Relevance of Tathagat Buddha in Contemporary Times

Prem K. Chamber
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weekly Newspapers

Tathagat Buddha started his search for an answer to ‘duka’ (suffering -physical, mental, moral & social) by abandoning palace and seeking the company of the knowledgeable recluse of his time. His sufferings did not begin out of either scarcity of material resources or of any physical ailment. It was the outcome of subtle realization on his part after a chance encounter of sickness, old age, and death. It went deep into his rational mind that if someone faces sickness, turned old and become dead then this will be the fate of every human being irrespective of his status, age and place. In this way, Buddha’s suffering was the outcome of his encounter with the sufferings of others. In other words, it was contagious! So it cannot be designated as moral or something else. Maybe, we can call it impersonal-personal-suffering that he attributed to his very inner being after the chance encounter. Nevertheless, it occurred despite the presence of all comforts at his end. And this personal-personal-suffering led him to renounce his palacial living, King father, beautiful wife, a very small son and to live a mendicant life full of self-invited sufferings. He began his search for the emancipation of sufferings of all sorts outside the palace and in the company of the known renouncers. He did what was told to do to attain the ‘truth’. He practiced every formula, yogic exercise and put himself to self-severe physical afflictions to the extent of turning his body frame into a mere skeletal. Living for days just on a single grain. None did work. Finally, I became clear to him that answer to suffering cannot be found outside. It might have occurred to him that how come an answer to sufferings that experienced within could be located in the outer-world? This led him to perform a new journey in search of the “truth” - a journey within his very self. It also made him realize that this journey, the best way is the middle way - in between extreme indulgence and total renunciation! But what distinguished Tathagat Buddha from all other practitioners of spiritual way of finding truth is his scientific approach to know ‘thyself’. He taught us there is dukha in life. It has a cause. The cause can be tracked down. And the answer to get rid of that could be found.

Another insight of the realized truth that he shared with the humanity is that all human beings are same. There is no upper and lower caste. Freedom, equality and social justice are the fundamental foundations for the journey to launch within by each one of us. Suffering begin in craving and it never ends at any stage of life. The only exit is to light one’s own lamp within. Babasaheb Dr B.R. Ambedkar found the noble way to the emancipation and empowerment of the lower castes in embracing Buddhism, which for him not a religion of rituals but of social justice, freedom and equality. It taught us to struggle for salvation through our own efforts. It did not ask for any mediator between the sufferer and the God. It called upon us to understand what caused our suffering and to find a way out. The way he suggested is: Educate, Agitate, and Organize!

Remembering Advocate Bhagwan Das: A Profile

Mr. Bhagwan Das was born in an Untouchable family at Jutogh Cantonment, Shimla (Himachal Pradesh), India on 23 April 1927. He served in the Royal Indian Air Force during World War II and after demobilisation served in different capacities in various departments of Government of India at Saharanpur, Shimla and Delhi. He did M.A. in History (Punjab University) and LL.B from Delhi University. He did research on the ‘Indiansisation of the Audit Department from 1840-1915’. He has been contributing articles and short stories to various papers and journals published in India.

His father Mr. Ram Ditta was fond of reading newspapers and a great admirer of Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar. Inspired and encouraged by his father, Mr. Das worked with Mr. T. R. Baidwan of Simla who was the most prominent leader of the Untouchables in Simla Hills, and joined the Scheduled Castes Federation at the tender age of 16. Since then he has been actively associated with the Ambedkarite movement and has done a great deal to promote the ideas of Babasaheb Ambedkar and to unite and uplift the downtrodden not only of India but also of other countries of Asia. Mr. Das is associated with many organisations of lawyers, Buddhists, Scheduled Castes and Minorities in India. He was General Secretary, United Lawyers Association, Supreme Court, New Delhi; General Secretary, Boudh Upasak Sangh, New Delhi; Founder Chairman, Ambedkar Mission Society which has branches in many parts of the world; Revived Samata Sainik Dal (Volunteers for Equality) founded by Dr. Ambedkar in 1926-27; Regional Secretary (North). Indian Buddhist Council; Founder, Society for the Protection of Non-Smokers; Founder President of Society for Promoting Buddhist Knowledge; edited Samata Sainik Sandesh (English) 1980 - 1990. He was also the main person behind publication of “Bheem Patraka”, an Urdu and the Hindi magazine published from Jullundur (Punjab).

His mother tongue is Urdu. He learnt English from class 7th. His command over English and his British accent compelled many to label him as a “Black English Man.” He isAdib-Fazel in Persian. He can speak and write in Hindi and Punjabi. Just like Dr. Ambedkar he was not allowed to read Hindi and he had to take up Persian at school. His knowledge about Dr. Ambedkar, Buddhism, Hindu Castes, Religion and more subjects is so vast and thorough that he is often marked as a “Moving Encyclopaedia.” He is very modest and simple which made Bhadant Anand Kaushlayan to remark, “You are so humble.”

He was married to Rama Devi (Lucknow) on 9 February, 1957 through the mediation of Shiv Dayal Singh Chaurasia who was a member of the Parliament. He has one son Rahul and two daughters Zoya and Shura. He became a Buddhist in 1957. His devotion to Ambedkarite movement is very high and he is known as a True Ambedkarite.

He remained in close contact with Dr. Ambedkar at Delhi from 1942 till his death. He also adopted Buddhism in 1956 when Dr, Ambedkar launched his Buddhist Conversion Movement on 14 October, 1956. He has written his autobiography which has been published as “In the Pursuit of Ambedkar” in English and: “Baba Ke Charnon me” in Hindi. A documentary film on his life has also been prepared by S. Anand of Navayana.

Mr. Das has been associated with the ‘Peace Movement’ since the end of World War II, in which he served on the Eastern Front with the Royal Air Force (RAF) under South East Asia Command. He is one of the founder members of the World Conference on Religion and Peace (WCRP) (India) and has participated in the Conferences held in Kyoto, Japan, 1970; Princeton USA (1979); Seoul, Korea (1986); Nairobi, Kenya (1984) and Melbourne Australia (1989). He was appointed Director, Asian Centre for Human Rights (Asian Conference on Religion and Peace) in 1980 and continued to serve in this capacity till 2004 monitoring the news of violation of human rights in Asian countries and organising camps for training of human rights workers, speaking and writing for the cause.

Mr. Das was invited to deliver a lecture on ‘Dissimulation’ by the Peacetime University, Tokyo (1980) and also addressed several meetings organised by the Buraku-minosof Japan. He gave testimony before the United Nations in regard to the plight of the Untouchables in South Asia, in the meeting of Sub-Committee on Human Rights held at Geneva, Switzerland in August, 1983. He visited England in 1975,
potency in my monthly article to ex-
plain to you what this law is, why this is coming before the Board of Super-
visors, and why it is such a big deal.
Laura’s Law is named for 19-
year-old Laura Wilcox, who was a col-
lege student working in a Nevada County mental-health clinic in 2001, when she and two others were shot and killed by a man with untreated severe mental illness. After the incid-
ent Laura’s parents chose to advoc-
ate for assisted outpatient treatment (AOT) for individuals who meet strict legal criteria and who, as a result of their mental illness, are unable to vol-
untarily access community mental health services.

Since then, California coun-
ties have the option to “opt in” to the program, and that has been done so far in most of the larger counties. To date, Sacramento County has been one of the few larger counties who has not opted in and has never held a public hearing at the Board of Super-
visors regarding whether or not to im-
plement the program.

This process changed how-
ever with the passage last year of AB 1976, which requires counties like Sacramento to hold public hearings at the Board of Supervisors about whether we will “opt in” or “opt out”, and if we choose to “opt out” we have to provide specific reasons for this to the State. The deadline for Sacramento County to have this hear-
ing and formally decide will be July 1st of this year. Sacramento plans to have our hearing on May 18th.

Earlier this month a mentally ill homeless man assaulted a child on 
Freeway Blvd in Sacramento; only to be released back into the public in less than 24 hours – and this was after he had been captured and re-
leased previously for assault and bat-
tery of another woman. As a former emergency room nurse, I understand firsthand that there are people living in our community who cannot take care of themselves, and they desper-
ately need help.

People like this should be able to get help before more crimes are per-
ned in our communities – it’s the compassionate and safe way to move forward. I do not know how I will vote on this issue when it comes before me as I want to have an open ear to both sides as well as be able to fully comprehend the fis-
cal impacts, but I do know this is a growing problem and we should be han-
dling this problem better than we are right now.

Sacramento County Project Room Key Through August

The Sacramento COVID-19 Homelessness Response Team (Team), comprised of the County of Sacramento, City of Sacramento and Sacramento Steps Forward (SSF), has been working diligently for a full year on COVID-19 Homelessness Re-

response.

The strategy included bringing

the most vulnerable into isolation trailers and preventative quarantine motels (Project Room Key), providing encampment support for those stay-
ing in place and equipping existing congregate shelters with safety measures.

County Partners with SBA to Help Local Restaurants

While rehousing efforts have always been the number one focus, the sheltering sites, initially slated for a three-month run, have been ex-
tended several times and are still op-
erational more than a year later. Due to the expensive nature of elongating this emergency response, the motels were given an upcoming closure schedule of April 30, May 30 and June 30 – but the Board of Supervi-
sors directed DHA to keep them open through August.

The Team continues to ex-

plore all sources of local and federal funding available to keep the motels open to continue sheltering guests while working on rehousing efforts.

The Team has sought FEMA com-

pensation for all eligible costs and for eligible people served, however, to maximize the model’s ability to miti-
gate the spread of the coronavirus, the community offered preventative

During that time, 174 permanently housed participants and 80 participants set to exit into a new housing unit.

Encampment Support

58 handwashing stations
52 toilets deployed to enc-
ampments
72,000 meals provided to unhoused
Medical Response
7,000 COVID tests con-
ducted
1,122 people vaccinated (As of 4/12/21)
Only 57 positive COVID cases (as of 2/26/21)
Outcomes
By August 1st, Sacramento County had been able to shelter a total of 1,356 individuals since March 19, 2021.

Sacramento County Partners with SBA to Help Local Restaurants

The pandemic has created an economic impact across our nation over the last year. In our Sacramento region, the food and beverage industry is no exception. Sacra-
mento County is partnering with the SBA to help local restaurants and food and beverage businesses in our region.

The webinar will focus on the SBA’s new Re-

vention Fund (RRF) in ad-

ance of the program’s launch. RRF is a $28.6 billion program that pro-
vides funding for restaurants to meet payroll, purchase supplies and transi-
tion to today’s COVID-restricted mar-
ketplace. Eligible entities are busi-
nesses that are not permanently closed and include businesses where the public or patrons assemble for the primary purpose of being served food or drink.

Attendees will learn about the following RRF program elements:

**Eligible business types**
- Small Business Administration
- Certified Women’s Business Enterprise
- CERTIFIED Disadvantaged Business Enterprise
- Women-Owned Small Business
- Sole Proprietorship
- Veteran-Owned Small Business
- Small Business Administration (SBA) Designated Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI)

**Eligible use of funds**
- Payroll costs
- Supplier debt payments
- Rent, utilities, and other fixed obligations
- Repay debt incurrence costs
- Property, machinery, and equipment costs
- Payments on lease agreements
- Certain other operating expenses

**How to determine eligibility**
- For-profit restaurants and bars
- Non-profits that are primarily engaged in the restaurant and food and beverage business

**Eligible businesses**
- Small dining establishments
- Hotels and motels
- Gaming facilities
- Farm and food establishments
- Team sports facilities
- Theaters
- Shopping and amusement centers
- Bowling and recreational facilities
- Amusement and recreational vehicles
- Water sports facilities
- General merchandise stores
- Construction contractors
- Educational agencies
- Medical research facilities
- Contingency compensation

The webinar will be on May 5th, 2021.
My Friend Ambassador Dr. Ashok Amrohi – An Obituary

C ovid played havoc and snatched my friend and colleague Ambas- dor Ashok Amrohi, IFS of 1981 batch on April 27 at Medanta Hospi- tal in Gurugram. President of Association of Indian Diplomats (AID), Ambassador Bhawati Mukerjee in a fulsome tribute to the departed soul in a condolence message rightly said, “Of the 1981 batch of the IFS, Ambassador Amrohi will be fondly remembered as a most helpful colleague and a very fine human being, a qualified medical doctor, he was affluent both in Arabic and French and known as a thorough professional diplomat. Warm and affectionate, he had an excellent sense of humour and a very positive approach” and yet another senior college Ambassa- dor Banashi Harrison Bose thoughtfully wrote that with the demise of Ambassador Amrohi we have lost “the heart and soul of 1981 batch”.

April 27 by Ambassador Bal Anand whose wife happened to be a distant relation of the wife of Ashok as such had first hand information. Ashok’s passing away is a personal loss to me which would be difficult to make up in the days to come. I met him and greeted each other several times in 1990-91 in South Block where I was sharing a room with his colleagues and batch mates. Later, I met him after a long time in 2009 & 2010 in Delhi during the Conferences of Heads of Mission (HOM) and came to know him rather closely particularly during our relaxed chats and “Gap-Shap” over the dinner hosted by the CII and FICCI etc. Our more intimate and personal rapport got stronger on our retirement. I vividly remember Ashok was a sharing host over two sumptuous lunches, along with my worthy colleagues in the IFS fraternity, at the Central Government facilities in Chankayapuri and India International Centre. They did not allow me to pay my share since I was there on visit from Jalandhar where I settled myself after retirement. I found Ashok a lively person with extremely pleasant demeanor. Ashok did not know that I knew his father in Amritsar, Chaudhary Prabhati Ram, from my days of student activism in Jalandhar in late 1960s. When I told him this, he was happy with a sense of belonging. Chaudhary Prabhati Ram was a staunch Ambedkarite affiliated with the Republican Party of India, a brain child of Babasaheb Ambedkar and as such I listened to him several times at the Ambedkar Bhawan in

Jalandhar.

I recall, if my memory serves me, that he was a staunch leader in those days on the issue of Punjabi Suba. Yesterday I spoke to Lahori Ram Balley an octo- genarian leader and associate of Chaudhary Prabhati Ram to know something more about the family of Ambassador Ashok Amrohi. Balley Sahib was saddened to learn about the passing away of Ashok Amrohi adorned coveted positions of Ambassador/High Commis- sioner in Algiers, Mozambique and Brunei besides Head of the CPV Di- vision of the MEA during his long diplomatic career in the IFS. Ambassador Amrohi will be fondly missed greatly.

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

change of name

I, Mohit Rulhan S/O Suresh Kumar
Resident of:
2142 Bolero Dr.
Pittsburg, CA-94565

Now I have changed my name
From: Mohit To: Mohit Rulhan
All concerned kindly note it.

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Eventbrite.com. For more information on all of the SBA COVID-19 pro- grams, visit the SBA’s COVID-19 re- lief options webpage.

Help Prevent Animal Cruelty in Your Community

To hold animal abusers ac- countable, the Sacramento County District Attorney’s office launched an Animal Cruelty Task Force in our re- gion in January 2018. Since then, many animal abusers have been brought to justice with the help of the County’s Bradshaw Animal Shelter. April is Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month. Since animals cannot speak for themselves, it is up to us to help.

Did you know animal cruelty may result in a misdemeanor or felony? In California, it is illegal to:

Organize dog fighting
Tether a dog to a stationary object for more than three hours
Leave pets unattended for ex- tended periods of time: in vehicles in extreme weather; or without food and water
Maliciously and intentionally maim, mutilate, beat, torture, tor- ment, wound, or kill an animal or overdrive, overload, or overwork ani-
mals.

Deprive animals of necessary sustenance, access to water, shelter, veterinarian care, and adequate exer-
cise.

Poison animals belonging to another person.

Abandon an animal
Fail to provide proper care for animals in pet shops
Cruelly transport animals in a vehicle.

Here are a few ways you can help prevent animal cruelty:

When reporting an animal cruelty in-
cident, make sure you are not in dan-
ger.

Collect as much information as you can, including descriptions, photos and videos, if possible.

To report an emergency, such as to rescue a dog in a hot, locked car, call 9-1-1.

To report a non-emergency animal abuse and neglect incident im-
mediately, dial 3-1-1 or (916) 874-4311. Remember, if you see some- thing, say something. Be alert to animal cruelty – even when it’s not Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month. More information about re-
porting animal abuse and cruelty can be found on the Bradshaw Animal Shelter website.
Increasing Air Pollution in Delhi

On April 28, 2021, an international team of researchers from the University of Birmingham and UCL, comprising scientists from the UK, Belgium, Jamaica, and India, released their findings highlighting air pollution is on the rise in a number of cities in India, including Delhi. This study used observations from instruments on satellites that scan the global skies every day. Researchers used a long record data by space-based instruments to estimate trends in a range of air pollutants between 2006-2018. According to the study, the amount of PM2.5 and nitrogen oxide particles, both hazardous to health, has been steadily increasing in Delhi and Kanpur from 2005 to 2018, while the amount of both pollutants has been declining in London and Birmingham over the same period, reflecting the success of policies targeting sources that emit these pollutants. The study also found formaldehyde in air pollutants that scientists had never mentioned in the earlier studies. The presence of formaldehyde in the air in Delhi, Kanpur, London, and Birmingham also took researchers by surprise. According to researchers, formaldehyde emissions in London and Birmingham come from personal care and cleaning products and a range of other household sources, while in India it comes from vehicles as well.

This is not the first study on rising air pollution in Indian cities. Every year one or the other international organization releases a report on the rising air pollution in India. But one of them which has been making efforts to reduce the pollution, the Indian and state governments avoid it every time by making excuses. According to the World Air Quality Report 2020, released on March 17, 2021, Delhi has been the world’s most polluted capital for the third year in a row. In addition, 14 of the top 15 most polluted cities in the world and 22 of the top 30 are in India, while China, Pakistan, and Bangladesh have only two each.

Increasing air pollution not only pollutes the environment, but also adversely affects the health of all kinds of organisms (flora, fauna and humans). According to the India State-Level Disease Burden Initiative, 1.7 million people died in India due to air pollution during 2019. According to a 2020 report by Greenpeace’s Southeast Asia, 54,000 people died of air-borne diseases in Delhi alone. Air pollution is not only affecting the health of the people of Delhi. The pollution killed 25,000 people in Mumbai in 2020, 12,000 in Bangalore, 11,000 in Hyderabad and 11,000 in Chennai. The worst effects of air pollution are on children’s health. According to a study by researchers from all India Institute of Medical Sciences (AIIMS), Kalawati Saran Children’s Hospital and Vallabhbaip Patel Chest Institute, increasing levels of air pollution increase the incidence of lung and respiratory diseases in children aged 3 to 5 years from 21 to 28 per cent.

Air pollution causes premature cost to the economy due to air pollution found that out of 28 cities around the world Delhi suffered the most economic losses from air pollution at Rs. 58,895 crores. Mumbai haslost about Rs. 26,000 crores, Bangalore Rs. 12,000 crore, Hyderabad Rs. 11,000 crore and Chennai Rs. 10,000 crore. Apart from economic losses, air pollution also comes at a heavy cost to society. Air pollution costs millions of rupees on lung and respiratory diseases as well as heart and skin diseases. People who die succumbing to these diseases loose some of their relative lock-down (2020) due to COVID-19 the government was forced to shut down industries and private vehicles, leaving the skies clear, while farmers in Punjab and Haryana were harvesting their crops and burning crop residues but this didn’t increase Air Pollution levels during that time.

Therefore, the Delhi government should take legal actions against industries that do not comply with environmental regulations. The rules set by the Union Ministry of Environment, Forest and Climate Change (MOEFCC) in 2015 should be strictly enforced on coal-fired thermal plants that emit large amounts of sulfur dioxide, nitrogen oxides and PM10 and PM2.5 particles into the atmosphere on a daily basis.

The owners of the thermal plants made a writ petition to the Supreme Court for relaxation in the environmental regulations of 2015 and 2017. They have been granted relief till 2022. According to a report by the Center for Science and Environment, currently only 2 out of 12 thermal plants meet environmental regulations. Such laxity in monitoring of the government rules is responsible for the rapid pollution of Delhi’s environment.

The government should use modern technology to deal with air pollution. But there are no specific rules that are being followed. Air pollution is an invisible poison that is devouring thousands of lives every day. Seriously, this air pollution has already weakened the lungs of people who are now saying goodbye to the world in an instant suffering the effects of COVID-19. The government needs to take immediate steps to protect the people from air pollution.
Remembering Advocate Bhagwan Das: A Profile

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He was invited to deliver Ambedkar Memorial Lectures in Milind Mahavidyalya, Aurangabad (1970); Marathwada University (1983); Nagpur University, PWS College, Nagpur; Ambedkar College, Chander Pur and Amrati University in 1990.

Mr. Das also visited Nepal (1980 and 1990); Pakistan (1989); Thailand (1988); Singapore (1989) and Canada (1979) to study the problems of deprived and disadvantaged members of society, women and children. Delivered lectures in Wisconsin University (USA) 1979 and North-field College (USA) on Caste in contemporary India. He was invited to give lectures on Dr Ambedkar at the Institute of Oriental Studies, Moscow in June, 1990.

Mr. Das practices law in the Supreme Court of India. With a view to improve the professional competence of and helping upcoming advocates belonging to Untouchable and indigenous groups he founded Ambedkar Mission Lawyers Association and Legal Aid Society in 1989. He was General Secretary of ‘Professions for People’, an organisation founded in Delhi to elevate professional standards.

Mr. Das was invited to preside at the Dalit and Buddhist Writers Conference held at Akola in 1989 and is closely associated with various organisations of Dalit Writers.

Mr. Das has written more than five hundred articles, papers for seminars, short stories for various newspapers and journals. His papers on ‘Revival of Buddhism’; ‘Some problems of minorities in India’; ‘Reservation in Public Services’ have been published in Social Action brought out by Indian Social Institute, New Delhi and Delhi University Buddhist Department. He has written many papers on Reservation and Representative Bureaucracy, Discrimination against the Dalits in Public Services and Minorities etc. His short stories were published in Sarita (Urdu), NayaZamana (Urdu), Milap (Urdu, Bheem Patrika (Urdu and Hindi). He has edited ‘Slavery and Untouchability’ complete book written by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He also edited “Untouchable Soldiers- Mazhabi and Mahar” wrote M.A. Thesis by Ardith Basham, an American Scholar. He has also written about Dalit politics under the title “Dalit RajnitiaurSamiksha.” (Dalit Politics and Organisations). He was a member for the “Committee for evolving new strategies for the development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes - VIII Plan” set up by the Government of India and also a member of Ambedkar Centenary Committee of the Government of India. Mr. Das has written many books in Urdu, English and Hindi on Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar; Untouchables; Scavengers and Sweepers; Human Rights Discrimination etc. Prominent among them are Thus Spoke Ambedkar (Vol I to IV) a pioneer work; Ambedkar on Gandhi and Gandhism (Ed); Ambedkar Ek ParicheyEk Sandesh (Hindi); Main Bhangi Hoon (Hindi), the story of an Indian sweeper told in the first-person (this book has been translated into Punjabi, Kannada and Marathi and German); Valmiki Aur Bhangi Jatian (Hindi); Valmiki (Hindi); Dhobi (Hindi), Revival of Buddhism in India and Role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar; Dr. Ambedkae Ek Parichay Ek Sandesh; Dr. Ambedkar aur Bhangi Jatiya and Bharat me Baudhd Dhamm ka punjagran tathasamasyaeyen. He has translated into Urdu former President of the USA Lyndon Johnson’s book ‘My Hope for America’; Dr Ambedkar’s ‘Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah’in to Urdu; besides editing Bhadant Anand Kaushalyayan’s’Gita Ki Buddhivadi Samiksha.’

Other books in hand are “Reservation and Representative Bureaucracy in India”; “Untouchables in the Indian Army (Mahar, Mazhabi, Chuhra, Pariahs, Mangs, Dhanuks, Dusadhs, Chandars, Kolis, Bheesh)”; “Mandal Commission and the Future of Backward Classes”; “Twenty-Two Oaths of Buddhism and Conversion”; “Balmiki; Ravidassias and Balmikis of Northern India”; “Buddhism and Marxism” and “Ambedkar as a Religious Leader.”

Mr. Das has toured almost the whole of India to study the problems of Hindu-Muslim riots, religious conflicts, atrocities committed on the Untouchables and tribal people, with the group ‘Threat to Diversity’, ‘Swaraj Mukti Morcha and as Chairman, Samata Sainik Dal.” He is also the founder President of “Dalit Solidarity People”, an organisation aiming at uniting Hindu Dalits, Dalit Christians, Sikh Dalits, Muslim Dalits and Burakumins of Japan and Korea. Like Marx his slogan was “Dalits of the World Unite.”

Mr Bhagwan Das has been a storehouse of insight and information, his residence at Delhi has been a mandatory stopover for many renowned scholars like Eleanor Zelliot, Mark Juergensmeyer, Owen Lynch, Marc Gallanter, RK Kshirsagar, SukhadeoTharoor down to younger scholars like Vijay Prashad, Nicolas Jaoul and Maren Bellwinkel-Schempp. ***
Babu Mangu Ram's unforgettable legacy

On the occasion of 135th Birth Anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia on 14th January, 2021 we, on behalf of Supreme Council, Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha, USA, congratulate the entire community for whom he played a pivotal role as the founder of Ad-Dharm movement in 1920s. He created a new wave of awakening and social consciousness among the neglected segments of society in India. The movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia aimed at carving out a distinct identity for the followers of Guru Ravidass Ji, independent of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia who was a house- hold name in undivided Punjab among the untouchables, has not gained the serious scholarly attention, he deserved. Mark Juergensmeyer, a renowned Professor in Santa Barbara University and an eminent scholar of International fame was the first one who met Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia personally in India made an extensive study on him as revealed in his book "RELIGIOUS REBELS IN PUNJAB" "The Ad Dharm challenge to caste". Lot of efforts are under way by many of the modern scholars in India to revive the invigorating legacy of this forgotten hero. It was Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia who left no stone unturned to prove that we were the actual aborigines (Mooinivas) of India but were forced to live a life of slaves in our own land.

Staunch Supporter of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: - Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia stood like a solid rock with Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his crusade in Round Table conferences in London, supporting him with telegrams that Dr. Ambedkar is the real representative of the down trodden to participate in the deliberations of the conference for award of separate electorates for the scheduled castes. He even started a counter fast unto death against Mahatma Gandhi's which ended in the signing of Poona Pact in 1932.

Role as a freedom fighter: - Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia while in USA in the early part of the 20th century became an active member of the Gadar movement fighting for India's freedom from the British rule for which he even risked his life while coming back to India with a shipment of weapons to be used by Ghadarites in India. He was honored and recognized with a Tamar-Patra for his role as a freedom fighter by the former Prime Minister of India Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Unfortunately the name of such a revolutionary figure in the Gadar movement and one of the founder members of the historic Sikh Temple in Stockton (California) has not been even included in the official lists displayed in Gadar Memorial hall, San Francisco and Gurdwara Sahib Stockton. This omission, being a matter of great concern to all, was also confirmed by Mr. Prem Kumar Chamber Chief Editor Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times and by other visitors to these locations.

Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times, the two U.S weekly publications in circulation among the Indian Diaspora all over the world are also very instrumental and embedded to the cause of reviving the exemplary role and the legacy of this patriotic hero for restoration of human rights to the deprived and the original inhabitants of India. Desh Doaba has made it a regular feature in its periodical Editorials to write about his gigantic contributions in the establishment of a distinct and a separate identity of Ad-Dharmi Community.

Let the youth of the modern era learn more and more about the life of such a valiant and a patriotic fighter in the freedom struggle as well as a crusader for restoration of human rights denied to the down trodden for centuries. In the pages of history he deserves the honor and the veneration as a great leader and a champion of human rights.

* (General Secretary)
Supreme Council,
Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha USA

Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar & his book "My Struggle in Life"

Prem K. Chumber
Editor-In-Chief:
www.ambedkartimes.com

Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar is a household name in the Doaba region of Punjab. He was probably the first Punjab Civil Service officer from the Ad Dharmi community of the region. Ad Dharmis of Punjab were the pioneers of the Dalit movement in the Northwest India. Sh. Pawar Ji served the cause of the Samaj through his bold decisions in the direction of Dalit empowerment. When he was appointed as the passport issuing officer in the region, he made great contribution towards helping his people reach foreign lands to improve their life conditions. To obtain a passport one needs to show some property, which lowest of the low were deprived of simply for being born in such families. Sh. Pawar saw to it that this formidable hurdle should not come in their way to obtain passports. It was during his tenure at the Passport office that a large number of people belonging to various Scheduled Castes (SCs) communities started reaching abroad. Currently SCs of Punjab constitute the second largest emigrant group from Punjab in North America and Western Europe.

The lesson to serve one's community, Sh. Pawar Ji learnt from the teachings of Ad Dharam movement. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia, the founder of the glorious Ad Dharam movement of Punjab, influenced Pawar Sahib deeply. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia Ji used to go to Chandigarh to meet Sh. Pawar Sahib at his residence and Mrs. Pawar look after them passionately as both of them were well aware of their commitment towards the Dalit Samaj. ID Pawar was not only a source of aspiration for his people but also great support to help them at various levels of administration for their day-to-day life requirements. Ambedkartimes forum takes lots of pride in serializing Sh. I. D.Pawar’s autobiography “My Struggle in Life”. Our thanks also to Sh.Pamas Rai Bhatti whose contribution towards the publication of this valuable treasure of our Samaj was duly recognized by Pawar Sahib in the preface of “My Struggle in Life”
called him Sardarji. He was a man of command—Rala Ram. Out of affection and respect, people Sikhs but was known by the name of Chaudhri—

The chances of work and earnings were much better there. Our people in those days had queer notions. They abhorred the idea of leaving the ancestral village and settling in any other village. There could therefore be nothing wrong in migration to another village in search of better ways, we have two villages as our homes. In order to be near our family and get the best education, we first moved to village near our residence, nearly half a mile from our new residence. Babu Moti Lal was and his family originally belonged to the Chhura caste (as the Valmikis (low caste people, nearly half a mile from our new residence. Babu Moti Lal was a very kind-hearted woman. Babu Moti Lal was not well read, but he could teach us as well as we had to start from the alphabet stage to learn Urdu. He very graciously consented to be our informal teacher. For one time only, he taught us. In his second class, Sunny Lal, would come to our house and initiate me and my brother into the Urdu language. We got very much interested in our studies. Then we started going to his house for classes every evening. But he had been sent, he was educated. He ascended to the heavens after leaving a message with his disciples. The message was that he would again come down on earth on the day of judgment to record his decisions and verdicts on the doings of the people. He would then recommend their good followers for a place in heaven." This, in a nutshell, is the exposition of the essentials of Christian faith as given by Fazl Masih. How heart-}

I have also availed myself of this opportunity to touch upon a few other subjects of public interest. I shall feel encouraged to speak about them on every available occasion.

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Dr. B.R. Ambedkar’s 130th Birth Anniversary

Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (CA) will be celebrating Baba Sahib Dr. B. R. Ambedkar’s 130th Birth Anniversary on Sunday, May 16, 2021. You are humbly requested to come and join us in the celebration.