



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber    Contact: 001-916-947-8920    Fax: 916-238-1393    E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

VOL- 14    ISSUE- 42    December 28, 2022    California (USA)    www.ambedkartimes.com    www.deshdoaba.com

## My Meeting with Professor Mark Juergensmeyer: Dream Come True

**Prem Kumar Chumber**  
Editor-in-Chief:  
**Ambedkar Times &**  
**Desh Doaba Weeklies**

**R**ecently I met Prof Mark Juergensmeyer, an eminent social scientist and celebrated author, who did pioneer research work on the Punjab Ad Dharm movement in the 1970s, which was published in 1982 by the University of California Press under the title **Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab**. Ajanta and Navayana republished it later in India in 1988 and 2009 respectively under the title **Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Social Vision of Untouchables and Religious Rebels in the Punjab: The Ad Dharm Challenge to Caste**. The meeting with Prof. Mark was a great day in my life and a dream come true as I have been longing to meet him since my honorable brother, late C.L. Chumber, brought out a Souvenir on Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, 99th birth anniversary and Ad Dharm movement in 1985. At that time Prof. Mark's classic on Ad Dharm, mentioned above, was the only authentic published work. It was his well-received book that made the almost forgotten movement once again alive and ignited a keen interest in its historical account and the way it was organized. Consequently, it created social and political consciousness among the lower castes in the region.

The meeting could not have become possible but for the liaison made by Prof Ronki Ram, who – inspired by the classic of Prof Mark, as he mentioned in some of his research articles – have also written extensively on Ad Dharm. I am thankful to Prof Mark for agreeing to respond to my questions about his research work on Ad Dharm. Reproduced below is the conversation with him conducted during the meeting:

**Question-** What prompted you to do research on the Ad Dharm movement?

**Answer-**As a graduate student in political science at Berkeley, I was searching for a subject for my PhD dissertation. My specialty was religion and politics, and I wanted to research that topic in India, since I had lived in the Punjab for two years

before graduate school (1965-67) where I taught at Punjab University. Naturally I fell in love with the Punjab and wanted to return.

My MA thesis had been on the creation of a Punjabi Suba, and to do research on that I had to go back into the British census records. In the British report on the 1931 census there was a small item labeled "Revolt of the Untouchables" that caught my attention. It talked about the creation of a new religion, Ad Dharm, for which many had registered their affiliation. This excited me, in part because I had been active in the civil rights movement in the US and knew of the power of religion to be a motivating factor and a basis for social identity. I was also excited about the fact that there was virtually nothing written about it in English, at least of which I was aware, and that meant I would have to go to India and talk to people, which struck me as a much more appealing research activity than spending all day in a stuffy library.

**Question-** How did you trace Babu Mangu Ram?

**Answer-** When I got to India in Fall, 1970, I quickly resumed my affiliation with Punjab University, which gave me a place to stay and a base of operations. I then went to Jalandhar, which the census report had mentioned was the office of the Ad Dharm movement. I didn't find it, but found the Desh Bhagat Yad Ghar, a memorial for the Ghadar movement, which had a picture of my university, Berkeley, on the wall. They directed me to Boota Mandi, where I talked with many people, including Seth Kishan Das, Lahori Ram Balley, and others. A young man, Manohar Mahey, kindly escorted me from place to place on his motor scooter, including

the Ravi Das dera at Ballan, which at the time consisted only of the main satsang hall and a few side rooms for sadhus and visiting devotees.

They told me that the founder of the Ad Dharm movement was quite old, but still alive. I couldn't believe my good luck that I could actually go and visit him at his farm near Garhshankar, in Hoshiarpur district. I immediately went to meet with

followed.

**Question-** Were common people at that time aware of the movement?

**Answer-** If you mean in the 1920s, the sheer numbers recorded in the census would indicate that it had an impressive following. Even when I was there in the 1970s, there would be events recalling the great Ad Dharm movement where hundreds would be in attendance.

**Question-** Was there any support from the British Government to the movement?

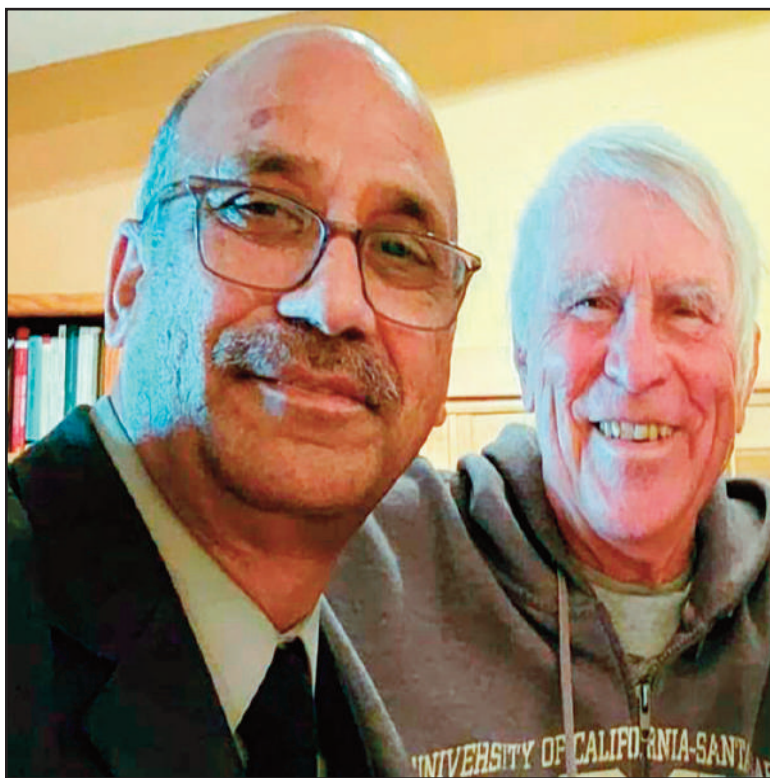
**Answer-** Not that I was aware of Mangu Ram, after all, had been a revolutionary who was part of the Ghadar Party that wanted to overthrow British rule in India. After Independence, he was regarded as a freedom fighter by the post-colonial Indian government, who gave him the land on which his farm was located.

**Question-** In your book you wrote that Babu Mangu Ram was sentenced to death along with his other four accomplices on the Maverick Ship. But somehow he escaped. After his return to India, he founded the movement. Why did the British not arrest him once they came to know about his true identity?

**Answer-** I don't know the answer to this question. But he seems to have slipped under the radar.

**Question-** What caused the movement to lose its sheen after the independence of India?

**Answer-** I don't know the answer to this question. But since the movement was organized in order to affect the 1931 census, my understanding is that this gave Mangu Ram and other Ad Dharm leaders the ability to use that leverage to secure places in the legislature and influence policy on behalf of the Scheduled Castes. So the political winds had shifted. What endured, however, was the renewed interest in Sant Ravi Das as a religious figure and a symbol of identity. I went to Banaras to see the impressive memorial that was built, largely with Punjab funds, on the site that was determined to be his birthplace. When I first went there only a dirt road connected it to the main streets, but later it was more appropriately developed.



Mangu Ram, and after asking around, found his farm in the late afternoon, where he was sitting on a charpoi outside and smoking a hookah. In my broken Punjabi and Hindi I explained to him that I was a student from the University of California, and that I wanted to talk with him about his role in leading the Ad Dharm movement many years before. He paused and then looked at me, and said -- in English-- "California? I used to live in Fresno." When I recovered from my astonishment, I began to ask questions. Why on earth, I wanted to know, was he in such a place as Fresno? This began a remarkable series of conversations with this amazing person, who I came to admire greatly. His mind and his speech were still quite strong, and he was able to remember events and ideas with clarity and precision. Needless to say, I felt I had found everything I needed for my dissertation, and the book that



### Ambedkar Times



## Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba Weeklies:

Happy New Year 2023 to our esteemed readers, contributors and well-wishers. Wishing you all good health and productive life ahead! May your all dreams come true!

**Prem Kumar Chumber**  
Editor-in-Chief

# NEW YEAR-2023 JUST AROUND THE CORNER



**W**hile bidding farewell to the year 2022, we are anxiously anticipating the arrival of the New Year 2023, which is just around the corner.

I send my good wishes to you all for a very happy, cheerful and a prosperous New Year 2023.

As the history goes, January 1st of every year is celebrated as the beginning of the New Year. Though

peace. We pray for an end to the hostilities, with peace and normalcy to return as soon as possible.

**COVID-19:-** Covid-19 pandemic has engulfed the entire globe with loss of



**O.P. Balley**  
1-925-252-6085



lives, social and economic disruptions. We thank the entire community of medical professionals for their round-the-clock efforts to control its spread and pray to Almighty God to end this public health threat.

**ARGENTINA WINS FIFA WORLD CUP:** - With the victory of Argentina against France in world cup football (soccer) tournament,

there are jubilations and celebrations all over Argentina, as world champions in this popular world sport event.

I congratulate Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber for his

there are different traditions and beliefs observed differently by many countries, but because of the enormous popularity of the Gregorian calendar, it is universally celebrated on January 1st. every year.

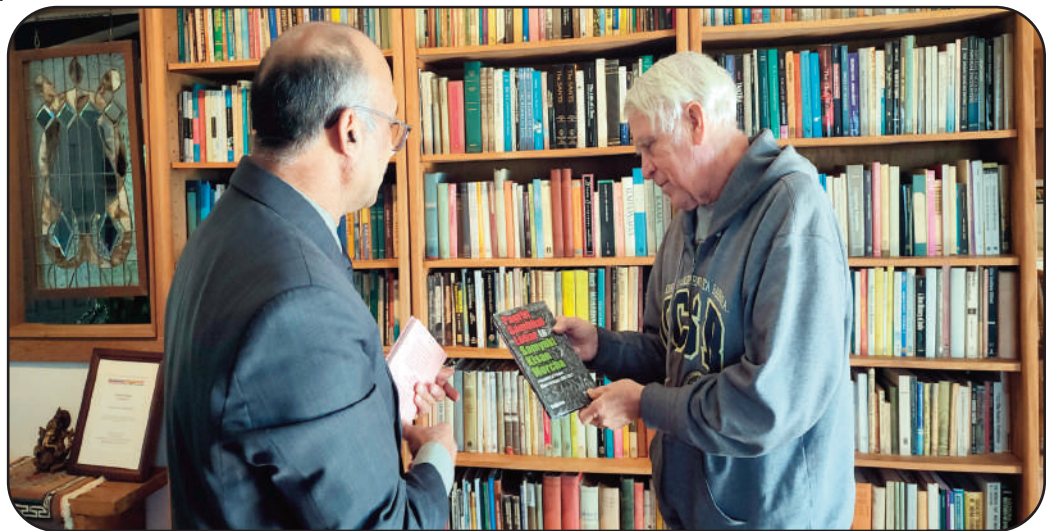
While we part with the previous year we reflect on some significant events (both sad and happy) of the outgoing year, among wishes, new hopes and aspirations in the coming year. Some of them are mentioned below.

**1. LATA MANGESHKAR PASSED AWAY:-** In February 2022, we lost the melody queen and Nightingale of India, Lata Mangeshkar, at the age of 92, leaving behind her immortal legacy with a treasure of her exhilarating and ever-green songs. She dominated in the domain of music for over sixty years with more than fifty thousand songs. A God gifted person like her never dies and remains alive for ever in the hearts and souls of millions world over.

**2. QUEEN ELIZABETH -11** of United Kingdom passed away at her home in Scotland on September 8, 2022 after a peaceful and a dignified reign of more than seventy years. Her eldest son Prince Charles succeeded her as King Charles III. It was a very significant event of the year 2022, with international dimensions. She was 96 years old.

**3. RISHI SUNAK-** Rishi Sunak became the new Prime Minister of United Kingdom in October 2022. Because of his Indian heritage and Punjabi roots, we are proud to see him assuming such a prestigious and a responsible position. We wish him a successful and a dignified inning during his tenure as Prime Minister of such a great nation.

**RUSSO -UKRAINIAN WAR:** - It is very unfortunate to see a big surge in Russo-Ukrainian war during 2022. The world is standing at cross-ways of war and



long awaited meeting with Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer recently at his residence in Santa Barbara University. Professor Mark is an eminent scholar of international fame with his PhD. thesis on **Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in Twentieth Century Punjab**. Prof. Mark also met Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia personally many times in Punjab while pursuing his PhD. in 1971-72.

I also admire Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Editor-In -Chief Ambedkar Times and Desh Doaba (Weeklies) for his services to the community through his publications and coverage of various events and community functions.





# Ambedkar in London

WILLIAM GOULD, SANTOSH DASS  
& CHRISTOPHE JAFFRELOT (EDS)

## A new Book Ambedkar in London

Prem Kumar Chumber

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

**A** An exciting new book 'Ambedkar in London' (Hurst Publishers, London) has come out on 15 December, 2022. It is edited by Dr William Gould, Professor of Indian History at the University of Leeds, Ms Santosh Dass MBE, a former civil servant, human rights and equality campaigner and Christophe Jaffrelot, Avantha Chair and Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at the Kings India Institute, Kings College London. It explores the great Indian social and economic reformer Dr Bhimrao R. Ambedkar's (1891-1956) time in London; and the UK Ambedkarite and anti-caste discrimination movements influenced by his social/ human rights, women's equality, economic, and labour reforms.

Dr Bhimrao R. Ambedkar was one of India's greatest intellectuals and social reformers; his political ideas continue to inspire and mobilise some of the world's poorest and most socially disadvantaged, in India and the global Indian diaspora. Ambedkar's thought on labour, legal rights, women's rights, education, caste, political representation and the economy are international in importance. This book explores his lesser-known period of London-based study and publication during the early 1920s, presenting that experience as a lens for thinking about Ambedkar's global intellectual significance. Some of his later canon on caste, and Dalit rights and representation, was rooted in and shaped by his earlier work around the economy, governance, labour and representation during his time as a law student and as a doctoral candidate at the London School of Economics. The Indian diaspora in the UK is the country's single largest national minority. This volume connects Ambedkar's influence during his lifetime and his legacy today, to this early phase of his career and intellectual life in London, and its immediate aftermath. It contains new material on the establishment of the city's Ambedkar Museum, explores Britain's Ambedkarite movement, and charts the campaign to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK.

#### Links:

- \* [https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ambedkar-Comparative-Politics-International-Studies/dp/1787388093/ref=asc\\_df\\_1787388093/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=606445295421&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14350871096513631918&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=m&hvdvcml=&hvlcint=&hvlcophy=9045936&hvtargid=pla-1674847639340&psc=1&th=1&psc=1](https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ambedkar-Comparative-Politics-International-Studies/dp/1787388093/ref=asc_df_1787388093/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=606445295421&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=14350871096513631918&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=m&hvdvcml=&hvlcint=&hvlcophy=9045936&hvtargid=pla-1674847639340&psc=1&th=1&psc=1)
- \* <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/ambedkar-in-london/>
- \* <https://www.bookdepository.com/Ambedkar-in-London-William-Gould-Santosh-Dass-Christophe-Jaffrelot/9781787388093>
- \* <https://imusic.co/books/9781787388093/2022-ambedkar-in-london-comparative-politics-and-international-studies-series-hardcover-book>
- \* [https://www.whsmith.co.uk/products/ambedkar-in-london/william-gould/santosh-dass/hardback/9781787388093.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiA4aacBhCUARIsAI55maGxrtLID-OFL\\_QebF-NS7uRfkh8e\\_mN9RaS8\\_tEfqtONGS9MB\\_3aMFlaAsH1EALw\\_wcB&gclid=aw.ds](https://www.whsmith.co.uk/products/ambedkar-in-london/william-gould/santosh-dass/hardback/9781787388093.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiA4aacBhCUARIsAI55maGxrtLID-OFL_QebF-NS7uRfkh8e_mN9RaS8_tEfqtONGS9MB_3aMFlaAsH1EALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds)



## SKY TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

STRIVE FOR MORE

ਟਰੱਕਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਈ  
ਸਕਾਈ ਟਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟ ਸਾਲਿਊਸ਼ਨ  
ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ



SPECIAL BIT INSPECTION AND DOT AUDIT COMPLIANCE:

NOTARY PUBLIC SERVICES.

ON THE SPOT VIN VERIFICATION SERVICES.

DOT OUT OF SERVICES??

AUTHORIZED IRS E- FILE PROVIDER.

WE HAVE COMPLETE SOLUTIONS

FOR OUT OF SERVICE DOT.

SPECIAL DOT COMPLIANCE

FOR SAFETY, AUDITS AND

RECORD KEEPING.

ICC, DOT, IFTA, IRP Plates,  
PERMITS, NYP, KYU, OR,  
Canada Permit, CORPORA-  
TION AND LLC FILLING  
SERVICES, 2290, PTI,  
Trailer plates.

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

PHONE: 209-855-6938, FAX: 209-762-6540

Email: skytransportsolution@gmail.com

Give us a chance to provide you best services

121 E 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376

# The Role of Saints in the Empowerment of Scheduled Castes – International Conference

I participated, as an invited delegate, in the International Conference on “The Role of Saints in the Empowerment of Scheduled Castes” at Ahmedabad on December 21. The Conference was organized and hosted by BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute in collaboration with Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya Bilaspur and Gujarat University Ahmedabad in connection with centenary celebrations of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj. It was a rewarding experience to listen and discuss an important and relevant subject for the socio-economic development of the marginalized sections of the country and the society at large. It was not only a well organized event by the premier academic, educational and research agencies of the country but also the participation in the Conference and their contribution was a sheer delight and thought provoking. On getting the invitation from Dr. Jyotindra Dave, Director of BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute to participate in the Conference, I wondered as to how come they had picked me up, a non-academic, for this

conscious of this and would try my best to justify their choice as thinking and alert observer of contemporary history and my diverse experience as a career diplomat and a social activist. I hope that the intellectual delegates and the discerning audience would bear with me.” and added that as a believer in Guruvani, I will stand to gain from the elite participants as “Tum Chandan Hum Rind Baapre; Sang Tumhare Vasa: Neech Rukh Te Unch Bhao Hain Gandh Suganadh Niwasa” Referring to the theme of the Conference I said in my submissions, “The Saints of ancient and medieval times did their job in reforming the society and empowering the weaker sections of the society including our Matri Shakti. Their contribution in the process is a chequered history and will remain so. Reform and Change is an unending process. The contemporary Saints stepped into the shoes of our worthy forefathers – Narayana Guru, Mahatma Jyotirao Phule, Chatrapati Sahu, Swami Daya Nand, Swami Vivekanand, Rama Krishna Param Hans, and Maharishi Arvind among others carried the agenda forward in em-

son of BJP who candidly said, “India would not be India without Samrasta.” Milind Kamle, Founder of Dalit Indian Chamber of Commerce and Industry termed himself as a “Sipahi of Samrasta” and added that ‘economic empowerment’ was as important as social empowerment. I fully endorsed this view and concluded with a poetic recital of Allama Iqbal:

Aao Ghairat Ke Parde Ik Baar Phir Utha Dein  
Bichdon Ko Phir Mila Dein Naqsh-E-Dui Mita Dein

Sooni Padi Hui Hai Muddat Se Dil Ki Basti  
Aa Ik Naya Shiwaala Is Des Mein Bana Dein

Dunia Ke Teerthon Se Ooncha Ho Apna Tirath  
Daaman-E-Aasman Se Is Ka Kalas Mila Dein

This narration would not be complete if I don’t give briefly my impressions and reflections on the great deliberative event – International Conference on the theme “The Role of

social inequalities. There was no point in remaining in the ‘denial mode’ and keep on defending the indefensible and justifying the unjust. It was noted with satisfaction that, of late, it was observed that things were

changing and well meaning socio-cultural organizations and also spiritual outfits were getting active and engaged in the process. It is a welcome development.

Some of the delegates also observed that such deliberations having ‘reform intent’ should be open to all segments of the society as it was seen in the Conference rather than limiting it



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



intellectual exercise. Nevertheless, I accepted the kind invitation and appreciated the gesture with pleasure. It was an educative and rewarding experience to participate in the Conference and interact with some of who’s who of the academic and intellectual circles and also renowned personalities from public and spiritual life namely; Milind Kamle, Tarun Vijay, Bizay Sonkar Shastri, Ravindra Kirkole, Alok Chakarwal, Himanshu Pandya, Guru Prakash Paswan, Ramesh Pandav, Sanjeev Dangi, Jyotindra Dave and also many of the great Saints of His Holiness Pramukh Swami Maharaj outfits. The Press Release on the Conference issued by BAPS Swaminarayan Research Institute rightly gave an overview of the proceedings of the Conference, “During the conference, eminent scholars from around the world presented original research that discovered, reflected upon, and recognized the efforts undertaken by India’s great saints to empower scheduled castes. Attending scholars explored the relevance of their research to contemporary social issues and the role of saints in reforming modern society. The conference also highlighted Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s significant contribution to promoting social empowerment and harmony.” It further stated, “The delegates found the conference to be an engaging platform that promoted essential conversations on social empowerment and eliminating social disparities. Attendees also felt the conference encouraged interdisciplinary and diverse perspectives and emphasized the need and means to transcend all forms of social division.”

While presiding over one of the Paper Presentation Sessions of the Conference, I registered my humble presence and said, “I am personally touched and appreciative of the organizers who thought of inviting a non-academic, like me, to this highly academic, intellectual and contemplative event. I am fully con-

powering the socially and educationally weaker sections of the society. In this unending process, and rightly so, the next generation of reformists and saviors of the depressed and oppressed segments of the society emerged in the form of modern Saints; Mahatma Gandhi, Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, Swaminarayan, Rabindernath Tagore, Achutananda among others to name a few. In the more recent times HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj and many more did their best and contributed immensely to the ongoing process of ‘Removing Tears’ of every eye.” Concluding my remarks, I urged the present day players to do more in empowering the marginalized sections of the society and added, “It is a matter of satisfaction that we are on track. We have, perhaps, arrived but we are yet to reach. Our social and cultural organizations like RSS, Bhagwan Swaminarayan Research Institute and SGPC among others are expected to do more in the process of India’s tryst with destiny which we started in 1947. The lofty ideals of our constitution; Equality, Liberty, Justice and Fraternity would be realized only by establishing Casteless Society, Equitable Social Order and Samarasta by carrying forward the agenda of our Holy Saints – Bahujan Hitai: Bahujan Sukhai. Giving my reflections on the deliberations, I noted with gratification that since morning I got a distinct and welcome feeling, by listening to the Saints and the battery of elite participants, that they all equated ‘empowerment’ with ‘Samrasta’ in the society and rightly so, the very need to bring about a ‘just social order’ – Der Ayae - Darust Ayae. I appreciated the views of Tarun Vijay, MP and National Spokesper-



Saints in the Empowerment of Scheduled Caste”. Here I go:

All the dignitaries, right from the inaugural session to the valedictory session, underlined the importance and relevance of ‘empowering of Scheduled Castes’, and the need of establishing an ‘equitable society’ if India was to become a developed country and the ‘Vishava Guru’ as visualized.

It became clear and rightly so that ‘Empowerment’ and ‘Samrasta’ are synonymous and complementary to each other. Empowerment of the weaker sections of the society could be achieved by bring about Samrasta in the society and Empowerment would lead to Samarasta

One very important recently emerged trait came to fore in the deliberations. Many of the delegates; particularly MP Tarun Vijay, Guru Prakash Paswan, Milind Kamle and also the Saints of Swaminarayan mission were of the view that the main stream of the society should accept the fact that some ‘deformities’ had cropped in the social structures over the centuries resulting in

to the concerned communities. Empowerment of the weaker sections pertained to the entire society at large; particularly the main stream of the society.

While listening to the deliberations, I felt that, perhaps, both the socio-cultural and also the spiritual leadership of the country have realized that Samrasta and Empowerment would put the country on rails to move forward to appropriate the lofty ideals of our forefathers like HH Pramukh Swami Maharaj who preached, “No one is great or modest by ones birth or caste. Any ones greatness is measured by ones values and work. Discrimination on the basis of caste is an ill intension born out of one’s ego.”

Last but not the least; I was much impressed by the presence of prominent Saints of Swami Narayan organizations in the Conference and their invaluable contribution to the deliberations which were ably steered by Swami Aksharvatsal, a highly revered personality.

I will be failing in my over all impressions and observations, if I don’t mention about the befitting and picturesque venue of the International Conference on the Role of Saints in the Empowerment of Scheduled Castes – Pramukh Swami Maharaj Nagar – a specially planned and artistically created complex or township spread over in 600 acres of land in the outskirts of Ahmedabad in connection with Pramukh Swami Maharaj’s Centenary Celebrations. The Nagar was formally declared open by PM Narendra Modi on December 14 as ‘Pramukh Swami Maharaj Satabdi Mahaotsav (1921-2021) – a befitting and an ‘awe-inspiring’ tribute to the mission and thought of Swaminarayan.

I take this opportunity to wish Happy New Year to all. Let us usher ourselves into fresh optimism in the new year.

\*\*\*\*\*

# FUNERAL SERVICES HELD FOR BIBI GURBAX KAUR RATTU

**Bibi Gurbax Kaur Rattu**, wife of late Shri Karamjit Rattu and elder sister of Bhai Jagtar Singh Bhatia, who breathed her last on Monday (December 19, 2022), was given an emotional send off at her funeral services held on Friday (December 23, 2022) at Hull's Chapel in Walnut Creek. More than Five hundred mourners and sympathizers' attended the services held after the recitation of

Sukhmani Saheb Path. S/Shri O.P. Balley, Ramesh Suman, Pali Nur and Mr. and Mrs. Kashmiri Bhatia paid their floral tributes to the sweet memories of such a nice and a soft spoken person who was really an embodiment of innocence and devotion to the entire family. Antim Ardass for peace and tranquility of the departed soul was held with the recitation of Alania Path

at Shri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg followed by Guru Ka Langar. Her untimely departure just less than a year after her husband Shri Karamjit's demise, has left a very sad and pathetic impact on both Rattu and Bhatia families who will miss her deeply. Shri Prem Chumber Editor-in-Chief: "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" also conveyed his condo-

lences to both Rattu and Bhatia families during the final Ardass at the temple and captured the proceedings of the program in his camera as a memorial to the departed soul. Again with hearty prayers for Bibi Gurbax Kaur's soul to rest in peace in Almighty hands. **O.P. Balley** Founder Member Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA)



All pictures credit: Prem Kumar Chumber (Ambedkar Times)



# Shaheedi Diwas of Sahibzades



ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੋਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥  
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥

In the memory of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji's Sahibzade, Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg celebrated the Shaheedi Diwas of Sahibzade on December 25, 2022.

This was a very gloomy, heart breaking but important time in the Sikh History. Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji's Sahibzade, (Sahib Zada Zorawar Singh Ji and Sahib Zada Fateh Singh Ji), and Mata Gujri ji sacrificed their lives for their faith. These were the youngest Sikhs ever to suffer so much torture at such a tender age and sacrifice their lives but didn't give up their faith.

Bhai Anoop Singh Cheema paid a melodious tribute to Sahibzade of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Gurughar Head Granthi Bhai Balwinder Singh Ji narrated the history of Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji and the martyrdom of young Sahibzade and Mata Gujri ji in Sirhind . How Gangu betrayed them for money and turned her and the Sahibzade over to Mughal authorities. Sahibzade were subjected to torture to make them accept Islam. When they refused to give up their faith, they were

imprisoned with Mata Gujri ji in Thanda Burj by Nawab Wazir Khan. Nawab of Malerkotla, Sher Mohammad Khan, argued against their execution but it had no effect on Wazir Khan's thinking. Chote Sahibzade were bricked alive and then brutally executed. Todar Mal, follower of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, paid for the land by stacking gold coins to cover a piece of land to cremate Mata Gujri Ji and Sahibzade.

During this KATHA, besides Bhai Balwinder Singh ji's voice, you could only hear sighs and sobs of the Sangat. Our History needs to be told and then told again to remind all of us what Guru Sahib and their family members sacrificed to save our faith and culture.

Indians, specially Guru Ke Sikh can never forget this sacrifice. India has marked December 26 as a Veer Baal Divas to pay tribute to Sri Guru Gobind Singh ji's Sahibzade.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh's ji's Parkash Utsav will be celebrated on January 8, 2023 in the Gurughar. Please come and listen to Katha about the life of Guru Sahib from an amazing Katha-wachak, Bhai Balwinder Singh ji.

**Ramesh Suman**  
Former President/ Chairman- Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA)

# The Land of Punjab and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

**B**abasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar had a special corner in his heart for Punjab because of historical and cultural reasons and its contribution in Social Reform Movement. Punjab was known as Sapta Sindhu in the Rigveda and some other ancient Vedic texts. It finds mention as Hapta Hindu in the sacred Zend Avesta of Zoroastrians (Parsis). The seven rivers mentioned there are Sindhu, Chenab, Jhelum, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Saraswati. Sindhu and Saraswati were excluded subsequently and the land of remaining five rivers came to be known as Punjab in Persian and Panchapah in Sanskrit. The Punjab region played a decisive role in the annals of history of Indian sub-continent from time immemorial by virtue of its typical location and geo-political position. It has been the cradle of rich and advanced ancient Indus-Valley Civilization. As it lay on the highway between the nomad breeding grounds of Central Asia and the fertile valley of Ganges, it has been the arena of religious, social and political conflicts for a long time. The region has been invaded and ruled by many different Empires and races like Aryans, Persians, Greeks, Scythians, Bactrians, Sakas, Kushanas, Hunas, Mongols, Muslims and the British. It has been the birthplace of many a saints, and a breeding ground of various schools of religious thought like Sanatanism/Hinduism, Buddhism, Sufism and Sikhism etc. The scholars trace history of Hindu Scriptures – the Vedas, Upanishadas, Smritis and the epics etc., which are the bedrock of Hinduism and Hindu Social Order, to this region. It is the indepth study of these scriptures for over fifteen years by Dr. Ambedkar that led to his conclusion that Hindu Social Order based on these scriptures is inimical to equality, antagonistic to liberty and opposed to fraternity, impelling him to launch a lifelong crusade for its reformation. He stirred the mind of conscientious and liberal Hindus and other progressive elements to launch a reform movement against the 'unmoral and unhuman' Social Order with open mind in the larger interest of the society and the country.

The history of Social Reform Movement in Punjab and in India may be traced back to Buddhism. It is Lord Buddha, who raised the banner of revolt against the social system based on the said scriptures. He unfurled the flag of democratic ideals of equality, liberty and fraternity. Buddhism came to Punjab and gained a good hold there within 300 years of the Mahaparinirvana of Buddha in 483 B.C. Thereafter, for more than 1,000 years, Buddhism was the predominant religion of the people of the re-

gion. A galaxy of Buddhist saints, scholars, artists, poets and philosophers like Nagasena, Asvaghosa, Asanga and Vasubandhu not only en-

The word Punjab means the land of five rivers. These five rivers are : the Sutlej, the Beas, the Ravi, the Chenab and the Jhelum.

During the days of the *Rig Veda* this land was called '*Sapta Sindhu*' i.e., the land of seven rivers. At that time seven rivers, i.e., Sindh, Jhelum, Chenab, Ravi, Beas, Sutlej and Saraswati used to flow through this land. The Greeks called it '*Pentopotamia*'. Later, for several centuries, it was called Taki after the name of a tribe of the same name which ruled here for a pretty long time. In the medieval period, particularly during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1799-1839), the Punjab was generally called the 'Lahore Province' or the 'Lahore Kingdom' after the name of Lahore, the capital city. But under the British rule, it came to be called the Province of the Punjab. During the partition in 1947, this province was divided into two parts 'East Punjab' and 'West Punjab', the former falling under India, and the latter under Pakistan. In the Constitution of India, the Indian part of the Punjab has been named as the Punjab State.

riched the culture of the North-West region but also influenced and molded the destiny of Buddhism and the people during that age. It flour-



ished under the patronage of Kings such as Milinda, Kanishka and Harsha. The most renowned Buddhist Emperor, Ashoka also started his career in the Punjab. The accounts of Chinese traveler Hieun Tsang and the excavation at Sanghol (Punjab) throw flood of light on the spread of Buddhism in Punjab. Later, under the weight of political and religious upheavals, Buddhism disappeared from the plains but it managed to survive in some hilly tracts in the present day Himachal Pradesh.

The Bhakti Movement in the medieval period of Indian History was another revolutionary development in the Social Reform Movement in the country and Punjab. The humanistic, egalitarian, secular and spiritual teachings of saints/gurus like Ravidas, Namdev, Farid, Guru Nanak and others attacked prevalent social evils of caste, superstitions and ritualism etc. and appealed to the reason with focus of egalitarianism. The philosophy and teachings of these and various other saints and gurus were got compiled by Guru Arjun Dev in the

Holy Book called 'Adi Granth' in 1604 A.D. The nomenclature 'Adi Granth' was subsequently changed to 'Guru Granth Saheb'. This was one of the

most revolutionary events in the Social Reform Movement in Punjab that formally ushered in a brand new, progressive, humanistic and egalitarian

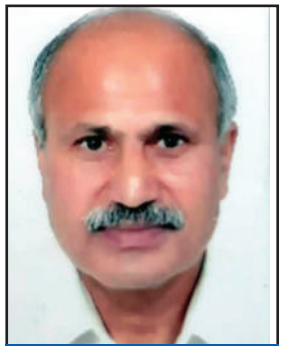


religion called 'Sikhism'. It did make a positive impact on the people and society. But the evils like social stratification, discrimination, casteism, poverty and atrocities on weaker sections continued to haunt the marginalized sections. The Social Conference of the National Congress and other Socialist organizations such as Brahma Samaj, Prarthana Samaj, Arya Samaj and its 'Jat Pat Todak Mandal and Gandhi's Harijan Sewak Sangh etc. also could not make the needed dent into the anti-social and anti-national Hindu Social Order with its pernicious caste system. Resultantly, the deprived sections, particularly the Scheduled Castes continued to reel under the age old Social Order. It is under these circumstances that Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar took a solemn vow to liberate the downtrodden from the thralldom of ages at the cost of his life. When Babasaheb was engaged in a pitched battle to liberate the unfortunate children of lesser God at national level, a new social reform movement by the name of 'Adi or Ad-Dharam' appeared in the land of five

rivers under the inspiring leadership of a young revolutionary Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia.

Born on 14 January 1886 in a poor downtrodden family of Mugowal village of present Garghshankar Tehsil of Hoshiarpur

District of Punjab, Babu Mangu Ram suffered untold miseries on account of stigma of caste right from his school days as suffered by Dr. Ambedkar. He was allowed admission in a school at Mahalpur on the condition that he would sit at the door outside the classroom; would receive lessons indirectly through a Muslim student; would never enter the class room in any eventuality and he would carry sitting mat daily with him. He completed his primary education under these humiliating conditions. He took admission in the nearby High School Bajwara on the additional condition that he would get lessons standing at the window outside the classroom. One day he took shelter in the class room due to heavy rains and hailstorm outside. He was caned black and blue and thrown out of the room by the Brahmin teacher. When he reached the school the next day, he found the classroom furniture kept outside to wash out the pollution caused due to his entry in the classroom the previous day. The moment his teacher saw him, he shouted at him calling him by the caste name 'Chandala' and shoed him away. Mangu Ram ran away to escape the wrath of his teacher never to enter the school again. After assisting his father in the business for over four years, he left for America in 1909 for better economic prospects. He worked as a laborer in California (U.S.A) for about four years at the orchard of a relative of a landlord of his village. He felt ill at ease working as a downtrodden under an employer suffering from the cancerous caste system even in a free democratic country like U.S.A. It was not a different experience for him than working as a landless labourer back home in India. Therefore, he left his caste-minded Indian employer and worked at different places like Fresno, Stockton, Sacramento and Elcehro etc. in a free and democratic environment. Influenced by the European and American history of independence, some



**Col. Prithvi Raj Kumar**  
91-94648-94941  
Chief Postmaster General (Retd.)  
(Additional Secretary,  
Govt. of India)

(Contd. on next page)

**Postal Address of "Ambedkar Times" : 5101 Doe Hollow Pl, Antelope, CA. 95843**

The opinions expressed in this newspaper do not necessarily represent the views or opinions of the staff or employees of "Ambedkar Times". All disputes subjected to Sacramento (CA) jurisdiction.

# The Land of Punjab and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

(Continue from page 7)

young Punjabi American migrants were charged with aggressive patriotic fervor in the mid 1913 to free their country from the British yoke. Lala Hardyal was their inspiring and motivating force. As a result, a revolutionary outfit with the name of 'Gadar Party' was formed and full time members were enrolled at San Francisco for the purpose. Fired with the patriotic fervor, Babu Mangu Ram also enrolled himself as a full-time member of the Party with the aspiration to see his people breathing in the fresh air of democracy on equal footing with the co-citizens of free India. Kartar Singh Sarabha, Lala Ram Chander, Gyani Bhagwan Singh and Sohan Singh Bhakna and the like were the other Punjabi front runners of the Party. When the Party took a dangerous decision to send the shipment of arms for the revolutionaries in India, Babu Mangu Ram volunteered alongwith four other members namely Charan Das, Harnam Rai, Mahesh Chander and Hari Singh to escort the ship. Babu Mangu Ram was given the

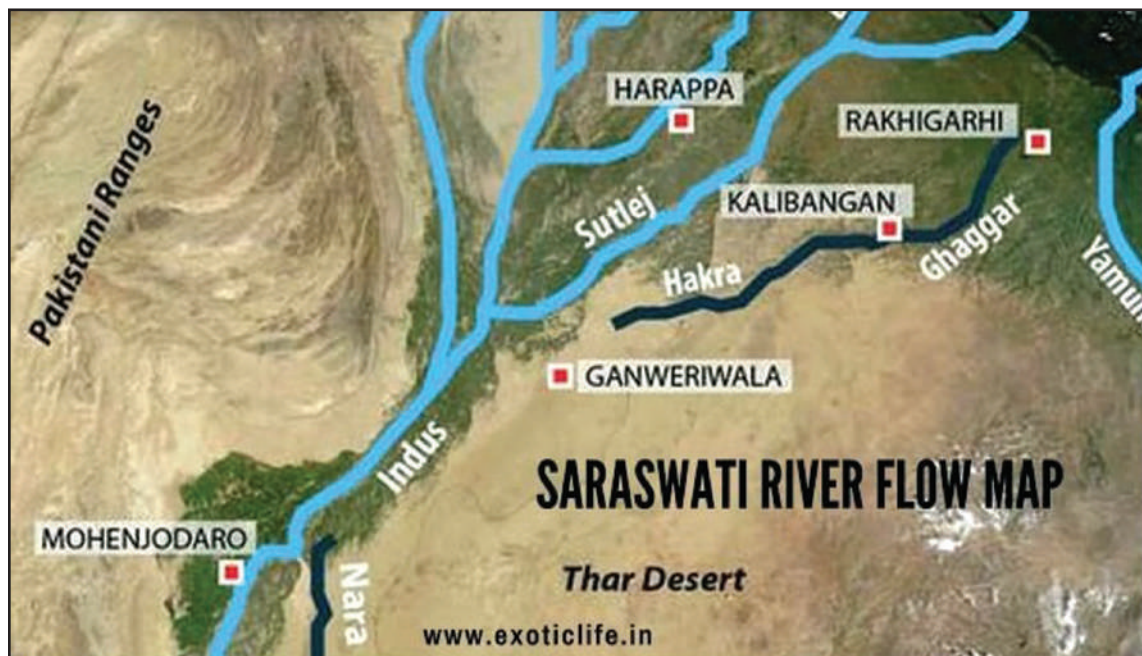
pseudonym of Nizamudin. Escorted by the five lions of Punjab, the ship named 'Maverick' set sailed for India from Mexico. Unfortunately, the ship was captured by the Japanese soldiers in East Indies Islands. Japan being an ally of the British in the War, Babu Mangu Ram and his colleagues were imprisoned and ordered to be hanged instantly. As luck would have it, they were rescued by an armed German soldier and made to escape. They took different escape routes and Babu Mangu Ram and his two other colleagues found their way to Singapore. Unfortunately again, they were identified by the British spies who were the traitors of Gadar Party, and handed over to the British authorities. They were ordered to be shot dead but the lady luck was on their side this time also. They were once again rescued by the Germans and sent to Manila. Babu Mangu Ram came to know from the Newspapers that he was awarded death sentence at Singapore on the charges of treason. Believing the news of death sentence true, his family married his wife to his brother. He managed to save

himself with the help of 'Gadar Party' and found a job in a factory in Manila. He left Manila for his country in the beginning of 1925. He reached the Indian coast via Lanka and reached his homeland via Madurai, Madras, Bombay, Poona, Satara, Nagpur and Delhi. He was moved at the sight of heart rending conditions of the down-trodden people en-route. The continued miserable condition of his people

or religion was Adi i.e. original. They were subjugated and enslaved by the Aryan invaders and were exposed to draconian and unhuman laws. Hence, they should be identified as a separate faith called Adi-Dharma, and they should liberate themselves from the thralldom of Hinduism. Thus, the foundation of Adi-Dharam movement was laid by Babu Mangu Ram and his colleagues in November 1926 with its

breadth of the State propagating aims and objects of the organization. Soon the Adi-Dharam Movement picked up and spread fast with its large following all over the State. It became a force to be reckoned with.

Dr. Ambedkar, on the other hand, was in the thick of his battle for the mission of liberation his people from the Hindu thralldom since 1917. In the second Round Table Conference (07 September - 31 December 1931) at London, Mahatma Gandhi represented the Congress Party. He made a statement in the Conference that he was the sole representative of the Congress and the Hindus including the Depressed Classes. It was an open challenge and affront to the position and leadership of Dr. Ambedkar who along with Rao Bahadur Srinivasan was representing the Depressed Classes. Reacting sharply, various organizations of the Depressed Classes in the country countered Gandhi's claim and sent telegrams to the British Prime Minister declaring Dr. Ambedkar as their sole representative. Babu Mangu Ram toured the State condemning



in Punjab shook his soul. He decided to devote rest of his life to fight for the cause of his people instead of the independence of India. He got approval for this from the Headquarters of 'Gadar Party' at San Francisco.

The Arya Samajists were already active in social reform activities in Punjab prior to arrival of Babu Mangu Ram on the Punjab scene. The Depressed Classes' people of Doaba region were economically somewhat better off due to their leather business and some land holdings. Their social and political consciousness was better and some of their youth such as Basant Rai, Thakur Chand and Shiv Charan (Shudranand) were actively engaged in social reform activities. It is believed that they talked about Adi-Dharam for the first time in the Conference held at Jalandhar in 1925. In the light of what Babu Mangu Ram experienced and observed, he felt the need of an exclusive and different organization totally committed to the cause of marginalized sections of Punjab. It was found that the Depressed Classes were the aborigines of the land and their faith

Head Office at Jalandhar. A spacious building with residential accommodation was constructed with the active support of Seth Kishan Das and other wealthy people of the community for the permanent office of the organization. Aims and objects of the Movement and other details such as flag, headgear, religious symbol and greetings etc. were finalized and included in its declaration. A Newsletter titled 'Adi-Danka' was started to propagate the activities of the Movement. All the prominent persons of the Depressed Classes of the region were enrolled as members/office bearers of the Executive/Organizing Committee. Babu Mangu Ram headed the Executive Committee as its President. Seth Kishan Das, Shudranand, Basant Rai, Hari Ram, Hans Raj, Thakur Chand and some others were the office bearers/members of the Executive Committee. Regional Branches were set up all over the State including the hilly areas of present Himachal Pradesh. A Branch was opened at Varanasi, the birthplace of Guru Ravidas. Babu Mangu Ram and his team frequently travelled the length and

Gandhi's claim. A large number of telegraphic messages with similar declaration were sent from Punjab also under Babu Mangu Ram's leadership. Hereafter Babu Mangu Ram whole heartedly supported and followed Dr. Ambedkar. When Gandhi resorted to fast unto death against the Communal Award on 20th September 1932, Babu Mangu Ram took a bold decision and countered Gandhi's action by going himself on fast unto death against him and in favor of Dr. Ambedkar and the Communal Award. He broke his fast on the intervention of Dr. Ambedkar on signing of the Poona Pact. When Lothian Franchise Committee visited Punjab in 1932, about one lac red-turbaned Adi-Dharam followers held a demonstration and Babu Mangu Ram led a twenty member delegation to present a Memorandum to the Committee seeking acceptance of their claim of Adi-Dharam as a separate religion. It sounded an alarming bell for the Hindu organizations particularly the Arya Samajists who indulged in false propaganda against the Adi-Dharam

(Contd. on next page)



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

## URGENT CARE CLINIC

### DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

8191 Timberlake Way, Suite # 400, Sacramento, CA 95823

Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Goodie Takhar, PhD



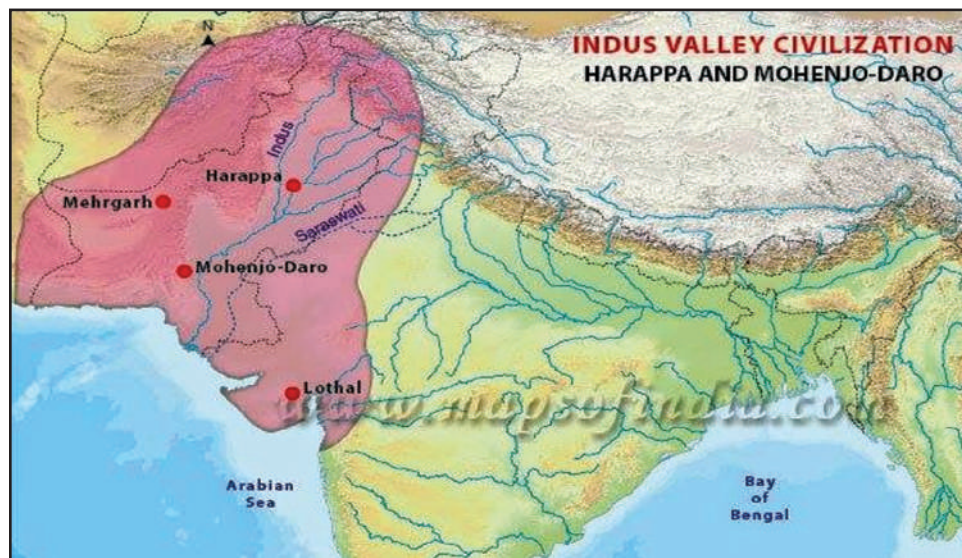
# The Land of Punjab and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

(Continue from page 8)

Movement. Their counter-demonstration against the Adi-Dharam Mandal's claim had no effect on the Committee. The Lothian Committee accepted the demand of the Adi-Dharam Mandal. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was present in the Lothian Committee on this occasion. As a result of Dr. Ambedkar's presentation of true facts regarding the Depressed Classes before the Franchise Committee of the Round Table Conference, eight seats were reserved for the Depressed Classes in the Punjab Assembly.

As a sequel to the declaration of Dr. Ambedkar at Yeola (Maharashtra) Conference on 13th October 1935 to the effect that he would not die a Hindu, emissaries of various religions including Buddhism and Sikhism approached him with an invitation to embrace their faith. Dalip Singh Doabia, Vice-President of the Golden Temple Management Committee wired a similar appeal to Dr. Ambedkar (Keer, p.255). Dr. Ambedkar attended the Sikh Mission's Conference held at Amritsar on 13 and 14 April 1936. It was attended by huge crowds of Sikhs and the Depressed Classes from Punjab, Kerala, U.P and C.P. The Conference was presided over by Sardar Bahadur Hukum Singh, a retired District Judge. The need for improving the plight of the Depressed Classes was stressed by the Sikh leaders. Addressing the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though decided to renounce Hinduism. The main feature of the Conference was the conversion of five prominent Depressed Class leaders of the Thiyya community of Kerala and fifty others from the U.P. and C.P. Sometime in May 1936, Dr. Ambedkar sent his son and nephew to Golden Temple Amritsar. They lived there for one and a half months in the warm hospitality of the Sikhs who received them with hope (Keer, pp. 267, 276). After consulting his colleagues from different provinces in the matter of choosing the proper religion for conversion, Dr. Ambedkar decided to embrace Sikhism. On the advice of his friends and colleagues, he had a free talk with Dr. Mooje, the President and spokesman of the Hindu Mahasabha on 18th June 1936 at Rajagriha, Bombay. The purport of Dr. Ambedkar's views was reduced to a written statement and given to Dr. Moonje, who approved of it personally. Shankarachary Dr. Kutakoti also approved the decision. Explaining the grounds of his preference for the Sikhism, Dr. Ambedkar observed that if the Depressed Classes joined Islam or Christianity, they would not only go out of the Hindu religion, but also out of the Hindu culture. If they became Sikhs they would remain within the Hindu culture. In conversion to Islam the danger of Muslim domination was real. Conversion to Christianity would help to strengthen the

hold of Britain on India. On the other hand if they embraced Sikhism, they would not harm but help the destiny of the country. They would not be denationalized. On the contrary, they would be a help in the political advancement of the country (Keer, pp. 277- 281, 289). He deputed a group of his 13 followers to the Sikh Mission at Amritsar to study the Sikh religion. There was some understanding between him and the Sikh Mission to start a college in Bombay in the interest of the Depressed Classes (Keer, p.284). Though the final choice of Dr. Ambedkar fell on Buddhism for multiple reasons, he was highly impressed by the philosophy and Guru Nanak and other saints as enshrined in the Guru Granth Saheb. In his undelivered speech at the Lahore Conference of



'Jat Pat Todak Mandal' in May 1936, which was published under the title 'Annihilation of Caste', Dr. Ambedkar said: "...You must not only discard the Shastras, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak. You must take the stand that Buddha and Guru Nanak took. You must have courage to tell the Hindus that what is wrong with them is their religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of Caste (BAWS, Vol.1, pp. 68, 69). The philosophy of humanism, egalitarianism and democracy as enshrined in the Guru Granth Saheb and the Buddhist literature echoes in the Preamble of the Constitution of India drafted by Dr. Ambedkar.

In the first elections to the Provincial Legislatures in 1937, the Adi-Dharam Mandal contested nine seats in alliance with the Unionist Party and won eight seats. It lost one seat by merely seven votes. But the elections laid the foundation of friction and intra-organizational rivalry among the Adi-Dharam leaders. Seth Kishan Das, a prominent face of Adi-Dharam Mandal, contested election from Jalandhar with the support of Adi-Dharam Mandal. But Master Gurbanta Singh, who was the General Secretary of the Mandal, stood against him on the Congress ticket and suffered heavy defeat. Subsequently, Seth Kishan Das founded the 'Punjab Achhut Federation' which was the Punjabi version of Dr. Ambedkar's 'Scheduled Caste Federation'. He appointed Gopal Singh

Khalsa, M.L.A. Ludhiana as its Vice-President without taking Babu Mangu Ram into confidence. Taking advantage of the situation, Master Gurbanta Singh came closer to Babu Mangu Ram and founded a separate organization 'Ravidas Naujawan Sabha'. He contested Punjab Assembly elections again in 1946-47 against Seth Kishan Das and defeated him with the support of Babu Mangu Ram. Babu Mangu Ram won from Hoshiarpur with the support of Unionist Party. The building of Adi-Dharam Mandal which was constructed with the financial support from Seth Kishan Das went under the control of Master Gurbanta Singh. He converted it into 'Ravidas High School' and assumed its chairmanship. Thus, the Adi-Dharam Mandal

and outside the Congress Party and the Constituent Assembly had a last laugh and the Bill was killed without remorse. A man of principles, Dr. Ambedkar preferred to resign from the Nehru Cabinet rather than compromise on principles. Accordingly, he resigned on 27 September 1951. Soon thereafter, first General Elections to the Parliament and State Legislative Assemblies of Independent India were declared and Dr. Ambedkar got busy in election campaign for his Scheduled Caste Federation Party. He visited Punjab in this connection from 27 to 29 October 1951. The leadership of Adi-Dharmis was now in the hands of Seth Kishan Das who was closely associated with Dr. Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation since its inception. He was the President of its Punjab branch. He bought a new car for Dr. Ambedkar on this occasion. Dr. Ambedkar was extended a very warm welcome by over a lakh or two of his followers who had come to Jalandhar from Hoshiarpur and other nearby areas to have a glimpse of their messiah and to listen to his pearls of wisdom. Dr. Ambedkar delivered four historic speeches at Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala during his visit.

In his first great motivational speech delivered on 27 October 1951 at Ramdaspora (Buta Mandi) Jalandhar, Dr. Ambedkar emphasized the need for unity of all ranks of the downtrodden sections and their unimpeachable commitment to the cause so as to attain the goal of becoming a ruling class. He had strong conviction that political power was the key to all their problems. Sharing experience of his life journey and his dedication to the cause of his people, he said that he was continuing in politics only for the sake of his community. Out of thirty long years of his life in the service of the community he was the member of the Government for eight years and could have remained there forever but the cause of his community necessitated his resignation from the Congress Government as he had always kept the well-being of the community in the uppermost of his mind. When he had returned from England after getting his degree in Doctor of philosophy, there was nobody in India with such qualifications. He was offered the post of Professor of Political Economy. He declined the offer for the service of community. On completion of Bar-at-Law he was again asked by Bombay Government to accept the post of a District Judge at the monthly salary of Rs. 2000 with a promise that he would be a High Court Judge after some time. But he had not accepted the offer though his income from the other sources was meagerly Rs.200. In 1942, he had to face two questions. One was to serve as a High Court Judge and the other was to join the Government of India as a member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. Had he joined the High Court, he would have received Rs. 5,000 per month as

fell prey to the individual political ambitions of its leaders. Babu Mangu Ram was offered Congress ticket in 1952, which he declined. But the Congress Party, Arya Samajists and the Scheduled Caste people themselves played an important role in weakening and ultimately wiping out the Adi-Dharam Movement. Had the Depressed Classes' people followed the footsteps of Babasaheb and faced the Congress Party and Aryasamajists as one united force, the history would have been altogether different. Alas! Individual ego and selfishness have ruined the people and organizations! Alas! People could take a lesson of two from the history!

Despite many upsets in Dr. Ambedkar's mission of liberating his people, he did not budge from his goal. Notwithstanding all out efforts of the Congress Party to keep the doors and windows of the Constituent Assembly shut for him, not only he entered the Constituent Assembly but also became the Chief Architect of the Constitution - supreme Law of the land, and the first Law Minister of independent India by dint of his sheer intellectual prowess, education, moral conviction, uprightness, egalitarian philosophy and selfless service to the humanity as the sole mission of his life. As an ardent believer of women's liberation and their rights, he drafted and presented the revolutionary Hindu Code Bill in the Parliament and fought tooth and nail for over four years to see it through. But the Hindu orthodoxy in

(Contd. on next page)

# The Land of Punjab and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

(Continue from page 9)

pay and Rs. 1000 as pension after retirement. But he declined that offer too for the service and cause of the community. He reiterated that he would die for his community as the cause of his community was supreme to him. While in Congress Government, many people thought that he had joined the Congress party. He asserted that he was like a rock which did not melt but turned the course of rivers. He had co-operated with the Congress Government with all his might and with sincerity in the service of his mother-land. But he had never allowed himself to merge into the Congress organization. He and his people wanted to join that party which had sympathy with the Scheduled Caste people but there was not a single such Party; all were selfish. Advising his people to capture power to protect their interests, he said that to be successful, one must be either powerful or rich. But they had neither money nor were they in majority. Marwadi and Baniyas did not have power but they had money. They could purchase anything including the Police as well as the courts. The Scheduled Castes being in minority in the villages had always to live at the mercy of the Caste Hindus and other high caste people. They were put to all sorts of hardships and they were even abused when they complained. If they united under one banner of the Scheduled Caste Federation, they could have the political power and rights, and pull their community out of chaos and protect their rights and interests.

About the role played by Gandhi and other Congress leaders, he said that they were not prepared to give them power and rights. Gandhi went on fast unto death when the British Government had given them the separate electorates. He was coerced to save Gandhi's life by agreeing to Poona Pact. Gandhi and others had promised that no candidates on Congress ticket would be put against the candidates of Scheduled Caste Federation. But in blatant breach of the promise and agreement they put their own yes-men of the community who were fools, illiterate, unpopular and had selfish motives, as candidates against the reserved seats for the Scheduled Castes. He pointed out that there were 30 such Scheduled Caste candidates in the Parliament, but they never asked any question, never moved any resolution and never moved a bill for the welfare of the Community thereby giving the impression to the outside world that they had no grievances and required no special consideration. That is why the Scheduled Castes Federation wanted to send their true representatives who could put their grievances before the Assembly and secure redress. Elaborating further his point, Dr. Ambedkar said that Pandit **Jawahar Lal Nehru had delivered 2000 speeches during the last 20 years but he had never spoken about the welfare of the Scheduled Castes even**

once. He had told the people that everything had been done for the scheduled castes and they had no requirement of anything special. On the question of evacuation of the Scheduled Castes from Pakistan also he had done nothing. It was he (Dr. Ambedkar) who had sent two persons to Pakistan for the purpose and Mahar Battalion for their protection and repatriation. According to him the image of Congress party had gone so low that the man with a Gandhi cap was not considered a gentleman. People said nobody could be both a gentleman and Congressman. He predicted that the Congress would soon die its natural death. He wanted the reservation for the Scheduled Castes to continue for such a time as untouchability was there but Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel supported by other members of the Congress Party had opposed him. Therefore, the reservation of seats for the Scheduled Castes was only for 10 years. Hence, they should try to send their true representatives to the Assemblies to safeguard their rights and also try to secure reservation after ten years. The other parties were only anxious to secure their votes and capture their seats and not that they were sympathizing with them. Only the Scheduled Caste Federation could do something for the Scheduled Castes. He said, **"I have built the house for you. It is up to you to maintain it in proper order. I have planted the tree, if you water it, you will enjoy the fruits and its shade. If not, you will have to sit in the sun and our Community will be ruined. Only if we unite, we can achieve something. United we stand and divided we fall."** The Party symbol 'Elephant' was selected as it could be easily distinguished from other animals (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt.3, pp. 416-421).

## **Failure of Parliamentary Democracy will result in Rebellion, Anarchy and Communism**

In his speech delivered before the students' Parliament of the D.A.V. College, Jalandhar on October 28, 1951, Dr. Ambedkar lucidly explained the different aspects of Parliamentary Democracy. He brought out that after a long discussion in the Constituent Assembly, a large majority came to the conclusion that the system of the British Parliamentary Government was best suited for our country. He was himself greatly attached to the Parliamentary system which all must understand and preserve in the Constitution. He traced the history of Parliamentary system of Government to the Buddhist era. There is ample evidence in Buddhist literature – Suktas of Mahaparinibban, to prove that Parliamentary System of Government was not unknown to the country. The system of secret ballot was also in vogue and followed in Buddhists Sanghas. Ancient India was the master of the World. There was such intellectual freedom in the ancient India as was nowhere else to be found. Why then India was subjected to autocratic monarchies, was

a subject matter of investigation. Today the Parliamentary System of Government was alien to India. The people must be educated on the benefits of Parliamentary Democracy and of Parliamentary System of Government. Explaining the system he said, "...Parliamentary System of Government is much more than Government by discussion. An opposition and free and fair elections are the two pillars on which the Parliamentary Governments rest. These are the fulcrums on which the mechanism works. Opposition is the key to a free political life. British and Canada, the two exponents of Parliamentary System of Government recognize this important fact and in both countries the leader of the opposition is paid salary by the Government. But we acclimatized to one single political party for the last 20 or 30 years. Congress does not want any 'opposition'. It is attempting to gather people of sundry views under one canopy. Free and fair elections are necessary for transfer of power from one section of the community to the other without any bloodshed. But under the Parliamentary System 'Big Business' is trying to play a great part in political life of the country. The amount that is being contributed to the Congress on behalf of the 'Big Business' is very dangerous thing. If the moneyed people try to influence the elections by contributing to the election fund of the political parties, they will naturally try to extract concessions either by modifying the present legislation or by influencing the party in power to legislate in such a manner as would be beneficial to their interest. The Congress is accepting the financial help of the Baniyas, Marwadis and other multimillionaires; therefore, it will naturally have to take their side at all crucial times. The Government servants are also influencing the elections in favor of the party which is feeding them and their dependents. Under these circumstances, do you think that there is any hope for the Parliamentary Democracy to succeed...?" He warned that Parliamentary Democracy was bound to fail in this country for the above reasons and if it failed, the only result would be rebellion, anarchy and Communism. If the people in power did not realize that people would not tolerate hereditary authority then the country was doomed. He told the students that if they wished that Parliamentary System of Government and Parliamentary Democracy prevailed, if they were satisfied that they would be assured of their liberty of thought, speech and action, if they should preserve their independence and if they cherished the inherent right of individual liberty, then it was their duty as students and as intelligent community of the country to strive their utmost to cherish the Parliamentary System of Government in its true spirit and work for it." (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 422-428)

## **British and the Congress Party deceived the Scheduled Castes**

Addressing a big gathering of his people on his maiden visit to Ludhiana on 28th October 1951, Dr. Ambedkar said if all the people voted for their candidates the success would surely be theirs. Speaking on the role of the British people and the Congress party vis-à-vis the interests of the Scheduled Castes, he brought out that the British people had deceived the Scheduled Castes during the period of their rule over India. When the East India Company came to India its purpose was only to do business but by and by they became anxious to establish their empire there. They became the rulers of India with the help of the Scheduled Caste people, who were called the Untouchables; who were illiterate and with whom the treatment of the High Caste Hindus was very degrading. They had no alternative but to join the British Army and earn their livelihood. They died for the sake of the Britishers but the Brahmins and other High Caste people derived full benefit of it. The Britishers educated their children and gave all the financial assistance to them whereas the Scheduled Castes were not paid any attention. Consequently, the important posts in the Army, Police and other departments of administration went in the hands of the High Caste people and the Scheduled Castes remained to be uneducated and poor as before. When there was mutiny in 1857, the Scheduled Castes revolted against the Britishers for the injustice done to them. After the mutiny was subdued the British stopped recruiting them in the Army any further. Instead Hindus and Rajputs were recruited in the Army. In 1947 when the Britishers left India, they handed over all power to the High Caste people. The Scheduled Castes were left at their mercy. Speaking about the role of the Hindus, he said that when the Aryans came over to India, Varna system came into force. The Untouchables were placed at the lowest of the social scale and were totally disconnected from the society. The relation between a Caste Hindu and an Untouchable was that of foot and shoe. As the shoes were left outside when entering the house, the same way the Untouchables were kept out of the society and were not given any rights whatsoever. They had borne such treatment at the hands of the High Caste Hindus for centuries and were still suffering socially, economically and politically. After struggling for many years they had achieved certain political rights which were incorporated in the Indian Constitution itself. He fought for twenty long years against Mahatma Gandhi who was against the idea of giving any separate rights to them. They had secured some political power after so many years of struggle. Now they could send their own representatives to the State Assemblies and the Union Parliament against the seats reserved for them. But there were many Parties which were up to snatch away

(Contd. on next page)

# The Land of Punjab and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar

(Continue from page 10)

their rights and send their own henchmen to the seats reserved for Scheduled Caste people. They wanted that the Scheduled Castes should remain where they were and should not come to power so that the menial jobs which they were performing should not suffer.

Warning his people against such designs of the High Caste people and their Parties, he reiterated that the constitutional rights of the Scheduled Castes could be safeguarded only by their true representatives. If their true representatives were not elected then they could not enjoy freedom. Independence would be a farce for them. That would be independence of the High Caste people. But if their true representatives were in the Parliament and the Assemblies they could fight for their rights and get their grievances redressed. Only then their children could get proper education; only then poverty could be removed and only then they would be given equal share in all spheres of life. Although special privileges had been provided for his people in the Constitution, the other Parties specially the Congress were unnecessarily interfering with them. They were putting their own henchmen for election to the reserved seats. None of the Scheduled Caste persons elected on the ticket of Congress Party opened mouth in the Parliament for the fear of stick of Party discipline. Such elected people would go by the wishes of their masters and would not safeguard the interests of the Scheduled Castes. His experience of the Congress Party was that the license and permit seekers and those who had their self-interest to serve at the expense of their community were in the Congress Party. Although he wanted reservation to continue till untouchability was removed, but the Scheduled Caste people elected on Congress ticket opposed him, not to speak of members of the High Castes. The Congress People who were going to the Scheduled Caste people requesting them to contest election on Congress tickets would no more go to them on the expiry of the period of reservation. They would not even spit on the face of the Scheduled Caste people seeking Congress ticket.

Speaking on the party Manifestoes he said that it should not be a list of promises only. It should deal with the problems facing the country and the way to solve them. The only thing impressive about the Manifesto of the Congress Party was the Muslim problem. But the country was not

faced with the Muslim problem after the Pakistan coming into being. 90% people in India did not get proper meals, clothing and shelter. But all those things had no place in the minds of the Congressmen. If a committee was constituted to find out as to which Manifesto was the best, he had no doubt that the Manifesto of the Scheduled Caste Federation would come out to be the best (BAWS, 17, Pt. 3, pp. P.429- 437).

**Corruption and poverty alleviation not on Congress agenda: Congress Government is corrupt and against the interest of the Depressed Classes**

In heart-touching speech at the Patiala public rally on 29th October 1951, apart from some of the points already covered at Jalandhar and Ludhiana, he brought out the true character of the Hindu-minded, corrupt, anti-poor and anti-Scheduled Caste Congress Party, and stressed the need for a social revolution in the country. He said that the Congress Party was the richest in India and the Congress Government most corrupt. It had a huge workforce as propaganda machinery because of money power. But the ground reality was that people were dying of starvation and there was a vast disparity between the rich and the poor. Rich people were becoming richer and the poor poorer day by day. Corruption, nepotism and black-market were the only industries which had flourished during the Congress rule. These evils were even greater now than during the British rule. Instead of doing something to wipe out these evils forever, the Prime Minister said that corruption was rampant in other countries also and it was comparatively in a very small scale in India. Therefore, the people should not worry much about it. Babasaheb wondered as to how the corruption could be eradicated when the Prime Minister was openly encouraging it. No

action against the corrupt Ministers and others was being taken, rather the people bringing cases of corruption to the notice were being sent to jail. He said that Mr. Sachar and Dr. Bhargava both were Premiers in the Punjab and both took bribes and encouraged black marketing during their rule and still no enquiry was made. In England one Minister was charged for bribery as he had taken some cloth from a businessman friend. Mr. Atlee the then Prime Minister appointed an enquiry Commission which reported that the act of the Minister could not be taken as bribe. But even on this ground that he accepted the cloth from a businessman without paying any money,

whether he was a friend or enemy, Mr. Atlee turned out that Minister from office. But the Congress Government had not even felt its duty to enquire into the charges against the Ministers, what to speak of their removal from office.

Speaking on the Brahmanical Mindset of the Congress party and its leaders, he said that the Brahmins and the high caste people were born anti-backward classes. As snake and the mongoose, cat and the rat and elephant and the Birree could not live together peacefully, similarly weak and the strong such as money lender and borrower in the human world could not live peacefully together. Similarly Brahmins and the other high caste people would never show sympathy for the poor Scheduled Castes because if they did so there would be nobody to serve them. The poor and downtrodden classes could never flourish under the rich and, therefore, they must unite separately to achieve better and dignified life of a human being. Their interests could be safeguarded by their own Party and true representative. Expressing his pain and anguish at their selfish representatives, he said that the two Scheduled Caste Deputy Ministers elected on the Congress ticket in the PEPSU Ministry who had done nothing for their people, asked the Scheduled Caste people to boycott his meeting in Patiala. Therefore, the Scheduled Caste people could judge what their people elected on the Congress tickets would do for them.

**Inevitability of a revolution**

Giving a clarion call to his people break themselves their shackles, he said that if the things continued like that, a revolution was inevitable. The downtrodden classes were fed up with the sort of living conditions they had been forced to suffer which they would not tolerate anymore. He asserted that they would have to use some other means to get liberated from the tyranny of the Congress and the Caste Hindus. Brahmin and Baniya never died for the freedom but they were the only fortunate who were deriving and enjoying the benefits. Therefore, he warned the high caste people that a revolution was inevitable unless something was done for the betterment of the backward classes. The high caste people who had kept them away from society had been putting mountains of difficulties before them to block their progress. If they did not pay heed to his words and their true representatives were not elected, then they would have to suffer forever. The Congress and the high caste people would continue to

call and treat them Chamars and Bhangis (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 438-446).

All the above speeches of Dr. Ambedkar are the true reflection of the socio-cultural and political scenario not only of Punjab but of the Hindu society and country as a whole. The social and economic conditions of the marginalized sections are almost the same as they were before the independence of the country. The gap between the rich and the poor is ever widening and social discrimination against the lower strata is rampant. The hydra-headed pernicious caste system continues to be the bane of the people, society and the country. The political reservation for the backward sections has proved to be rather counter-productive and injurious to the overall interests of these sections as their representatives elected on the ticket of other Parties have served their own selfish ends and the interests of their masters rather uplifting their own people. They are mere tools in the hands of their Parties. The political parties are concerned by and large with the power politics rather than addressing the problems of the weaker sections. The corruption seems to have infected the bones and blood of the society. The political Parties get financial support from the 'big business' houses and serve their interests. The scheduled castes and other backward sections continue to be a divided house mainly due to overt and covert designs of the high caste people and political parties, and the selfish interests of their leaders. The Constitution is on receiving end and the pillars of democracy are shaking. There is simmering discontent among the people of the deprived sections who are still reeling under miserable conditions. The silver lining appears to be none other than emulating Babasaheb and his philosophy in letter and spirit, maintaining the house built by him watering the tree planted by him, and strictly and sincerely implementing the Constitution. The civilization, culture and history of erstwhile Sapt Sindhu, Panchapah and now Punjab have much to offer as a way forward to everyone. It all depends how one takes it!

(Source: Writings and Speeches of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar, Vol. 1 and Vol. 17, Pt. 3, Keer, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Life and Mission, Swaroop Chander Boudh, Sher-e-Punjab Babu Mangu Ram, D, C, Ahir, Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab and Dr. Rajendra Prasad, India Divided, pp. 298, 303)

\*\*\*\*



D. C. Ahir

# The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

**W**hen in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi

nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,

for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his

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

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

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

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Juergensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

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



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

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written

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

The headquarters of Ad

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

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the mats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

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

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