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Relevance of Tathagat Buddha in Contemporary Times

Prem K. Chumber

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weekly Newspapers

Tathagat Buddha started his search for an answer to 'dukha' (suffering -physical, mental, moral & social) by abandoning palace and seeking the company of the known recluses 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. May be, 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 impersonal-personal-suffering led him to renounce his palatial 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 do perform a new journey in search of the 'truth', - a journey within his very self. It also made him realise that on 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 begins 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 sufferers 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!

Mr.

Bhagwan Das was born in an Untouchable family at Juttogh 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 'Indianisation of the Audit Department from 1840-1915'. He has been contributing articles and short stories to various papers and

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, Bouddh 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

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.

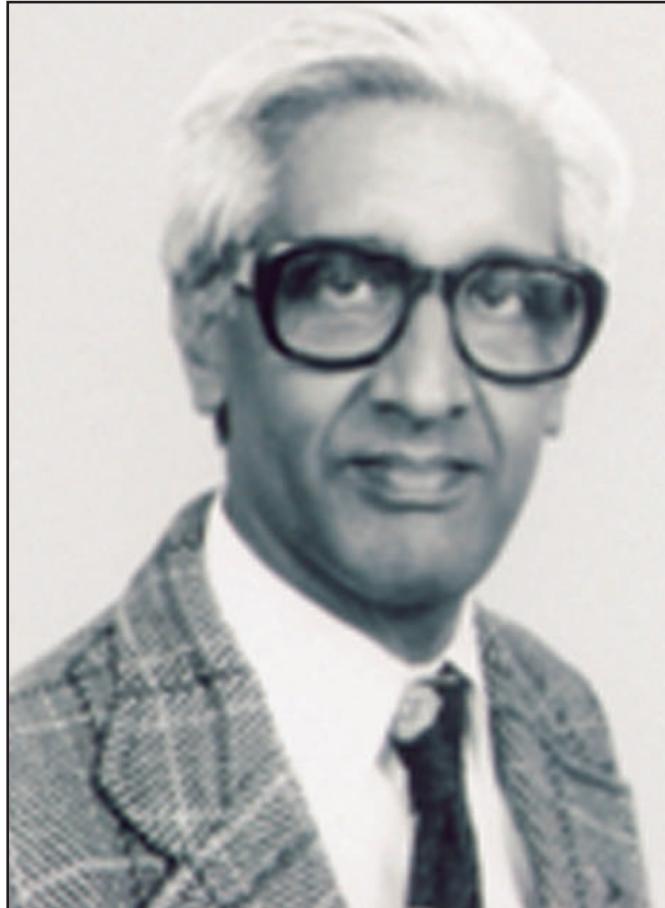


SR Darapuri

Centre for Study of Social Exclusion and Inclusive Policy,
Baba Sahib Bhim Rao Ambedkar University, Lucknow (U.P.)
Reader and Deputy Director

Promoting Buddhist Knowledge; edited Samata Sainik Sandesh (English) 1980 - 1990. He was also the main person behind publication of "Bheem Patrika" an Urdu and the Hindi magazine published from Jullundur (Punjab).

His mother tongue is Urdu. He learnt English from class 7th. His command over



Bhagwan Das: A Profile
(23.04.1927 - 18.11.2010)

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

English and his British accent compelled many to label him as a "Black English Man." He is Adib-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 many 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

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 14th 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 Navyana.

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 'Discrimination by the Peace University, Tokyo (1980) and also addressed several meetings organised by the Buraku-mins of Japan. He gave testimony before the United Nations in regard to the plight of 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,



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4

Assisted Outpatient Treatment in Sacramento County

On May 18th, the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors will have a big decision to make regarding whether or not to implement "Laura's Law." I want to take this op-

portunity need help.

People like this should be able to get help before more crimes are perpetuated 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 fiscal impacts, but I do know this is a growing problem and we should be handling 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 Response.

The strategy included bringing the most vulnerable into isolation trailers and preventative quarantine motels (Project Room Key), providing encampment support for those staying in place and equipping existing congregate shelters with safety measures.



While rehousing efforts have always been the number one focus, the sheltering sites, initially slated for a three-month run, have been extended several times and are still operational 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 Supervisors directed DHA to keep them open through August.

The Team continues to explore all sources of local and federal funding allowable to keep the motels open to continue sheltering guests while working on rehousing efforts. The Team has sought FEMA reimbursement for all eligible costs and for eligible people served, however, to maximize the model's ability to mitigate the spread of the coronavirus, the community offered preventative

quarantine sheltering and services to a broader population of people experiencing homelessness than those included with FEMA's criteria.

The Team is hopeful that forthcoming federal relief funds will have allowance to fund the motel response for the allotted period of time while continuing the important work of rehousing guests. While the sheltering aspect of our fight against homelessness is important, we are doing everything we can to move people into a more permanent and healthy living situation. Staff will prioritize the outreach and education needed to communicate how critical the rehousing efforts of this program is to guests and the community. This effort does not come without barriers, some of which are access to affordable housing, lack of landlords, and lack of income, to name a few.

COVID-19 Homelessness Response by the numbers:

Project Room Key

1,356 individuals sheltered

51 percent older than 55

39 percent with chronic health conditions

57 percent experienced homelessness for longer than one year

372 rooms still operational

468 persons currently sheltered (as of 4/10/21)

Encampment Support

58 handwashing stations

52 toilets deployed to encampments

72,000 meals provided to unsheltered

Medical Response

7,000 COVID tests conducted

1,122 people vaccinated (As of 4/12/21)

Only 57 positive COVID cases (as of 2/26/21)

Outcomes

174 permanently housed participants
80 participants set to exit into a new housing unit

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. Sacramento County is partnering with the Sacramento District Office of the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) to help local restaurants and food and beverage businesses in our region.

The webinar will focus on the SBA's new Restau-



Sue Frost

rant Revitalization Fund (RRF) in advance of the program's launch. RRF is a \$28.6 billion program that provides funding for restaurants to meet payroll, purchase supplies and transition to today's COVID-restricted marketplace. Eligible entities are businesses 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

Allowed funding uses

How to calculate one's potential fund amount

How and when to apply (process, documentation needed and how to obtain help with the application)

Priority groups (For the first 21 days that the program is open, the SBA will review applications from small businesses owned by women, veterans and socially and economically disadvantaged individuals. Following the 21-day period, all eligible business may submit applications)

The official application launch date will be announced at a later date. Sacramento County is advising business owners to start gathering their paperwork early so that they are ready for the application launch. Those who cannot attend the live event can view the webinar at a later date on the Economic Development website.

Speakers at the webinar will include:
Troy Givans, Director of Sacramento County's Office of Economic Development

Carrie Ellinwood, Deputy District Director of SBA's Sacramento District Office, will be speaking about RRF program elements

Marie Woodin, Director of Sacramento County's EMD, will be speaking about health permit fees and payment plans

Dr. Kasirye, Sacramento County's Public Health Officer, will be speaking about vaccinations for restaurant workers

To reserve your seat for the live webinar event, visit



U.S. Small Business Administration

(Contd. on next page)

My Friend Ambassador Dr. Ashok Amrohi – An Obituary

Covid played havoc and snatched my friend and colleague Ambassador Ashok Amrohi, IFS of 1981 batch on April 27 at Medanta Hospital in Gurugram. President of Association of Indian Diplomats (AID), Ambassador Bhaswati 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 Ambassador Banashri Harrison Bose thoughtfully wrote that with the demise of Ambassador Amrohi we have lost "the heart and soul of 1981 batch" and further said, "He was a thorough professional and discharged any job that the Ministry entrusted him with devotion and dedication, achieving results. As a friend, he was a true treasure, someone with whom you could share laughter as well as tears. He doubled your joys and halved your troubles."

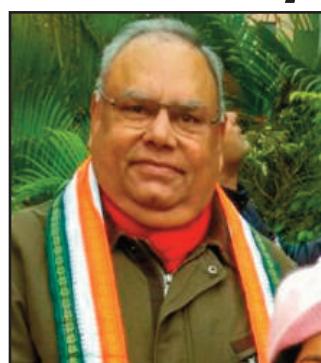
The shocking news was shared with me on the morning of



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 dinners 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 Chanakyapuri 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 supports me, that he was against the politics of Sant Fateh Singh, Akali leader in those days on the



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

issue of Punjabi Suba. Yesterday I spoke to Lahori Ram Balley an octogenarian 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 demise of Ashok. He informed that though he did not have much formal education, Prabhati Ram was a businessman of standing dealing with some materials (sak – shell of babul tree) required for leather tanning. Balley Sahib said that he was a staunch Ambedkarite and a 'dabang' politician. Prabhati Ram played an important role in having the statue of Babasaheb Ambedkar in front of the Amritsar Municipal Corporation as a Councilor. He provided good education to his children. One of the elder brothers of Askok, Lakshman Dass was an IPS officer of Haryana cadre. Ashok himself was a qualified doctor as an MBBS but choose to join IFS with a wider vision. While referring to his father's association with Balley Sahib, Ashok told me that he had his district attachment in 1982-83 as a trainee IFS and visited Ambedkar Bhawan to pay respects to Babasaheb Ambedkar. Ambassador Ashok Amrohi adorned coveted positions of Ambassador/High Commissioner in Algiers, Mozambique and Brunei besides Head of the CPV Division of the MEA during his long diplomatic career in the IFS. Ashok will be missed greatly.

न ढाथ थाम सके; न पकड़ सके दामन,
बहुत करीब से उठ कर चला गया कोई।

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.

(Continue from page 2))

Eventbrite.com. For more information on all of the SBA COVID-19 programs, visit the SBA's COVID-19 relief options webpage.

Help Prevent Animal Cruelty in Your Community

To hold animal abusers accountable, the Sacramento County District Attorney's office launched an Animal Cruelty Task Force in our region 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 extended periods of time: in vehicles in extreme weather; or without food and water

Maliciously and intentionally maim, mutilate, beat, torture, torment, 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 exercise.

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 incident, make sure you are not in danger.

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 immediately, dial 3-1-1 or (916) 874-4311. Remember, If you see something, say something. Be alert to animal cruelty – even when it's not Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Month. More information about reporting 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 2005-2018. 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 here, but instead of 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 pollu-

tion 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 Vallabhbhai 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 crore, Mumbai has lost about Rs. 26,000 crore, 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 rela-

the 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 had made a writ petition to the Supreme Court for relaxation in the environmental regulations of

2015 and 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 on the part of the government is responsible for the rapid pollution of Delhi's environment.

The government should use modern technology to deal with the piles of garbage. Strict adherence to environment friendly rules should also be observed on construction sites. Lastly, the government should make the means of public transport more efficient by making long-term plans to reduce the number of private vehicles. The use of coal for power generation should be stopped completely so that Delhi and other cities in India can be free from air pollution. 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.

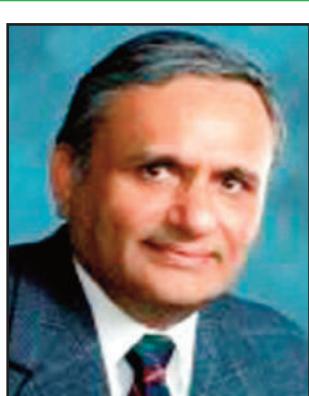


death for the urban poor. According to a recent report released by the University of Birmingham, more than 46,000 poor people in Delhi often sleep on the sidewalks after a day's work due to lack of accommodation and inflation of rent prices. These people also work in the most polluted places like industries, thermal plants, construction sites due to which they die prematurely because of exposure to air pollution. Despite so many deaths happen due to air pollution in the country every year, our Union Environment Minister Prakash Javadekar had inadvertently made a statement that no research shows that Indians die from air pollution. Maria Nair, director of the World Health Organization, responded to Javadekar's statement at a meeting with COP in Madrid. It was quoted as a satire in the 25th conference and Maria Nair said how good it would be if Indians were not affected by air pollution, but Alas! this is not the truth.

Air pollution not only kills people prematurely but also shortens their life expectancy. Air pollution also affects the economy of each country. According to Greenpeace Southeast Asia Analysis,

tives which is a never ending social loss. The main causes of air pollution in Delhi are the increasing number of vehicles and industries, construction work, burning garbage dumps, thermal plants, dust on the roads, burning of crop residues in the northern states, the annual fires and its fumes, and firecrackers during Diwali. The Delhi government needs to take four measures to reduce air pollution here. The first relates to the occasional indiscriminate use of firecrackers on Diwali and Dussehra.

The Delhi government should ban the use of firecrackers on these occasions or at weddings and take legal action against violators. Secondly, The Union Government should provide machinery to the farmers at affordable rates to protect Delhi from crop residue smoke pollution and help Punjab, Haryana and other states to adapt to the cropping pattern suitable to their agro-climatic conditions. Thirdly, Government should enact serious and strict enforcement of environmental laws to reduce pollution from sources such as industries, power plants, construction sites, garbage dumps, brick kilns, etc. located in Delhi. At the time of



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Remembering Advocate Bhagwan Das: A Profile

(Continue from page 1)

1983, 1988, 1990 and 1991 in connection with lectures and seminars. He participated in the seminar held in 'Hull University in 1990 as a representative of the Ambedkar Centenary Celebration Committee, UK and also a seminar on Human Rights in India held at London University, School of Asian and Oriental Studies in February 1991.

He was invited to deliver Ambedkar Memorial Lectures in Milind Mahavidyalaya, Aurangabad (1970); Marathwada University (1983); Nagpur University, PWS College, Nagpur; Ambedkar College, Chander Pur and Amrtaoti 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 So-

ciety 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" incomplete book written by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He also edited "Untouchable Soldiers- Mazhbi and Mahar" wrote M.A. Thesis by Ardit Basham, an American Scholar. He has also written about Dalit politics under the title "Dalit RajnitiaurSanghatan." (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 IVEd) 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. Ambedkar Ek Parichay Ek Sandesh; Dr. Ambedkar aur Bhangi Jatiya and Bharat me Bauddh Dhamma ka punjragran tathasamasyayen. 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 Bu-

reaucracy in India"; "Untouchables in the Indian Army (Mahar, Mazhbi, Chuhra, Pariah, Mangs, Dhanuks, Dusadhs, Chamars, Kolis, Bheels)"; "Mandal Commission and the Future of Backward Classes"; "Twenty-Two Oaths of Buddhism and Conversion"; "Balmiki; Ravidassis 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, Sukhadeo Thorat down to younger scholars like Vijay Prashad, Nicolas Jaoul and Maren Bellwinkel-Schempp.

Read more

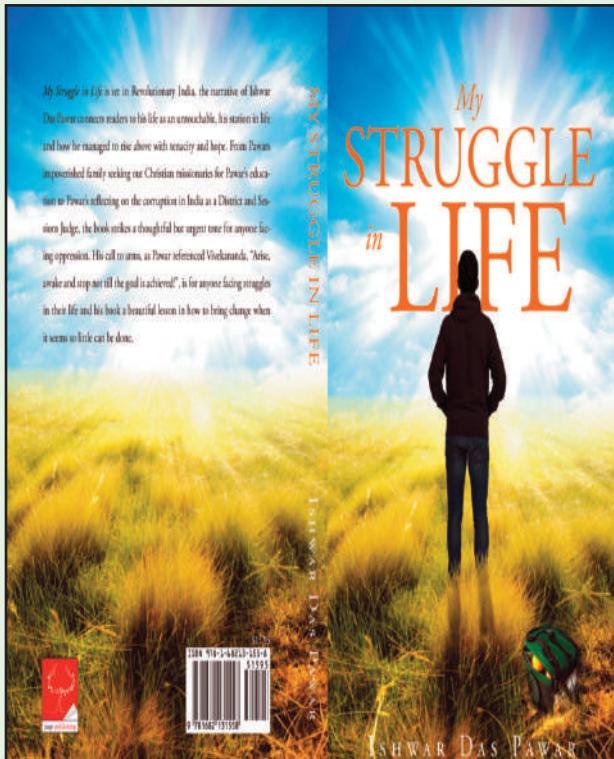
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Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar & his book "My Struggle in Life"

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 pass-



port 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 Dharm movement. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the glorious Ad Dharam movement of Punjab, influenced Pawar Sahib deeply. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia 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"

Babu Mangu Ram's unforgettable legacy

On the occasion of 135th Birth Anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia on 14th January, 2021 we, on behalf of Supreme Council, Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA, congratulate the entire community for whom he played a pivotal role as the founder of Ad-Dharm movement in 1920,s. 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 Mugowalia aimed at carving out a distinct identity for the followers of Guru Ravidass Ji, independent of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia who was a household 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 Mugowalia 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 Mugowalia who left no stone unturned to prove that we were the actual aborigines (Moolnivasi) of India but were forced to live a life of slaves in our own land.

Staungh Supporter of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: - Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia 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 Mugowalia 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



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

(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 Chumber 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 Sabhas USA





Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

recorded very briefly some of my reminiscences, and the events narrated, though essentially personal, are also of common concern inasmuch as they provide an insight into the times, the circumstances, and the environments in which the downtrodden and deprived section of the nation dubbed as untouchables have been struggling hard against heavy odds to redeem their lost rights and to lead a life of human dignity and honor. In addition to putting on record a few of the incidents that came my way, I have also availed myself of this opportunity to touch upon a few other subjects of public interest. I shall feel amply rewarded for whatever labor I have put in if the reader finds the book interesting and useful, viewed over a long and wide perspective of the fierce and grim struggle which has now turned dangerously repressive and violent against us. It will also show, by comparison, how much distance we have been able to cover on the long and arduous path that lies ahead, leading to our goal of emancipation from the religious, social, economic, and political oppression and exploitation. Shaping into a reality, my earnest desire to go in for the third edition of this book would not have been possible but for the voluntary and magnanimous offer that came from the USA-based Shri ISHWAR DAS PAWAR 10 Pamas Rai Bhatti that he would meet the entire cost to be incurred in this connection. For obvious reasons, the books have been placed at his disposal. Errors that had crept into the previous edition have been corrected, facts updated here and there, and a few additions incorporated at appropriate places. Much better printing and binding makes the book quite attractive. This publication is mainly meant for the American audience where there is a good deal of demand for the book. I am grateful to SarvshriGurbachan Das Badhan, company commander, Chandigarh UT Home Guards, and Chemas Rai Bhatti, BA LLB, for extending all help in the bringing out of this edition.

I. D. PAWAR District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)
Chandigarh, January 1, 1993.

How the Idea Was Born

It is not easy to make out how my father hit upon the idea of sending us to school. Even the so-called high-caste Hindus seldom sent their children to school. All that we know is that he got the idea when my eldest brother reached the school-going age. I was the youngest of five brothers. My father was illiterate, and he could hardly sign his name in Gurumukhi (the literal meaning is from the mouth of the Guru, most common script used for writing the Punjabi language in India) characters, and doing that too erroneously. He was, however, a man of vision and ideas and commanded great and wide respect from all sections of society. He frequently used to visit well-known saints, and a few of them belonged to our own family. He was completely free from all sorts of superstitions which were gripping the minds of innocent and illiterate people. Happily, we have inherited from him that great quality. Superstition is a disease of the mind, and very few people can rightfully claim to have free and healthy minds at least so far as this aspect of life is concerned. He was also deadly against smoking and drinking. He used to claim nostalgically that he had never touched even a new component of a huqqa (hookah) (bubble bubble, smoking pipe). Not only that, he had a firm and unflinching conviction and faith in these ideas and would propagate them on every available occasion.

My father wore his hair long like the Sikhs but was known by the name of Chaudhri-Rala Ram. Out of affection and respect, people called him Sardarji. He was a man of command-

Dedicated to the loving and respectful memory of my mother and father, who cast aside their mortal frames on the 10 April 1933 and the 15 September 1939 respectively, and who spent their lives in hard labor and toil so that we might have a bright future. (Read more:- www.ambedkartimes.com)

Educate, Agitate and Organise. Tell a slave, he is a slave and he will revolt. —B. R. Ambedkar

Preface

In this book, I have recorded very briefly some of my reminiscences, and the events narrated, though essentially personal, are also of common concern inasmuch as they provide an insight into the times, the circumstances, and the environments in which the downtrodden and deprived section of the nation dubbed as untouchables have been struggling hard against heavy odds to redeem their lost rights and to lead a life of human dignity and honor. In addition to putting on record a few of the incidents that came my way, I have also availed myself of this opportunity to touch upon a few other subjects of public interest. I shall feel amply rewarded for whatever labor I have put in if the reader finds the book interesting and useful, viewed over a long and wide perspective of the fierce and grim struggle which has now turned dangerously repressive and violent against us. It will also show, by comparison, how much distance we have been able to cover on the long and arduous path that lies ahead, leading to our goal of emancipation from the religious, social, economic, and political oppression and exploitation. Shaping into a reality, my earnest desire to go in for the third edition of this book would not have been possible but for the voluntary and magnanimous offer that came from the USA-based Shri ISHWAR DAS PAWAR 10 Pamas Rai Bhatti that he would meet the entire cost to be incurred in this connection. For obvious reasons, the books have been placed at his disposal. Errors that had crept into the previous edition have been corrected, facts updated here and there, and a few additions incorporated at appropriate places. Much better printing and binding makes the book quite attractive. This publication is mainly meant for the American audience where there is a good deal of demand for the book. I am grateful to SarvshriGurbachan Das Badhan, company commander, Chandigarh UT Home Guards, and Chemas Rai Bhatti, BA LLB, for extending all help in the bringing out of this edition.

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verses on Puran Bhagat and Shah Bahram of Faras (now Iran)." This, however, hardly satisfied the incorrigible detractors of education. This attitude of theirs was understandable and excusable as they were ignorant, and they little realized the advantages and benefits of education. The village of Dehlan where we were born and brought up at the house of our maternal grandparents did not hold out bright promise of earning reasonable livelihood for a large family as ours. So my father was in search of a new place where we could feel more comfortable, being assured of better living. Consequently, the family partly moved to village Naangran, about eight miles distant from Dehlan. 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. They called it desertion of the village, and desertion was a hated word. My father was, however, not wedded to the traditional and conventional way of thinking. He had fresh ideas and a new way of life. He would argue that adventurous people had gone to even foreign countries beyond the seas in search of better chances of life. There could therefore be nothing wrong in migrating to another village in search of better prospects of livelihood. He disliked the idea of clinging to a particular place even though living there was not profitable. He would not pay much heed to the outmoded and too conservative notions of the people in such matters. So in this way, we have two villages as our homes. In order to find out the possibility of imparting education to us, my father contacted a Christian preacher, Babu Moti Lal, living in the village of Bhanaam, nearly half a mile from our new residence. Babu Moti Lal and his family originally belonged to the Chuhra caste (as the Valmikis (low caste people, janitors) were then called), but they had embraced Christianity. Unbelievably, all the four members of the family were handsome and well behaved. Mrs. Santi, wife of Babu Moti Lal, was a very kind-hearted woman. Babu Moti Lal was not

well read, but he could teach us well as we had to start from the alphabet stage to learn Urdu. He very graciously consented to be our informal teacher. For some days, he along with his young son, 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 and learn our lessons sitting at his feet. We made a bit of progress. Babu Moti Lal then suggested that for regular and better studies, we should be admitted to a school. There was no school in any nearby place where we could get admission. In view of this difficulty, he offered to help us if we agreed to go to Ropar to join the mission school there. My father readily agreed to the proposal but my mother Shrimati Kirpo, felt hesitant in sending her young children to a far off place, a long distance of about twenty miles. The real opposition, however, came from our maternal grandfather. "Are you enemies of these innocent children?" he

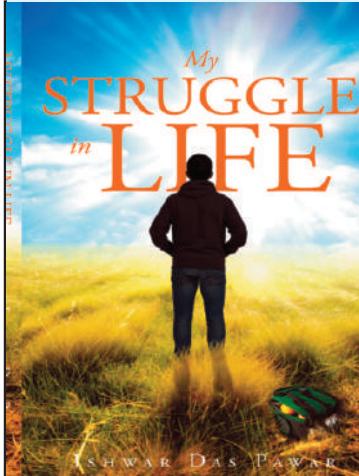
would ask with a sad tone. All the opposition was, however, overcome; and we got prepared for Ropar to get admission in the mission school. At Ropar, we were welcome and gladly admitted to the school. Master Maghi Ram was the sole teacher there. He and his wife both were very kind-hearted couple, and they treated us like their own children. Another name that comes to my mind in this context is that of Rev. R.V. Love, the missionary principal of the school. He was an exception-

ally handsome young man in his thirties with blooming health. True to his name, he was love personified. It used to be a matter of daily routine for him to visit the school-cum-hostel in the evening, sit and chat with us. We enjoyed his company thoroughly, and we looked upon him as a father figure. On Saturdays, our teacher used to take all of us to meet the principal and his family at their residence where we would receive from them sweets and fruits. Sweet memories last forever. We started our regular studies. I was rather enamored of the school and had a flair for studies. It was something inspiring. But occasionally, I would feel homesick. My father and brothers, Sant Ram, Bhagwan Das, and Harnam Das, periodically came to see us. Still I longed to meet my mother and sisters. My brother Ram Rakha Mal was, however, of a stronger mind, and he would try to console and encourage me. We found ourselves well on the way of progress in our education. There were not many students in the school, the number being not beyond fifteen. Fazl Masih, who was my classmate and a little older than me in age, took a fancy to me and became my fast friend. He had deep religious leanings. His father, Rev. Sucha Singh, was a famous Christian missionary stationed at Moga. Fazl Masih's cot and mine adjoined each other. When after evening meals we were in our beds, Fazl Masih would start his talks, initiating me into the philosophy and tenets of Christianity. He continued his discourses without break every evening for several days. His exposition of Christian faith greatly thrilled and inspired me. It was a hilarious and fantastic experience, and it had a profound impact on my mind. "God sent to this earth his only son, Jesus Christ, as a savior of the poor and the hapless. For these ignorant and simple-minded persons he took upon himself the role of a shepherd and treated them as sheep under his loving care. He came down on earth to protect them and take upon himself the burden of sins that lay heavily on their shoulders. He lived among them as one of them. He preached God's

message to them. He was crucified for espousing the cause of the poor and was buried in a grave, and a heavy stone was placed on the mouth of the grave so that nobody could tamper with the dead body. On the third day of the crucifixion, Jesus Christ came back to life, lived among his people for forty days, and then winged to heavens to join his father as the mission for which he had been sent, had been fulfilled. He ascended to the heavens after leaving a message with his disciples. The message was that he would again be coming down on earth on the day of judgment to record his decisions and verdicts on the doings of the people. He would then recommend his 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 heartening and hopeful all this was. I had never heard before of any great soul coming down on earth, living and dying for the poor. I had not heard about any other religion or a prophet or a messenger of God. I knew there was something like Hindu dharma, and side by side, the existence of the untouchables. Hindu dharma, whatever it stood for and whosoever was its founder, was for the Hindus alone. Untouchables were not Hindus. But they were the touch-stone for Hinduism. If a Hindu in any manner got into physical contact with an untouchable, he would get polluted, and before he could enter his house or touch any other, he had to purify himself by the sprinkling of a drop of water on him. This was Hindu dharma. A Hindu knew this perfectly well, and an untouchable too was well aware of this position though he might not know anything else. Ironically, an untouchable would himself remind the Hindu for the purificatory sprinkle of water if he, by any chance, tended to forget about it. O god, this is Hindu dharma! The sprinkle sometimes came from the foul-smelling water of a huqqa (hookah) or the stinking, dirty water of a pond used by cattle and dogs. Fazl Masih had also told me that the day was not far off when the entire world would come within the folds of Christianity. He gave me a beautifully bound copy of the New Testament. I kept it carefully wrapped in a neat and clean piece of cloth, treated it with all the reverence due to a gospel. I could not read it. I was still at the alphabet stage. I had never heard that there were other religious books also like the Vedas (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism), the Gita (Hindu scripture), the Ramayana (a great Hindu epic), and the Mahabharata (a great Hindu epic).

My heart and mind were blank about religions or prophets or avatars (In Hinduism, avatars are deliberate descents of a deity to Earth, or a descent of the Supreme Being (e.g., Vishnu for Vaishnavites). Jesus Christ was the first son of God, prophet, master, messenger, and his New Testament was the first religious book whose names were written first of all on my virgin mind and have left an indelible impression on me. Hindus started calling the untouchables as Hindus much later when their numbers were needed to swell their own numbers to obtain political and other gains. Honestly speaking, the untouchables are not Hindus. Hindus comprise only the four Varnas (Varna is the term for the four broad ranks into which traditional Hindu society is divided)—Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, and Sudra. Untouchables belong to none of them. They are at best Antyajas, Atisudras beyond the bounds of the four varnas. We had spent only about a year and a half in the mission school at Ropar when it was closed. All the students were therefore shifted to the primary mission school at Khanna. We bade good-bye to the Ropar School with heavy hearts and tearful eyes. This school and the prior schooling at the house of Babu Moti Lal laid the foundation of my educational career.

(continue)





SHRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (GSA)

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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.



Jagtar Bhatia (Chairman)



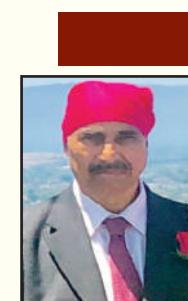
Shinderpal Narabut (President)



Dharampal Chonkaria (Gen. Secretary)



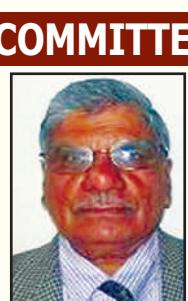
Vinod Kumar (Treasurer)



Balvir Chand Mal



Jagdev Ram



O.P. Bailey



Dr. Harmesh Kumar,

ADVISORY COMMITTEE



Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Committee Members & more



Jai Jaggi



Salinder Bhatia



Ajai Paul Ram



Shashi Paul

The New Committee appreciates the services of the previous committee and the selection panel and is looking forward to continued support. Guidance and cooperation of the entire Sangat who is the backbone of our Gurughar. Thank you.

Sangat De Sewadar

Chairman
Jagtar Bhatia

President
Shinder Paul Narabut

General Secretary
Dharam Pal Chonkria

Treasurer
Vinod Kumar