



Ambedkar Times

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Dream Just Became a Reality



Ramesh Suman

Ramesh@RameshSuman.com

What a great day we witnessed in our history. Newly renovated Gurughar was opened on Sri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj's parkash utsav.

This Gurughar is large with a stunning grandeur. Soon as you see this Gurughar, you can't help but say WOW.

Ever since the followers of

nations were small but people donated money on a regular basis. Most of us still miss those days.

About 8 years ago, Gurughar committee bought the adjacent building which used to be a Gym. We used to have only a couple of programs every year in this building because this building was large enough to hold the programs on Gurupurab etc.

The present committee undertook the project to turn that old building into a magnificent Gurughar. Mohinder Banga, President Salinder Singh and Treasurer Gyan Suman took the leading initiative on this project. Lekh Raj, Hardial Banga, Santokh

Mohinder Banga and Hardial Banga were at the Gurughar from dawn to dusk trying to get the stucco, roof and so many other things done in addition to a beautiful landscaping in the middle of two buildings with walk ways, trees and grass for children to play. There were days when some of the people were working in the rain just to ensure the safety of the Gurughar.

Finally, the big day arrived. Sangat came to Gurughar on Thursday to start cleaning and decorating the Gurughar. Sri Akhand path began on Friday Morning. There was a large gathering on Saturday. There were

ticipated in this big event. They were surprised and impressed to see the newly renovated Gurughar.

Our founder member, Shri Om Parkash Balley thanked the Sangat and the guests who came to grace the occasion. Vice President Nimi Rattu thanked Mohinder Banga, Salinder Singh and Gyan Suman for making this project successful. She said " This project could not have been completed without the help of Mohinder Banga and Gyan Suman." Chair person Debho Bains thanked Mayor and the Police department.

Chair person Debho Bains, Baksho Jaggi, Balbir Bagha and his



Satguru Ravidass Ji from Fiji and India moved to the Bay Area in sixty's and seventy's, they wanted a Gurughar, a place to worship, to pray, to find serenity, learn few things from our elders and wise people; listen to Gurbani from Giani ji and understand the message. In Early eighty's, a group of very dedicated and devoted people from Fiji and India met in Sacramento and made the first committee of the founding members. These founding members worked tirelessly for years to save up some money and find a place for the Gurughar. They started meeting in Shannon Park Dublin on Sundays to do the Shabad Kirtan and some small religious functions. Finally in 1985, they purchased an old church building in Pittsburg. This building needed a lot of remodeling work to run it as a Gurughar. Sangat came from Sacramento, San Francisco, San Jose and every city as far as 100 miles radius to work on the old building. With their hard work and strong desire they turned that old building into a beautiful Gurughar. Landscaping was done beautifully. Couple of people drove an hour to come on a weekly basis to take care of the lawns. People used to stop and admire the landscaping, they thought it was a park.

Sangat started coming to Gurughar on every Friday, Saturday and Sunday. Some people cooked langar for Sangat while others worked on different parts of the building. The work was hard some moments were tense but the whole experience was very rewarding. Even though the do-

Madhar, Ramesh Chand Ralh, Hans Raj, Balbir Singh Bagha, Balbir Chand Mall, Baljit Singh, Ajay Chahal, Karnail Heera, Jagtar Bhatia, Dilbag Singh, Shinderpal Narabut and so many other members started to work on this project. There were numerous kids who did their part. Rakesh Kumar was one who worked tirelessly without missing a day.

Giani Harjinder Singh Rasia motivated sangat to donate whole heatedly. Groups of committee members went to different cities to get donations. Shashi Paul, Balbir Bagha, Surinder Singh, Salinder Singh, Nimi Rattu, Harmesh Bangar, Abhishek Narabut, Salinder Singh, Gyan Suman, Harbans Kalu, Narinder Chahal, Gurnam Rattu collected funds badly needed to complete the building before the Gurupurab.



few Ragi Jathas who performed on Saturday. There was a group of 25 people who did the shabad kirtan collectively. Giani Sukhdev Singh was the main organizer of this kirtan.

Renowned Giani Kamaljeet Singh ji (Bilge wale), Giani Baldev Singh ji, Giani Surjit Singh Ji, Giani Amritpal Singh ji and famous singer S. Anoop Singh Cheema adorned the occasion with Shabad Kirtan along with our Head Granthi, Giani Harjinder Singh Ji Rasia.

Sangat came from far of places as far as Fresno, San Jose, Sacramento and San Francisco. The gathering was record breaking. I think there were over 2,500 people at the Gurughar. Mayor of Pittsburg, Nancy Parent and representatives of the Pittsburg Police department par-

wife Manjit Bagha and few other volunteers took charge of the kitchen. Food stalls were outside on the lawns. Kewal Jakhu and Jarnail Singh were busy with MAKKI DI ROTI and SAAG, it was very popular. India4u restaurnd - Harmesh Lal served CHAAT, Ram Pal from Mehran restaurant Served Tikkies and Pakoras, There were Hot Jalebies, courtesy of Garcha family, Abhishek Narabut and family was serving Aloo Tikkie, Pal and Dev Narabut Family delighted sangat with Mango Lassi. There was Gol Gappa stall also. Sangat enjoyed the langar and snacks served to them by sewadars. We started putting food stalls about 3 years ago and since then it has been a growing trend. Gurupurab concluded with Bhog ceremony on Sunday, 2/16/2014. This was a great success for the community. Having such a large and splendid Gurughar in Pittsburg is a matter of pride for all of us. We are thankful to our committee members, community and sewadars who donated money and their time to make this dream come true. There is more to be done. Gurughar needs everyone to come and serve with TAN, MAN and DHAN. This is a collective effort and should always be respected and pursued as such.

May WAHEGURU bless the Sanagat and sewadars so that they continue the spirit of dedication for future generation to build Guru-ke-Mahal.

"LONG LIVE THE DIVINE MISSION AND MESSAGE OF SATGURU RAVIDASS JI"

**AMBEDKAR TIMES CONGRATULATES
TO ALL ON SAHIB SHRI KANSHI RAM'S
80th BIRTH ANNIVERSARY (MARCH 15, 2014)**
Prem Kumar Chumber Editor: Ambedkartimes.com

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RESEARCH
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Congress of the United States House of Representatives

January 31, 2014

Dear Friends,
I extend my best greetings and join with you in celebrating the 637th anniversary of "Jagat Guru" Ravidass Ji Maharaj. His philosophy and teachings of equality, tolerance, kindness and universal brotherhood are as significant today as they were in the days of the Bhakti Movement of the late 1400s. I know that those qualities are very important to me, as well as the work that I do on behalf of all my constituents.

I congratulate, and extend my appreciation, to all who have made this grand celebration possible, especially the managing committees of Sri Guru Ravidass Temples in Rio Linda, Fremont, Pittsburg and Fresno. I commend you all for your hospitality, your dedication, and for providing a wonderful day for thousands of peoples!

May the values of equality, tolerance, kindness and universal brotherhood be carried forth from the celebration back into each of our respective communities.

Again, many thanks and have a wonderful day!

Be well

Ami Bera, Member of Congress



Congratulations on the Auspicious Occasion

On behalf of the Board of Directors I would like to convey congratulations on the auspicious occasion of 637th Birthday Anniversary of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj and 14th Annual Nagar Kirtan on Sunday the march 9th 2014. I would like to thank the committee members and all those individuals who work hard to make the Nagar Kirtan Safe & successful.

I would also like to thank all Shri Ravidass Sabhas and there sangat and specially want to thank Committee Members and Sangat of Sikh Temple Roseville. Sikh Temple Bradshaw Road, Gurdwara Dashmesh Darbar and Guru Nanak Sat Sangat Gurdwara Elsie Rd. Who participate in Nagar Kirtan every year. Once again congratulations on 637th Birthday Anniversary of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji and 14th Annual Nagar Kirtan. Wahe Guru Ji ka Khalsa Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh.

Balbir Singh Kler
Chairman
Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sacramento

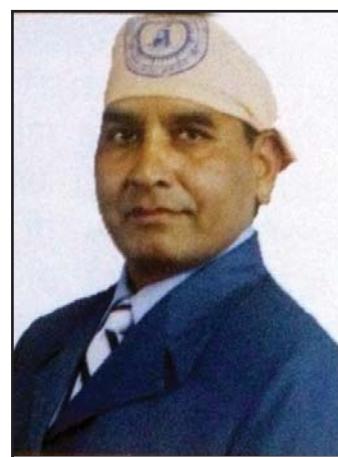


History and teaching of SHRI GURU RAVIDAS JI

Shri Guru Ravidass Ji was born in the fifteenth century at Kanshi (Goverthan Puri) U.P. State in India. His birthday comes every year at Puran Mashi of the month Magh. His mother name was Mata Kalsi Ji and father's name was Baba Santokh Dass Ji, who was working as a sarpanch in the kingdom of Raja Nagar Mal. Guru Sahib ji Came to this earth at the time when social and religious patterns of society was very distressing. He spear headed the fight against man made discrimination based on caste, colour or creed and preached the lofty ideas of Socialism, Secularism, Equality and Fraternity.

From the very childhood he was very much devoted to worship real God. The high caste Brahmins created so many problems for him and tried their best to restrict Guru Ji to do so, Guru ji had a appear before the King Nagar mal so many times. In the end king was convinced and became follower of Guru Ravidass ji. Guru Ravi Dass ji Taught the lesson of Universal Brotherhood, tolerances, message of love your neighbor which got more importance in today's world.

Jaswant Sheemar
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Assembly
California Legislature
Dr. Richard Pan
Assemblymember, Ninth District

Committees
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March 9th, 2014

Dear Guests:

As a representative from Sacramento, I am writing to wish you all the best as you celebrate the birthday of Shri Guru Ravidass Ji Maharaj.

Every year, this celebration draws followers from throughout the area to join in on the festivities. I am grateful to recognize the efforts the community has made to promote cultural awareness and strengthen ties within the region.

I am very proud to represent Sacramento and the people who build this city and country. As a guest, you are demonstrating leadership and community engagement. I am confident that you will make the most of this exciting festival to learn, participate and engage in building a better and stronger Sacramento.



Sincerely,
Dr Richard pan
Assembly member, 9th District



Dr. B.R. Ambedkar
1891-1956



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Dr Ambedkar Educational Aid Society (AEAS)

Dear Friends,

I am glad to learn that Sri Ravidass Sabha Sacramento (SGRSS) is celebrating the 637th Anniversary of Sri Ravidass Ji (SGRJ) on Sunday March 09, 2014. On this auspicious occasion and on behalf of the Dr. Ambedkar Educational Aid Society (AEAS) California I would like to take this opportunity to convey congratulations to the ardent followers of SGRJ all over the world. Also, I would like to express my appreciation for SGRSS management committee which, like every year, organized the Fourteenth Annual Parade on March 09, 2014 in concurrence with the observance of this anniversary.

A Proper indicator of economic prosperity in a particular community is the literacy rate that contributes to the healthy development of a nation. As President Obama said in his recent State of the Union speech on January 28, 2014—"Prosperity is not measured in terms of the money one possesses, rather in terms of education he/she is equipped with to create a healthy environment". This is what Dr. Bhim Rao Ambedkar, Chief Creator of the Indian Constitution, realized in his life long struggle for equality and liberation of underprivileged communities. And perhaps that is why he emphasized so much on education in his message of "Educate, Agitate and Organize".

The literacy rate of India is still below the average literacy of the world despite the improvements it has made, especially after the independence in 1947. Moving at the current rate of progress, it may take

a century more to catch up with rest of the world. India has the largest illiterate population in the world and majority of them belong to the underprivileged, oppressed & backward classes (OBC). This is due to class, caste, gender disparity and discrimination based on the social structure of the nation. Because of these issues, including a high poverty rate, many brilliant students of the community drop out and find it difficult to pursue their education. Unlike in America, they are not able to find resources to fund their education and eventually end up working as laborers with no hope for upward mobility.

"Aap Mukat Mukat kare Sansar, Nank Tis Jan Ko sada Na-maskaar", enlighten Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji means "great are those personalities who liberate others in addition to himself or herself". Moving forward in compliance with the teachings of SGRJ and as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar, AEAS's mission is, therefore, to help promote literacy rate among the underprivileged and identified OBC classes. We believe in the equality of education for all. In the words of Nelson Mandela, "Education is the most powerful weapon which one can use to change the world". So let us put our diligent efforts together to help the less fortunate and move forward to make this world a better place for all.

Again congratulations to all on Sri Guru Ravidass Ji 637th Anniversary and 14th Annual Parade.

Rakesh Chander, For AEAS
(General Secretary)
By RNC-022014

Shri Guru Ravidass Ji's 637th birthday & 14th Grand Nagar Kirtan celebrated in Rio Linda (Sacramento) by Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sacramento (California) & All Sangat on March 9, 2014. All pictures by Prem K. Chumber



ਫੋਟੋਆਂ - ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੁਮਾਰ ਚੁਬਰ ਅਦਾਰਾ "ਮੈਥੇਦਕਰ ਟਾਈਮਜ਼" ਅਤੇ "ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੁਆਬਾ"



Shri Guru Ravidass Ji's 637th birthday & 14th Grand Nagar Kirtan celebrated in Rio Linda (Sacramento) by Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sacramento (California) & All Sangat on March 9, 2014. All pictures by Prem K. Chumber



Shri Guru Ravidass Ji's 637th birthday & 14th Grand Nagar Kirtan celebrated in Rio Linda (Sacramento) by Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sacramento (California) & All Sangat on March 9, 2014. All pictures by Prem K. Chumber



Shri Guru Ravidass Ji's 637th birthday & 14th Grand Nagar Kirtan celebrated in Rio Linda (Sacramento) by Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha Sacramento (California) & All Sangat on March 9, 2014. All pictures by Prem K. Chumber





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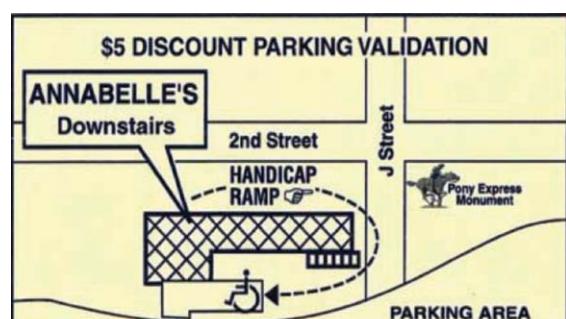


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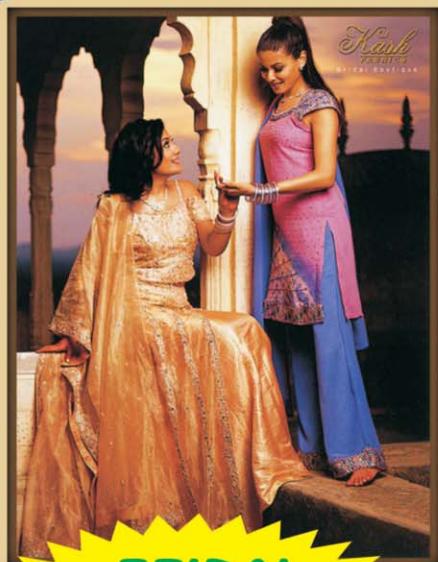
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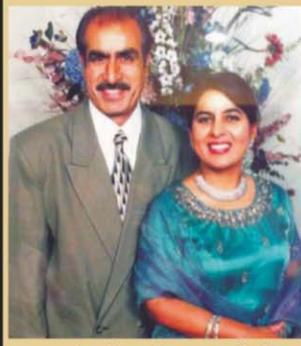
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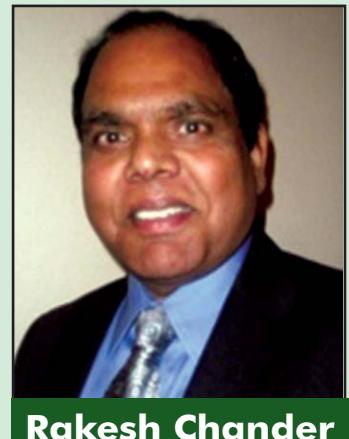
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United Awareness Committee of the Ravidassia Community



5109 Antler Hollow Place, Antelope, CA 95843
(916) 300-5398

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the United Awareness Committee of the Ravidassia Community, we would like to convey congratulations on the auspicious occasion of 637th Anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidass ji Maharaj (SGRJ) and Fourteenth Annual Parade scheduled on Sunday March 09, 2014. The annual celebration of our great Guru has its own historic significance reflecting the events, struggles and achievements of His life, and constantly reminding us to live life in accordance with His teachings.

Although religion and faith brings peoples of similar faith together, it can also bring with it contempt, mainly because of ignorance. A Recent study showed that social hostilities within the communities, religious hostilities, and religions-related terrorism are on the rise almost all over the world, except in the United States. Some countries have even imposed or are imposing legal limits on worship, preaching or religions wear. enforcing individuals to conform to certain norms in order to decrease violence and discrimination against others.

How do we stop these hostilities? Effective implementation of the teachings of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji, interpreted from both spiritual and social reformist perspectives, is one of the solutions to alleviate these issues. These teachings attempt to enlighten us to live with dignity, regardless of national origin, ethnicity, familial status, hereditary occupation and social stratification of a system. His teachings also challenge the prevalent inequalities in

the system and proclaim for equality, liberty and justice for all. A comprehensive study of His teachings convey a message of Fundamental Human Rights for all individuals which can be compared with Article 1 of the United Nations- Universal Declaration of Human Rights that, "all human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood."

"Naam Tere Ki Jyot Lagai, Bhayo Ujayare Bhavan Saglare"..... i.e., "with Thy name of truthfulness in words, honesty in action, equality-liberty and justice for all, understanding and staying true to the core values of 'Naam' will eventually make this universe

a better place for everybody", enlightened SGRJ.

Even the Lord Buddha named it an eight-fold path to liberate individuals from the sufferings of ignorance. Furthermore, Jo Hum Sahari So Meet Hamara directs us to live in harmony with our fellow citizens, regardless of our background or our origins. Overall, Sri Guru Ravidass Ji teachings speak volumes of universal brotherhood and promoting equality, love and peace for all to create a healthy environment, an ethically sound community, city or county and eventually the whole world.

Congratulations!
**United Awareness Committee
of the Ravidassia Community**



File Photo May 2013



On behalf of Sri Ravidass Supreme Council Guru Ravidass we extend our heartiest congratulations and sincerest wishes to everyone and the managing committees of all Sri Guru Ravidas Sabhas on the auspicious occasion of 637th Birth Anniversary of our great Guru Sri Guru Ravidass Ji.

Guru Ji's message clearly demonstrates that human beings becomes great not by acquiring material possessions or by a family heritage in which they are born but by their individual deeds and spiritual attainments. Through his sacred teachings as enshrined in the hold pages of "Shri Guru Granth Sahib ji", he awakened the human conscience against inequality, and social fragmentations of his time based on caste, creed, colour and ancestry affiliations.

Our true homage to our great Guru should reflect in our continuous efforts to spread his teachings and follow it to live life with dignity.

NEED FOR ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL: The main mission of this organization, that had been duly registered with the Secretary of State of California as a religious entity, is to work for unity among all Sri Guru Ravi-

dass Sabhas in USA as a centralized body. It functions under the duly constituted By-laws to foster an environment of awareness, harmony and understanding for interfaity unity and harmony with no political involvements or affiliation of any nature. This organization does not work under any Deras and their directions. This is a purely religious organization; its members are followers of Sri Guru Ravidass Ji and preach his teachings. This organization necessitates loyal, dedicated and hard working members in order to achieve its short and long term objectives.

Congratulations and best wishes to all once again. Thanks for attending the 14th Nagar Kirtan on Sunday, March 9th 2014 at the Sacramento Gurdwara (6221 19th Street Rio Linda, CA 95673) in celebration of this forthcoming 637th birthday anniversary of Sri Guru Ravidass Maharaj Ji.

Sincerely, O. P. Balley, Balvir Singh Sheemar, Hans Raj Kajla, Tavinder Kazla, Ajit Ram Banger, Karm Singh Banger, Vinod Kumar, Sonu Ambedker, Palwinder Malhi, Dr. Harmesh Kumar, Santokh Singh, Dayal Ram Narr, Mohan Lal, Ram Murti Saroya & all Shri Ravidass Guru Ghar Committees of USA.

CONGRATULATIONS ON THE BIRTH ANNIVERSARY OF SAHIB SHRI GURU RAVIDASS JI

Prem Kumar Chumber

(Editor: www.ambedkartimes.com)

Satguru Ravidass Ji Maharaj, whose 637th birth anniversary is being celebrated throughout the world, was a great saint/Guru of medieval Bhakti movement of North India. He belonged to the lowest of the low castes in India whose touch used to be considered polluting to the Savarnas. He opened a frontal attack against the system of Untouchability. He rejected the tradition of Brahmin mediator to reach the Supreme Being. He also said that one need not to hide his caste or leave his low profession to reach God. He became a model for his fellow beings to overcome the hierarchical barriers of Brahminical Social Order and to establish Begumpura - a state without fear and sorrows. Guru Ravidass elevated

the status of the labor by emphasizing on the fact that honest labor is empowering. He completely rejected the concept of living on charity or miraculous wealth obtained by Paras.

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

social oppression.

For the social transformation of the society, Guru Ravidass laid emphasis on labor, compassion, virtue, prohibition of alcohol and all bad deeds. He also reiterated on the urgent need of remembering the formless God whom he addressed by varied names.

Some scholars are of the view that Guru Ravidass did not form an organization nor he launched any consistent and systematic agitation against the system of untouchability. This is true. But to raise a loud voice at his times was no less than a clarion call to dismantle the unjust system of Brahminical social order. It is also true that the path told by him has become the beacon light for the Dalit movement in the country and abroad.

Caste and Democracy in India: A Perspective from Below, 2014, Gyan Publications, New Delhi, Author - Prof. Vivek Kumar

Reviewed by: Vinod Arya, Former Assistant Professor, Central University of Bihar, Patna,
email – vinodarya286@gmail.com

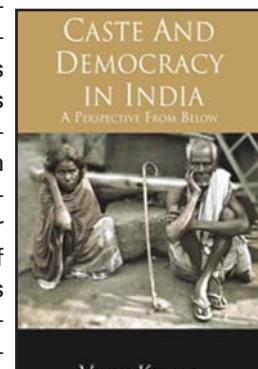
Social scientists have always been keen to study the interaction between traditional and modern institutions. One such area has been the correlation between caste (jati) and democracy. The attempts in this context have majorly analyzed caste as structural-functional for society but antithetical for democracy. In this backdrop the book "Caste and Democracy in India: A Perspective from Below" by Prof. Vivek Kumar presents a critic to the aforesaid mainstream understanding of social scientists. The author advocates a contradictory understanding and tries to establish that jati is dysfunctional for ex-untouchables (Dalits) but functional for democracy. The book is a collection of essays; logically divided into five thematic modules.

At the outset, Kumar elaborates understanding of caste critiquing the pedagogical practices and points out that inclusion of Dalits into Hindu social order is a social construct and it is for the sake of construction of majority community of Hindus. The author argues that distorted understanding of caste and democracy and the irrelevance of curriculums of social sciences exists due to black out of life and world views of Dalits including their culture, sufferings, discrimination, humiliation and movements both in 'book view' and

'field view'. Further, Kumar indicates anomalies in the above mentioned views. He highlights that within the field view it has been found that individuals and groups are governed by different principles in a given geographical and socio-political situation i.e. caste relations are dynamic and go through social change and conflict which is contrary to normative and prescriptive order as mentioned in sacred texts (book view). For holistic understanding of caste system author also presents common threads in Ambedkar and Lohia's criticism of caste system and portrays their suggestions for its annihilation. The book also delineates epistemological issues of social exclusion and argues for an indigenous definition of the term along with its contextualization within the framework of caste. The second theme of the book highlights different kinds of political mobilization and identifies caste mobilization in Uttar Pradesh in the form of caste conventions and formation of single caste based parties. In this light of discussion author establishes the perspective from below regarding the formation of Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) in 1984. He ar-



Prof. Vivek Kumar



gues that BSP brought change in social structure of society and reversed the roles for Dalits in governance (from higher echelons to panchayat level) under independent Dalit leadership. The book criticizes formations of personality cult in Indian politics and points out at the democratization of polity and society by BSP as it uses the methodology of representation to various castes among Dalits and bahujans on the basis of their population. Author highlights that BSP's mobilization strategy has transformed the common history of exclusion of Dalit and bahujans into capture and sharing of political power. Important role and potential of youth in India is discussed in the context of globalization. Author points out the need for an independent agenda for youths so that it can contribute in nation building. On the other hand book describes different types of construction of personality among the Dalit youth in contemporary times in Indian society. Fourth part elaborates democracy as self representation rather than representation of aspirations. The author presents an account of representation of marginalized section in various politi-

cal parties of different ideologies and concludes the importance of independent political movement and leadership in the same. The book criticized 'saffronization' as tool of Brahminism for monopoly over society. Author also addresses the representation of Dalits in social sciences and highlights exclusion of Dalit thoughts, cognitive thinking and their understanding in various disciplines like economics, political science, sociology, history, psychology and literature.

The fifth part relates democracy and development and elaborates the politics of policy making regarding excluded groups and inclusion of modern ideas. The book also deals with the structure and mechanism of corruption and points out its correlation with the institution of caste. Author points out that under the garb of civil society movements there flourishes a mechanism to create new elite from the dominant castes of the society.

Acknowledging the diversity in Indian society he points out at hegemony of particular groups and exclusion of others on the basis of these cultural diversities. In the end, author narrates the silent revolution of Buddhism which took place in his life and of many Dalits in the past few decades. Kumar concludes that under the visionary leadership of Ambedkar; Buddhism is seen as the last resort by Dalits to enhance their status and esteem.

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SAHIB SHRI KANSHI RAM JI

Prem Kumar Chumber (Editor-In-Chief) chumbermedia@yahoo.com

www.ambedkartimes.com, www.ambedkartimes.org, www.deshdoaba.com

Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram was born on March 15, 1934, in Khawas Pur village of Ropar District of Punjab. He was the eldest of eight siblings. He belonged to the Ramdassia (Ad Dharmi) community of the Scheduled Caste group, which is the largest group in Punjab. He was named Kanshi because after his birth the midwife placed him in a tray made of kansa metal. His father owned some land and his uncles were in the armed forces. In Sahib Kanshi Ram's own words, "I was born and brought up amongst those who sacrificed themselves but never betrayed the country..." Despite his low caste background, he earned a bachelor's degree in science from the Government College at Ropar (Punjab).

His upbringing was modest. During his education years there was nothing special about him to suggest that he would mature into great social revolutionary. It was only after he took up a government job in the western Indian state of Maharashtra that he began to be influenced by the writings and life of Baba Sahib Dr. B.R. Ambedkar who voiced the concerns of India's low caste community and worked hard throughout his life for their empowerment. Soon after his graduation, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji joined the research staff of Kirki's Explosive Research and Development Laboratory (ERDL) in Pune 1957. While working in Pune, he quit his job after becoming involved in the famous Deena Bhan case.

Deena Bhan, a Rajasthani Scheduled Caste employee and senior colleague of Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji was suspended. His fault was that he protested against the decision of ERDL management for the cancellation of holidays for Ambedkar and Buddha Jayantis and their replacement by the Tilak Jayanti and one additional holiday for Diwali. Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram decided to fight against such a caste ridden and dictatorial behavior of the management. The fighter in Kanshi Ram got the suspension orders of Deena Bhan revoked and Ambedkar and Buddha Jayantis holidays were restored.

This was the beginning of the long battle for the emancipation of the Dalits in the country that Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram had to lead till his last breath. He resigned from his job and totally dedicated his entire life for the cause of the community. He never married nor visited his home since then. His struggle was not for the home and family. He devised a new strategy to regain the lost glory of the original (Adi) inhabitants of Bharat. He gave utmost importance to the culture of work and democratic method of struggle. He also expanded the circle of the Dalits by incorporating other Backward Classes and Minorities into it.

He criticized the post-Ambedkar

leadership of Dalits in India. For that he declared Poona Pact as the main reason. He said that "Poona Pact made Dalits helpless. By rejecting separate electorate, Dalits were deprived of their genuine representation in legislatures. Several and various kind of Chamchas were born in the last fifty years. As and when India's so called high caste Hindu rulers felt the need of Chamchas and when the authority of the upper castes got endangered by real and genuine Dalit leaders, Chamchas were brought to the fore in all other fields".

In his "The Chamcha Age", a well-argued and polemical tirade against the pseudo Dalit leaders, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji sharpens the contradiction for the legitimate acquisition of political power by the downtrodden in electoral democracy in India. In, the Chamcha Age, "he focused very much on the Poona Pact which was a point of a rather decisive Gandhian victory over Dr. Ambedkar after a long duel between the two at the Round Table Conference". In the mid-1960s, Sahib Shri Kanshi Ram Ji began to organize Dalit government employees to fight against what he saw as the deeply entrenched prejudice of higher caste peoples. It was around this time that he decided that he would not marry

and dedicate his life to the cause of Dalit improvement. By the mid-1980s, he decided play a crucial role in the politics of the country.

The result was the formation of the BSP (the Common Man's Party) in 1984. As a politician, he became very popular among his people, who found a new hope and vision in his style of functioning and sincerity. Suddenly he became a national figure. He was a master strategist and a meticulous organizer. He used his strengths to carve out a niche for Dalits. This was done by deploying an often combative and aggressive strategy, with virulent attacks on other political parties which he claimed only represented the interests of higher caste Hindus. He was sharply different from other politicians of the mainstream. He used to communicate before he spoke.

He was one of the few great leaders of Independent India who actually expanded the limits of Dalit politics. His political vision was never confined to Scheduled Castes only, as is often thought about him.

All of the political organizations he founded were meant for the downtrodden of all sorts – SC, ST, OBC and Minorities. It would not be an exaggeration to say that he was the one who took a lead in making Indian democracy more competitive and practically open to the Dalit-Bahujan Samaj.

(Mobile: USA 916-947-8920)

