



Ambedkar Times

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VOL- 5

ISSUE- 15

October 16-31, 2013

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Chaudhry Gurmail Singh honored in USA



O.P.Balley

We take this opportunity to emphasize the importance of social get-togethers with Chaudhry Gurmail Singh, former Education Minister of Punjab, on three different occasions, as under. Mr. O. P.Balley, having known Mr. Gurmail Singh from his college days and a close friend of the family, had the privilege and the honor of welcoming, co-ordinating and introducing the visiting guest of honor on all the three events.

September 27th, 2013:- A special community gathering attended by about 150 prominent people, was held in his honor in Mehran Restaurant, Pittsburg where he was given a standing ovation by the participants. The event was very successfully hosted by the family of Lamberdar Jarnail Singh, the younger brother of Chaudhry Gurmail Singh. Lamberdar Jarnail Singh who is also a former Sarpanch of his village, Sakruli in Hoshiarpur District, has arranged this private trip to USA.

Chaudhry sahib, while thanking the audience shared his noble and valuable thoughts with the participants.

October 5th, 2013:- This event was organized in the honor of Chaudhry Gurmail Singh under the auspices of Dr. Ambedkar Educational Aid society (Fremont). Mr. R.C. Paul Retired PCS (judicial) who has now immigrated to USA to join his son, Mr. Shashi Paul, Advocate, was also honored on this occasion. Both the dignitaries were honored with plaques for their distinguished services in their respective fields. The honorable guests thanked the participants and shared their majestic thoughts and experiences with the audience.

Other prominent community leaders who shared their concerns and thoughts with the guests included Mr. Ram Murti Saroay, chairman of the society Mr. Amrik chand Lakha CPA,

Mr. Sucha Ram Bhalta. Mr. Balvir Thind, Mr. Ram Saran and Mr. Balvir Singh Sheemar.

October 14th, 2013:-

Chaudhry Gurmail Singh accompanied by Mr. O.P. Balley, Mr. Jarnail Singh and Mr. Karamjit Rattu attended the dinner hosted to honor Mr. Singh in Elk- Grove, Sacramento, by the members of the United Awareness Committee Of The Ravidassia Community, California, USA. Mr. Singh was honored with a befitting reception and a plaque on behalf of the Awareness committee. The prominent members of the community who participated in the event included Mr. Paramjit Bhutta, Mr. Tavinder Kazla, Hans Raj Kajla, Rakesh Chander, Mr. Prem Chumber (Ambedkar Times) Mr. Sonu Ambedkar and Mr. Sukh Ram. They had an open dialogue with Mr. Singh on various issues.

Mr. Gurmail Singh, while addressing the audience, appreciated the progress made by our community diaspora in economic and educational fields.

Chaudhry Gurmail Singh also attended the Bhog ceremony held on

September 29th, 2013 in the loving memory of late Bibi Kartar Kaur Bains, mother of Mr. Avtar Singh Bains at Sri Guru Ravidass temple, Pittsburg. He was also honored by the temple with a "SAROPA" for his noble efforts to embellish the image of the community. We thank Chaudhry Gurmail Singh for gracing the above occasions with his presence and inspiring words and a productive dialogue, for his innovative measures and efforts in the field of education, during his tenure as Minister of education in the state of Punjab.

We should continue to arrange and encourage such social meetings more frequently to strengthen the fabric of mutual solidarity and understanding on the issues of common interest of the community. We wish Chaudhry Sahib a very pleasant, happy and a enjoyable trip abroad.

We also thank his younger brother, Mr. Jarnail Singh and his family for their help.

BABASAHEB DR. B.R. AMBEDKAR, BUDDHISM AND DALIT EMANCIPATION

Prem K. Chumber Editor-in-Chief:

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Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism at the historic public ceremony in Nagpur on October 14, 1956. The decision to embrace Buddhism by Dr. Ambedkar was not at all a sudden attempt. It took him more than two decades (from Yeola Conference, October 13, 1935, where he took the vow that 'even though I am a Hindu born, I will not die a Hindu', to the historic Nagpur conversion ceremony, October 14, 1956, the day he embraced Buddhism with thousands of his followers) to translate his vow for conversion into reality.

He decided to embrace Buddhism after thoroughly exhausting all possible ways of reforming Hinduism from within and exploring the possibility of conversion to Christianity, Sikhism, and Islam for overcoming the oppressive structures of Brahminical social order (BSO) in India. Converting to Buddhism, in fact, was a unique and meticulously calculated move. It was a unique move in the sense that though there have been

many instances of individual conversions to Buddhism, the real credit for systematically organizing collective conversion to Buddhism on a mass scale in India, beyond doubt, goes to Dr. Ambedkar. The historic conversion ceremony at Nagpur assumed further importance with the publication of The Buddha and his Dhamma shortly after the demise of Babasaheb on December 6, 1956.

Dr. Ambedkar discovered in conversion to Buddhism the most desired and reliable way of overcoming the centuries-old system of social exclusion. According to Babasaheb, the central thesis of the Buddhist philosophy revolves around two major problems: the first problem was that there was suffering in the world and the second was how to remove this suffering and make mankind happy. Since caste and caste based social exclusion dehumanizes the Dalits, Babasaheb underlined the urgency of caste annihilation. It is in this context that conversion to Buddhism becomes meaningful. Another aspect that underlines the importance of conversion to Buddhism encourages strategic alliance between the non-Brahminical/ Shudras/

Bahujan Samaj/ artisans and the Dalit/Ati Shudras sections of the Indian society and calls for their united front against the oppressive and hegemonic structures of Brahminical social order. Forging unity among the victims of the 'varna order' in turn aimed at reclaiming India on the basis of the neo-Buddhist identity.

The very fact that Dr. Ambedkar founded three political parties (the Independent Labour Party, All India Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican Party of India), and the leading role that he played in drafting the Constitution of independent India, vindicated his active involvement in the polity and society of the country even after denouncing Hinduism publicly in 1935 and later on embracing Buddhism in 1956. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar used to emphasize on the application of scientific approach to solve the question of caste and social exclusion.

His movement also became very popular in Punjab. He visited Punjab thrice. It was during his last visit in October 27-29, 1951 that he spoke at length to his people in Punjab about his

approach and ways of Dalit empowerment. He delivered speeches at Jalandhar, Ludhiana and Patiala and also addressed the students of D.A.V. College Jalandhar.

Though the people of Punjab were well impressed by his great movement but they could not follow him so closely in relation to conversion to Buddhism. Late D. C. Ahir, a renowned Ambedkarite Buddhist and world reputed scholar of Buddhism, was of the opinion that due to deep faith of Scheduled Castes population of Punjab, especially of the Doaba region, in the teachings and spirituality of Saheb Shri Guru Ravidass Ji, Buddhism could not become so popular in this state. Another possible reason behind the deep popularity of the teachings of Saheb Shri Guru Ravidass in Punjab could be the concerted efforts of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia and the mass appeal of his famous Ad Dharm movement. The popularity of Ad Dharm can be known from the fact that some of the scholars of late started advocating that the principles of "Ad Dharm" are also followed in Buddhism.

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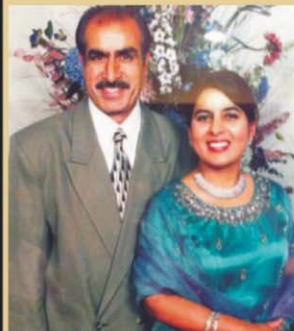
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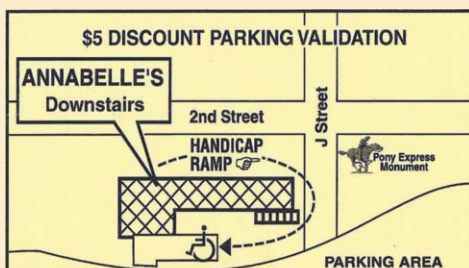
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Ajaipaul Ram with Baba Ranjit Singh Dhadrianwale while on California visit during this weekend.



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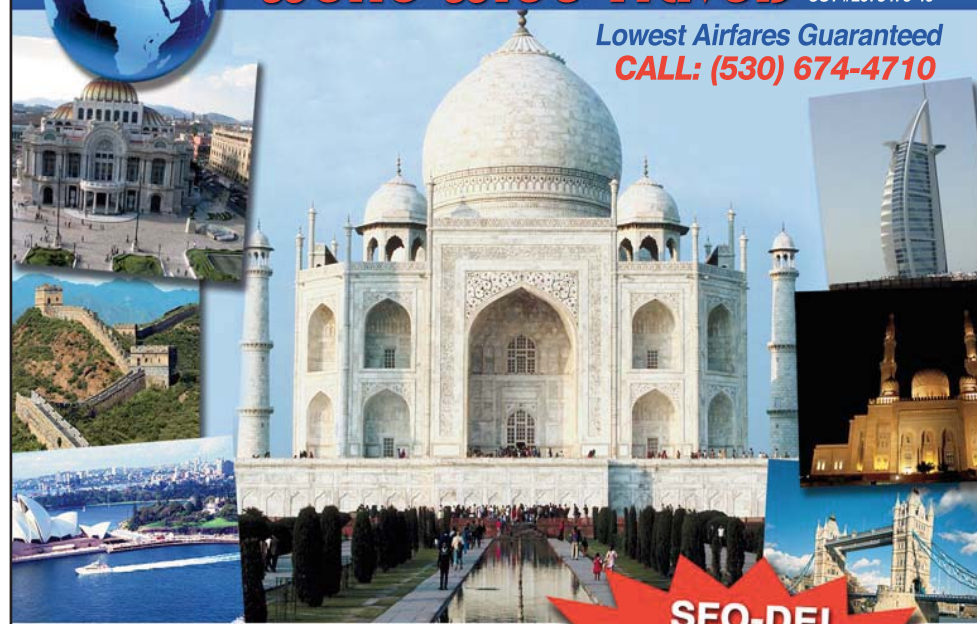


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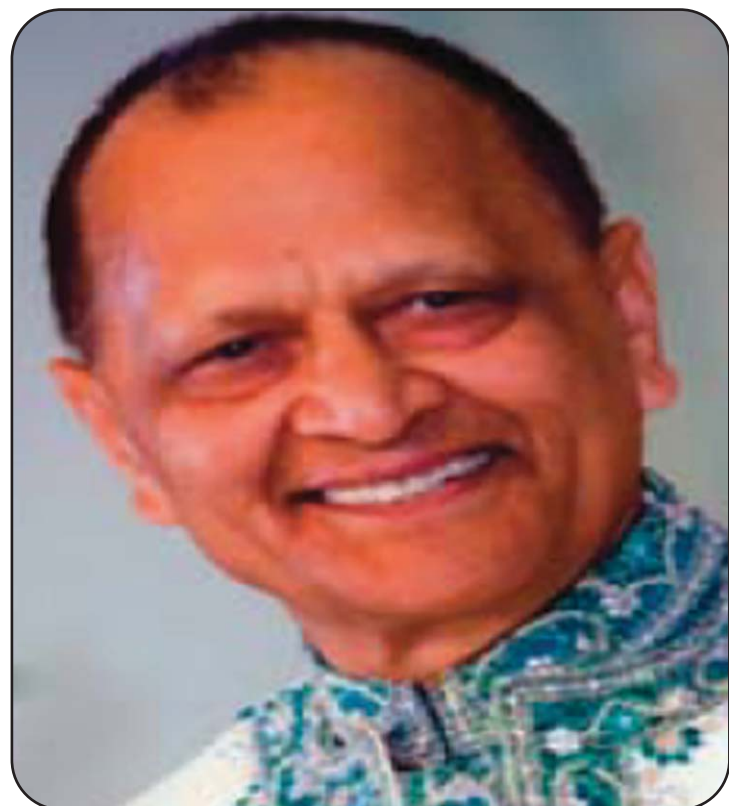
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