outcome by the end of March. The awards will be presented in May, coinciding with the recognition of Older Americans Month.

Chair and Vice Chair Elected; Supervisors Sworn in

The annual vote to elect a new Chair and Vice Chair of the Board of Supervisors was held Tuesday, Jan. 10. This year's elected Chair is Supervisor Rich Desmond of District 3, and Patrick Kennedy of District 2 was elected Vice Chair.

"I am honored and ready to serve as the 2023 Chair of the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors," said Desmond. "As I look to the year ahead, I know we have a great deal to accomplish, and I look forward to working collaboratively with my fel-

low Supervisors, county staff, residents and our community partners to



address the many issues facing the communities and people we serve."

In addition to electing a new Chair and Vice Chair, three County Supervisors were sworn in for four-year terms:

Phil Serna, First Supervisorial District; Oath Administered by Ashley Soltani

Patrick Kennedy, Second Supervisorial District; Oath Adminis-



tered by Maurice Reed Patrick Hume, Fifth Supervisorial District; Oath Administered by Don Notoli

Board Chair responsibilities include the following:

Presides over the Board meetings; the Vice Chairperson assumes the role in the Chairperson's absence

or inability to act. If the Chair and Vice Chair are absent or unable to preside, the members present will select a member present to act as temporary Chairperson.

Acts on procedural matters or questions.

Recognizes a member of the board desiring to speak on an item.

Is entitled to vote on all matters before the Board, participate in discussion relating to any matter, make motions without relinquishing the Chair, and second any motion without relinquishing the Chair.

Sits on other boards/commissions as a representative of the County of Sacramento and is the point of contact for questions from the public regarding the meetings (i.e., coordination of resolutions/presentations and general questions not specific to a district, etc.).

The Chair and Vice Chair serve annual terms.



SRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (CA)

2150 Crestview Drive, Pittsburg CA 94565
Tel : (925) 439-2355

ਸਗਲ ਭਵਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਇਕਾ ਇਕੁ ਛਿਨੁ ਦਰਸੁ ਦਿਖਾਇ ਜੀ

February 3-4-5, 2023

Parkash Utsav of
Satguru Ravidass Ji

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha CA, Pittsburg is celebrating the 646th Parkash Utsav of SATGURU RAVIDASS JI on Sunday, February 5, 2023 at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, 2150 Crestview Drive, Pittsburg, CA 94565.

Guru Ravidass ji was born in 1377 in Varanasi. He was a spiritual Guru and a social reformer. 40 Shabads and one Shalok by Guru Ravidass ji are enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. He preached about equality among all humans and against social injustices like caste based discrimination.

February 3, 2023 (Friday) 9:30 AM
ARAMBH SRI AKHAND PATH SAHIB

February 4, 2023 (Saturday) at 7:00 AM
PARBHAT PHERI

February 4, 2023 (Saturday) at 11:00 AM
Nishan Sahib Hoisting Ceremony.

February 4, 2023 (Saturday) at 6:00 PM
Kirtan Diwan by Jathas of Bhai Suveg Singh ji and
Giani Balwinder Singh ji

February 5, 2023 (Sunday) 9:30 AM BHOG SRI AKHAND PATH SAHIB
KIRTAN DIWAN - After Bhog Ceremony until 2:00 PM

Sangat will perform Langer and Path Sewa for this program. Jatha of Giani Balwinder Singh ji, Dhadi Jatha of Bhai Sukhwinder Singh ji 'Bilge-wale' and other Kirtankars will enhance the Kirtan Diwan.

We need volunteers to help with this event. For STALLS or any SEWA, please contact
Vinod Kumar (President) 408- 718-2506 Kulwant Banga (Chairperson) 925-698-3059.

“NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA”

www.srigururavidasstemple.com

Sangat Sewadars

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(408) 718-2506

General Secretary
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