



BAHUVANA HITAYA BAHUVANA SUKHAYA

Prem K. Chumber

Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weekly Newspapers

The history and the contemporary texture and structure of Hindu society are caste ridden. It is basically an exploitative society. What further distinguishes it from rest of the varied forms of exploitations and exploitative social systems is its birth-based-purity-pollution principle of graded caste hierarchy that perpetuates hereditary occupation laced discrimination. Traditionally it draws its sustenance from the Varna system social stratification having its roots in the Hindu Dharmasastras. The most horrible aspect of this India-specific system of social exclusion and exploitation is that it has been able to inculcate in the minds of its victims that the latter are supposed to undergo such discrimination rather willingly as a penance of their bad deeds they have had accumulated in their earlier enumerable low births.

Religion of the Hindus is nothing but a sacred reinforcement of the above obnoxious system of social exclusion of their inhabitants cursed as ex-Untouchables. However, as far as the hard labour of these lesser human beings and its expropriation is concerned that is welcomed! For centuries no one objected to this inhuman social practice. On the contrary, this inhuman social practice was considered as a normal practice and an integral part of the Hindu social and political order. So much so that the Hindu religious texts were designed to justify such a horrible social muck meticulously.

Tathagat Buddha was the first rational and forceful voice against the Hindu caste system and its consequent system of untouchability. He contested the Hindu system of birth-based social stratification with his new and innovative slogan of Bahujana Hitaya Bahujana Sukhaya. He took on the Hindu socio-religious system head-on and turned it upside down while coming out with a scientific interpretation of the maladies of the society and its rational ground-based practical solutions. He categorically discarded the supernatural/extra-worldly/mythological God/Avatar based Hindu world view. He very politely but equally firmly emphasized on the equality of all Human beings and very strongly rejected the rotten institution of caste. He very strongly advocated that looking after the interests of all would definitely give way to the much desired goal of the welfare of the all.

Tathagat Buddha came out with four noble truths: (a) suffering is an inherent part of existence, (b) the origin of suffering is ignorance and the main symptoms of which are attachment and craving, (c) the cause of suffering can be removed, (d) the way for its removal is AshtangikaMarga (the eight-fold path). The eight-fold path includes: (1) right understanding, (2) right thought, (3) right speech, (4) right action, (5) right livelihood, (6) right efforts, (7) right mindfulness, and (8) right concentration.

Let us follow Tathagat Buddha's Ashtangika-Marga in properly understanding the real problem of the community and finding its practical solution by bringing everyone on a common platform for furthering the cause of Dalit liberation and empowerment without accusing each other.

Shahu ji Maharaj: The Saviour King of the Backwards and Dalits

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About 115 years ago, Shahu ji Maharaj introduced 50 per cent reservation for the first time ever in India. He belonged to the Kunbi caste (a backward caste). He took several steps to break the back of brahmanism. Remembering him on his death anniversary is

- Dr Siddharth

In the brahmanical tradition, "Ramrajya" is the ideal kingdom and Ram is the greatest ruler ever born. But subjects of the Ramrajya had to follow the varna system. In other words, the Shudras and the Ati-Shudras had to serve the dwijs, and women were had to be subservient to men. Violation of the tenets of the varna system invited death and the king, Ram, himself executed the sentence. In contrast, the Bahujan-Sraman tradition witnessed many kings who upheld justice and worked for public welfare in every sense. They devoted their lives to the arduous task of dismantling the varna and the caste system, and the elaborate structure of discrimination based on it. Shahuji Maharaj was one of them. He concretized the dreams of Jotirao and Savitribai Phule.

Shahuji was anointed the king of Kolhapur on 2 July 1894. Soon, he was loosening the stranglehold of Brahmins on the administration and society. On 26 July 1902, he took a path-breaking step – something no one had even imagined. Amid stiff opposition from the Brahmins, he implemented 50 per cent reservations for Dalits and the Backwards in educational institutions and in government jobs in his state. This was the first instance of caste-based reservation in modern India. That is why Shahuji Maharaj is often described as the father of modern-day reservations. Later, Dr Ambedkar incorporated the pioneering initiative of Shahuji Maharaj in the Indian Constitution. The Constitution mandated reservations for Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes, but the decision on OBC castes was kept open. The OBCs got reservations on 16 November 1922, about 45 years after Independence and 90 years after Shahuji made the provision for his subjects.

In 1894, when Shahuji took over as ruler, Chitpavan Brahmins had monopolized most of the positions in the administrative set-up of Kolhapur. Brahmins occupied 60 of the 71 senior administrative positions. There were only ten non-Brahmins among the 500 clerks. Following the implementation of Shahuji's reservation policy, only 35 Brahmins were left among the 95 administrative officers in 1912.

Shahuji was in complete agreement with what Phule wrote in his Gulamgiri:

"Without education, wisdom was lost, without wisdom, morals were lost, without morals, development was lost, without development, wealth was lost, without wealth, the Shudras were ruined, so much has happened through lack of education."

Shahuji Maharaj took upon himself the task of combating ignorance and lack of education among Dalits and the backward castes. By as early as 1912, he had made primary education compulsory and by 25 July 1917, he had made it free. He was the first Indian ruler to do so. Like the Phule couple, he laid great stress on women's education. He opened schools in all villages, each to serve a population of at least 500 and up to 1,000. In 1920, he established a free hostel named Prince Shivaji Maratha Free Boarding House.

He outlawed two obnoxious traditions, thus bringing about a sea change in the position of Dalits in society. First, in 1917, he abrogated the archaic Balutdari system, under which an Untouchable was given a small piece of land and in return, he and his family had to render all kinds of services to the entire village without any compensation. Second, in 1918, he promulgated a law putting an end to the oppressive Vatandari system and introduced land reforms to enable Mahars to become owners of land. This ended the economic slavery of

Mahars to a great extent. The pro-Dalit Kolhapur ruler, with obvious pride, told a vast assemblage of Dalits in Manmad in 1920: "I believe you have got an emancipator in Dr Ambedkar. I hope that he will break your chains of slavery." He not only showered praises on Ambedkar but also helped him complete his education abroad and make politics a weapon for the emancipation of Dalits.

Shahuji's efforts to secure equality and justice for the Backwards, Dalits and women earned him the ire of the Chitpavan Brahmins of Maharashtra. Numerous efforts were made to humiliate and run him down. Ordinary Brahmins hating Shahuji can be understood. After all, he had ended their dominance in society. But what was painful was that people like Balgangadhar Tilak and Sripad Amrit Dange, a founding member of the Communist Party of India, also brimmed with anger and hatred towards him. Tilak fought a running battle with him.

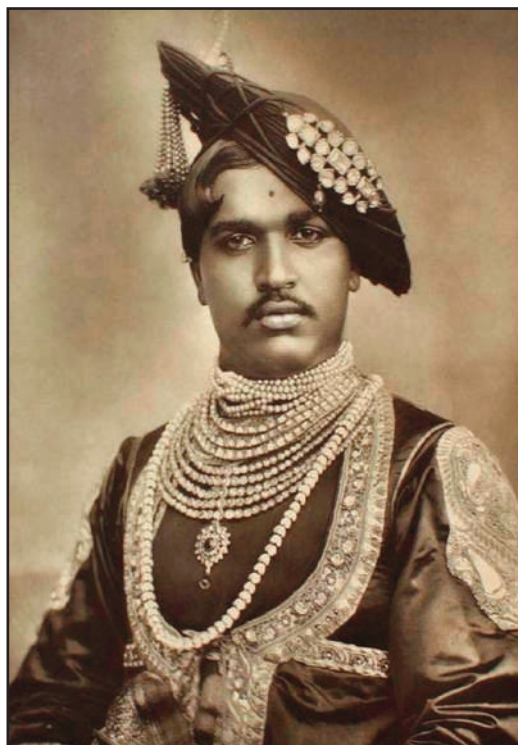
Born into a Kunbi (Kurmi in North India) family on 26 June 1874, Shahuji Maharaj became the ruler of Kolhapur when he was just 20 and ruled the state for 28 years. He was the grandson of Chhatrapati Shivaji and the son of Aapasaheb Ghatge Kagalkar. Yashwant Rao – as he was called in his childhood – lost his mother when he was just three years of age. Anandibai, the queen of Kolhapur, adopted him on 17 March 1884, and the title of Chhatrapati was conferred on him. In June 1902, the Cambridge University conferred on him an honorary doctorate of law. He was the first Indian to receive the honour. He was honoured with the title of Rajashri at the 13th national convention of the Akhil Bharatiya Kurmi Mahasabha held in Kanpur from 19-21 April 1919. He was also a recipient of the titles of GCSI, GCMG and MRES.

This great emancipator of the Backwards and Dalits breathed his last on 6 May 1922, aged 48. But

the lamp which he had lit, inspired by Phule, is illuminating our lives even now.

Translated by Amrish Herdenia

We all know that the brahmanical Peshwa rule had led to Brahmin dominance in every field of life – religious, political, economic and social – in Maharashtra. They were in control of almost everything. With the provisions of 50 per cent reservation and free and compulsory education, Shahuji aimed at ending that dominance. He also decided to dismantle the brahmanical supremacy on religion. On 9 July 1917, he issued a declaration that the income and the assets of religious institutions in Kolhapur belonged to the government. He also ordered that Marathas (a backward caste) be appointed priests in temples. In 1920, he established a school to train priests in conducting religious rituals. We all know about Dr Ambedkar's Hindu Code Bill, but few of us are aware that Shahuji Maharaj also passed a Hindu Code Bill on 11 November 1920, ending the stipulation that Hindu succession laws would be governed by the Mitakshara School of Law. Mitakshara is Vijnaneswara's commentary on Yajnavalkya Smriti and broadly rules that women cannot inherit the property of their families. It imposes several conditions and restrictions. Shahuji also brought to a close the tradition of assigning villages to Brahmin priests. Shahuji took a series of steps to ensure that the Untouchables (Dalits) were treated on a par with others and to improve their living conditions. Until 1919, no Untouchable could get treatment in a hospital. In 1919, Shahuji issued a declaration that any Untouchable could visit a hospital and get treatment. In the same year, he issued another order outlawing discrimination in primary and high schools and in colleges against students on the basis of caste. Besides ensuring that Dalits got a foothold in government service, he also issued an order that said Dalit government employees should be treated with dignity and respect, and that government offices should be free of the practice untouchability. "The officers who are unwilling to follow this order should resign within six months," the order said.





V.B. Soni
Ambassador (Retd.)

Gentleman Bureaucrat: Vimal Chandra

Some great personalities, out of modesty, shun limelight while doing their bit to help humanity. Their

contribution accordingly goes unnoticed and unacknowledged. Vimal Chandra was one such person, belonging to that rare breed. He gave wise counsel, guidance, help and support to countless people, from modest background and victims of high caste prejudices. He understood their predicament well, as he himself came from such a milieu and identified and empathized with them. He authored a publication entitled: "Handbook on Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe" (S.C. & S.T) in 1968 based on lifetime work in the office of Commissioner, S.C. & S.T. It became a useful reference material for researchers and scholars.

There is scanty material in public domain about Vimal Chandra's background, family history, official positions held and contributions made. To collect the material, there was no better source than the man himself. Accordingly, with questions and note book in hand, I picked his brain at length, in half a dozen sessions with him.

I found him gracious, patient and generous with his time to have granted those marathon sessions in January/February 1996, when I visited Delhi on midterm home leave, from my posting in Jamaica. With his photographic memory, he recounted events dating back to more than 60 years back, not leaving even minor detail. What follows was a fascinating account of what came out from him.

Vimal Chandra's family hailed from Village TANDA, UNA District, Hoshiarpur in Punjab. The only son of Labbu Ram and Nandi Devi, he had three sisters Malawi, Ram Pyari and Vidya. The family surname Bhatia transformed to Bhatia in due course of time. Born on 6th November 1915 he was a bright student from the beginning. He graduated from D.A.V. College, Lahore, Punjab University with Honours in Philosophy in 1936. One of his lifetime close associates, Ishwar Das Pawar, was pursuing LLB course, while being employed as Clerk/translator at Lahore High Court. From then on they forged a lifelong close family bonding.

Around that time a well-established builder Nanig Ram's family was on the lookout for a suitable match for the daughter Shanti, (born 10th September 1923). The eldest son Mohan Lal, who had taken charge of the family affairs, after his father's death, visited Lahore in 1935 to check out on Ishwar Das. His name had been recommended, by an associate. The latter's response to the proposal was that his priority was to complete his LLB degree first. So

the matter was not pursued.

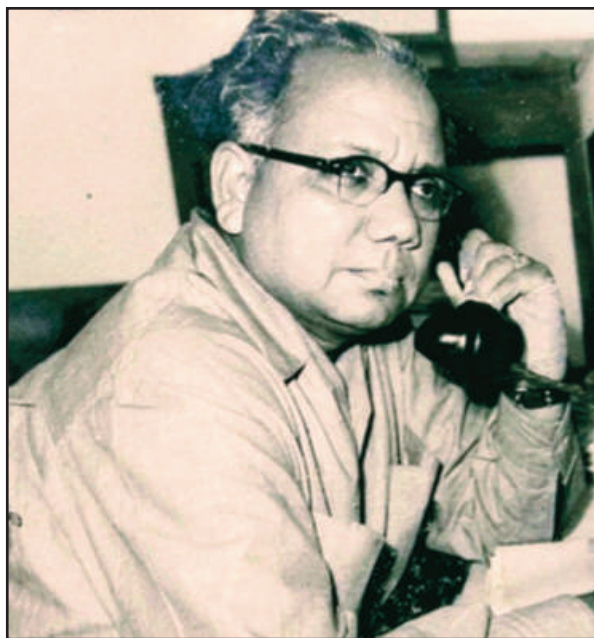
After graduation in 1936, Chandra qualified as Lower Division Clerk (LDC) but could not join, on account of lack of proficiency in typing. That proved to be a blessing in disguise, giving him an opportunity and time to prepare for a higher post. Sure enough he qualified for Assistant level position advertised by the Public Service Commission. In 1938 Vimal Chandra joined Government service in the office of Accountant General in Shimla. From there he was asked to proceed to Delhi. As he did not know anybody in the city, he sought the help of Mohan Lal in finding residential accommodation. (He had met him during the latter's Lahore visit.) A modest flat from amongst the family property in Paharganj, not far from Imperial Talkies was offered, which is where he initially started life in Delhi.

In the meanwhile, search for a match for Shanti was still on. In response to a matrimonial ad in a local newspaper, somebody claiming to be close to a Royal family in Jammu region, offered to be the facilitator for the match. Through correspondence, family details and photos were exchanged, resulting in quick engagement. The date of the proposed marriage was fixed in November 1937 and invitation cards distributed.

When a family friend received the wedding card he enquired if a background check had been done on the prospective bridegroom. He alerted that the groom may be suffering from some serious disease. Shocked by this disclosure, its veracity was checked out. Sure enough, the rumours turned out to be true! The proposal was immediately withdrawn. The groom's side refused to accept it and threatened to bring the

baraat on the fixed day anyway, leading to much tension. Mercifully that did not happen and a disaster was averted.

Fortuitous circumstances put Vimal Chandra in a position to be the right choice at the right time for Shanti. A suitable approach was made and the marriage proposal was accepted by both sides. The wedding date was fixed for January 26, 1939. Preparations got under way in the right earnest. Just a day before the date, unexpected complications developed. Without the knowledge and approval of Vimal Chandra, a close relative of his, approached the bride's



side exploring possibility of some 'consideration'. This was turned down with the response that the girl would be given gifts and presents out of love and affection, which could not be the matter of discussion/negotiation.

This unforeseen development made Shanti's brothers nervous. They were unsure if the baraat would actually turn up at the appointed hour for the ceremony! Youngest brother Bankey Lal was sent to discreetly check out, if preparatory activity at the place, where bridegroom's party was lodged, were going on as per schedule. Much to everyone's relief, no let-up in the proceedings was reported there. In the event the bridegroom's party did arrive at the fixed time. The marriage was solemnized normally, as per Vedic rites, much to everybody's relief. That's how the couple's life's inseparable life journey started.

Shanti proved to be a perfect life partner, as proudly commented by Vimal Chandra himself. She blended well within the family. Facing a challenging domestic situation, she proved more than a match because of her affable personality, warm and af-

fectionate nature. She was a perfect hostess and entertained constant stream of official and family guests' graciously. She had a good knowledge of religious and social customs and rituals. Her attribute as a match maker was impeccable, advising people on a whole range of issues. A very popular person and a favourite of relatives and friends, she was a noble soul.

One of the earliest influences in Vimal Chandra's life was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. In 1936 Baba Sahib had visited Punjab for a discussion with Sikh leaders, to examine the option Scheduled Caste community could consider to escape from the clutches of deep rooted caste prejudices, rampant in the Hindu society. Could conversion to Sikhism be the answer? He started with a visit to Lahore, during which the student in Chandra got drawn to his magnetic personality, becoming his early follower.

Vimal Chandra's official career got off to a grand start with posting to Ministry of External Affairs, South Block in 1938. He worked for varying periods of time in the Northern and Eastern Division, followed by General Section. He rose to be Resident Clerk in Central Registry in South Block, which meant he was on duty from the close of office at 4.30 p.m. till the following morning at 10 a.m. The important job involved sorting out incoming important Dak, dispatch of classified telegrams to higher ups, overlooking smooth and efficient movement of communications to various Government departments. His stint in that Ministry lasted till 1946.

All India Scheduled Caste Welfare Association (SCWA) was formed at Dr. Ambedkar's initiative in 1942. Up and coming earliest graduates from Punjab, Vimal Chandra and Kartar Singh, who had taken up Government jobs, became two of its office bearers. At the height of the World War II in July 1942, Ambedkar was appointed to the prestigious Executive Council of Governor General, as its Labour Member. His priority was to fight for a fair deal for his people. Even before the demand for reservation, his unrelenting fight was for adequate representation for the downtrodden in various official positions. He was aware of the standard excuse that there were no qualified people among the community, to be considered for the purpose. He immediately swung in to action to address the issue.

Baba Sahib got together a group of promising young members from the community, to personally mentor and guide for the leadership role. Vimal Chandra was in regular touch with him, in connection with the activities of SCWA. He became a trusted confidant of Ambedkar and helped him putting together an informal study group, taking responsibility for logistical arrangements for their meetings. The tea and snacks on the occasions used to be brought by the

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Gentleman Bureaucrat: Vimal Chandra

(Continue from page 2)

individuals voluntarily. Baba Sahib used to give important lessons on various aspects of life. His main emphasis was on importance of education and books, as tools to uplift his people. He was at pains to underline the importance of the world of knowledge and the study of relevant academic material.

Other achievers among Dr. Ambedkar's protégés included Munshi Ram Bhardwaj, Prakash Chander, Nanak Chand Rattu, Bhonsle, DG Jadhav, Meshram, Devi Dayal, Bankey Lal, Dr. K.L. Muir and Rai Sahib Puran Chand. Later Sohan Lal Shastri, joined as an important collaborator. Baba Saheb brought him as a senior draftsman, helping in the Hindi translation of important legal documents. As the Law Minister Dr. Ambedkar was busy drafting the Constitution of the new Republic of India, and later the Hindu Code Bill. S.L. Shastri, provided a helping hand, in many ways.

It was common knowledge that Vimal Chandra had gained confidence of Baba Sahib and his family. The latter's only son, Yashwant Rao disappointed the father no end, showing no inclination for academic pursuits. Even at the age of 31 years, he had not settled in life. At that stage he fell in love with a girl but did not dare approach his father for permission for marriage. Using Vimal Chandra's proximity, he tried seeking the father's permission through him. With great trepidation when the subject was broached, Baba Sahib flared up, dismissing in a brusque manner the proposition aside by a remark: "I am against marriage just for the heck of it. People should become useful to the society before considering marriage. The purpose in life should be to acquire knowledge by reading books. Anybody who does not read at least a book per week has no right to exist."

In 1946 in Labour Ministry, which was under the charge of Dr. Ambedkar, as Member in Viceroy's Executive Council, a vacancy at the level of Superintendent became available. With his recommendation Vimal Chandra was appointed on that post on transfer from External Affairs Ministry. He worked there for some years before he found his rightful place in the newly created Office of Commissioner for Scheduled Caste and Scheduled Tribe (S.C. & S.T.), building its architecture virtually from inception. Having carved a niche for himself on the subject, he rose from positions of Assistant Commissioner, Deputy Commissioner going on to the rank of Director. Even after attaining the age of superannuation, which then was 55 years, he was given extension for three years, keeping in view his competence and thorough knowledge of the subject. From a modest dwelling at 54 Foch Square, Gole Market, he moved in March 1956 to the sprawling green Lutyen's Zone Bungalow at 56, Ashoka Road near Bangla Sahib, where he stayed

on till his retirement from Government service on November 5, 1973. The Independence of India was accompanied by a traumatic partition of the country on August 15, 1947. One of the biggest mass migrations in human history, uprooting millions of people on either side of the newly created border, resulted in millions from West Punjab on the Pakistan side of the border descending on Delhi. Majority of people were given temporary shelters in camp conditions. Vimal Chandra's sisters, along with their families were accommodated in the cramped condition at his Government accommodation at Foch Square. For months the residence was teeming with scores of occupants. There was uninterrupted 'lan-



Daughter Shashi and Darshan Nafri Reception. 6.2.1966. From left Khub Singh, Nafri, Renu, Santsoh, Bishan Lala

gar' in operation at all hours of the day. Food used to be cooked not just for the newly arrived guests but also for refugee camps, especially for the orphan girls traumatised as rape victims, while fleeing Pakistan. Not for a moment did the hospitable couple show any exasperation, while voluntarily undertaking this humanitarian gesture, in spite of the great personal discomfort: ample proof of their large heartedness and generosity.

Wife Shanti proved to be an anchor and a rock-solid support system, Vimal Chandra was fully devoted and dependent on her. He never tried to hide their special bonding in public. While going out together, he would often lovingly hold her hand swinging it gently, as they walked along in the manner of young lovers! Shanti was an accomplished singer. The song everyone wanted to hear her sing at private family gathering was "Yehzinda giusiki haijokisi kahogaya" from the blockbuster film 'Anarkali'

Eldest son Vinod joined Government service and Ashok migrated to Canada after finishing his College. Deepak got his engineering degree and after working for a public sector undertaking, he too shifted to Canada. Chandra's eldest daughter Shashi married Darshan Ram Nafri, who retired as an I.A.S. officer, while the younger one Manjula married a banker Surinder, who rose to a high position in the Reserve Bank of India. An incident worth mentioning about the motherly instinct of Shanti that

came to the fore pertains to her nephew. In 1954 his youngest bhabhiKishan Devi, after delivery of the youngest son Bharat, underwent a medical emergency. In her stomach a ball like foreign element developed, growing in size, causing anxiety. She had to be operated immediately, before it became cancerous. During the period Shanti came forward to take care of the baby voluntarily. She nursed Bharat like her own offspring, till the mother got out of the hospital. Such was the care, maternal affection and dedication she showered on him. November 1984 would be the saddest month in Vimal Chandra's life. The country was reeling after the tragic assassination of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi on October 31 1984

ent could not hide the smirk on their faces. The candidate, who was unprepared for such a question, recovered quickly enough to give the right reply!

Vimal Chandra enjoyed the reputation of being a balanced and a fair person. He never showed undue favour to anyone. It was for this reason that the families of his wife's three brothers approached him for help in deciding on contentious issue of property division. It was a complex matter but he took it on as a challenge. He listened to the claims and counter claims, examined the intricate issues involved carefully and came up with fair division formula, acceptable to the three parties. If such a matter had been brought before a court law for arbitration, it would have dragged on for a prolonged period of time, entailing a huge cost, creating bitterness among the contending parties. His constructive approach and deft handling saved the family honour.

I was privileged to have been mentored by him, when I was preparing for All India Civil Services Examination. Result of that was to be announced in May 1967, through a press release by Press Information Bureau's (PIB) office, then located in the Annex to All India Radio building on Parliament Street. A day before its formal announcement I went to that office to check and could not believe that I had made to the IAS/IFS. Before rushing home, I decided to take a detour through 56, Ashoka Road residence of Vimal Chandra and broke the good news first to him. And from there, on reaching home at 53, Hanuman Road, I learnt that he had already informed my father about it on phone, depriving the surprise element. He just could not contain his happiness at my achievement and became the harbinger of good news to my father.

Vimal Chandra and Shanti proved to be the perfect match makers for our family. Three of my sisters got married to the bridegrooms, selected by them. In my own case also, they came up with proposal for the daughter of his old friend Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar settled in Chandigarh, Kamlesh. That's how the two of us got married on May 13, 1968.

Vimal Chandra continued to serve the society, even after retirement, in various capacities. He was Adviser to several Government departments and a consultant in the selection board of Public Sector Undertakings like NTPC, PNB, LIC, EPI, Indian Airlines, EIL. He had a tremendous sense of humour. An incident recalled by his son Deepak's friend, interviewed for the post of Junior Project Engineer in Engineering Projects India Ltd. (EPI) would bear that out. At the interview he was answering competently the questions put to him by Board members, which included Vimal Chandra. To put him at ease, to check his reflex, Chandra out of the blue asked him: "How many buttons are there in the shirt you are wearing?" The atmosphere in the cabin lightened up, as those pres-

Vimal Chandra was a great family man. After the passing away of his wife he took over the responsibility to bind the family together. He was a doting and caring grandfather. On a visit to his home one would find his grandchildren rallying around him to listen to his stories and fascinating anecdotes. He had the interest, patience and time for them. In fact he could sit in a group of any generation or age group and be connected with them all, as if he was one of them. He used to derive immense pleasure by asking out of context questions to test their knowledge. A grandchild of his fondly recalls, that at times sitting beside him, a subject was given to him to compose a poem. He would

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Buddhism: A far Greater Revolution than the French Revolution

Dr. Ambedkar in his book "Philosophy of Hinduism" writes that Buddhism was first a religious revolution which eventually turned into a Socio-Political revolution. He considered Buddhism as a far greater revolution than the French Revolution. It becomes natural to ask how was Buddhism a religious revolution and why the need to revive our society on Buddhist principles is even greater today.

According to Dr Ambedkar, Religion is not a fixed phenomenon and its meaning has varied from time to time in accordance with the development of human thinking in relation to his societal surroundings. During its evolutionary history, two drastic changes have occurred in the meaning of religion - the integration of concepts of God and Morality into the scheme of religion. These changes have resulted in fanaticism which manifests itself as sentimental nonsense both in personal as well as social relations.



I would name this incorporation of God and Morality into the scheme of religion as COSMO-MORAL CORRUPTION. Tathagat Buddha was the first

religious teacher who, through an ideological revolution corrected this corruption by freeing the meaning of religion from the concepts of God and Morality and made human mind the epicentre of his teachings.

Dr Ambedkar in "Buddha and His Dhamma " questions what can a man who has no internal purity in him give to the society..? Buddha said that the presence of Dukkha in the world has its origin in the human mind which eventually manifests as wrong social ideologies creating class conflicts. A man suffers from Dukkha because of his wrong thoughts and actions towards himself and others in the society which leads to wrong inter personal as well as inter social relations.

Tathagata Buddha, by taking away the power from an omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent God as the deciding factor of all human

thoughts and actions, universalized and equalized all moral values of life in order to reduce moral conflicts arising out of division of morality based on class, caste and gender. He made the re-orientation of human mind the source of social reformation.

Dr Ambedkar by reviving and reinterpreting Buddhism in the form of Neo-Buddhism, freed theology from COSMO-MORAL corruption, the biggest corruption ever done to enslave human mind and society.

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Dr Amritpal Kaur

(Dental Surgeon)

Writer on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism
Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders

Definition of Scheduled Castes

Vimal Chandra

(Ex-Deputy Commissioner)

for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes, Ministry of Home Affairs

Ex-Director of parliamentary form for Scheduled Castes & Scheduled Tribes

Intention to leave a religion sect born of disgust with current practices or injustice does not sever one's connection with the religion which he is normally believed to profess.

"Surely, not all the present day Christians are true Christians. What about the Sunday parades in Europe where people who do not believe in Christianity or are indifferent or are rationalists demonstrate in front of Churches on Sunday morning? They, too, are nevertheless Christians in the eyes of the state." "you may call me a statutory Hindu if you like," said Dr. Ambedkar humorously, "but I will insist on my political rights irrespective of the depth of my religion fervour."

To support his contention Dr. Ambedkar cites two instances from the Punjab, where two section of depressed classes have been classified as "Scheduled Castes" in spite of the proved fact that they are not Hindus. The instances mentioned are those of Ad Dharmis and Ramdasis. The first of these have gone out of their way formally to intimate to Government that they are not Hindu, and yet they have been classed under "Scheduled Castes" in the general constituency. "The Punjab Census Report of 1931 says":

"The most notable feature of the present census from the standpoint of return of religion has been the adoption of the term 'Ad-Dharmi' by numerous Chamars and Chuhars and other untouchables. A new instruction to the religion was given this year, namely, persons returning themselves as Ad- Dharmis should be recorded as such.

"The Punjab Ad-Dharm Man-

dal had petitioned the Punjab Government before census operation started in 1930, representing that the depressed classes should be permitted to return in Ad-Dharm as their religion at the time of the census, as they were the aborigines of India and while the Hindus kept them at a respectable distance, they did not believe in the Hindu religion. The president of Punjab Ad-Dharm Mandal was informed that a clause was being provided in the census code requiring that persons returning to their religion as Ad-Dharma would be recorded as such. Ad-Dharm literally means original or ancient religion.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, the dispute over the Ad-Dharmi agitation became so serious that several murders were committed. However that may be, the Ad-Dharmis have been classified as "Scheduled Castes" in the general constituency, notwithstanding their unequivocal declaration that they are not Hindus.

In the case of himself and his followers, Dr. Ambedkar points out; the attitude is negative in respect of Hinduism and not yet positive adherence to any other faith.

Similarly, the Ramdasis are Sikhs by religion, but they have been classified under "Scheduled Castes" in the general constituency. All of which, according to Dr. Ambedkar, goes to show that religion has nothing to do with electoral classification have gone exactly contrary to the religious grouping.

Thus, while Dr. Ambedkar does not recognize the Hindus right to complain or challenge the 'Depressed Classes' privileges by virtue of the Poona Pact, he affirms that his community's political rights are unaffected by intended or even impending renunciation of Hinduism.

Courtesy: Babu Mangu Ram

Mugowalia 99th Birth Anniversary 1985
(Published by Mr. C. L. Chumber)

(Continue from page 3)

close his eyes and, on the spot, come up with a verse that rhymed perfectly.

To ward off the scorching sun, overhead sola hat which was an Indian sun helmeted cap, made from pith material, was popular during the colonial period. Vimal Chandra used to wear it. To amuse the children, he devised a 'magic' trick by standing with his back against the wall with the hat touching it. While whistling and letting off air from his inflated mouth, he would simultaneously press the hat against the wall lifting it from the front and gradually bring

his heel down making it look like a magic. Then again he used to make mouse origami with his white handkerchief, putting it in his palm and making it jump off by suddenly closing his fist, to the excitement of the children. The game was for the kids to catch the mouse.

And then after almost 20 years following his wife's departure, Vimal Chandra decided to join her in heaven on February 21, 2004. He left a void in the lives of his family, friends, former colleagues and admirers.

Vimal Chandra was a cultured man with a fine taste. He was a

straight forward person with simple habits. He dressed elegantly, a trait he no doubt learnt from Dr. Ambedkar. His use of Brylcream gel to keep his hair in place was his trademark style! His hobbies included solving cross word puzzles. He enjoyed watching movies and saw 'Anarkali' about 20 times. He attended International Film Festivals regularly. His favourite TV show was "The Bold and The Beautiful". No one could disturb him during the programme.

Chandra's family says that he was a discerning foodie and enjoyed exotic dishes, particularly non-vegetarian. He consumed raw bulbs of

garlic daily with relish, stating that it was the best medicine for heart. He had fondness for namkeen Bhajia mixture and would sneak into the kitchen and locate the carefully hidden jar containing his favoured item. He was often troubled by a blocked nose. His constant companion to counter that problem used to be Vicks nasal inhaler.

Vimal Chandra was a gentleman bureaucrat. He was never arrogant nor haughty. Nobody ever saw him losing his temper. He never drank nor smoked. He had no extravagant habits. In short, an exemplary personality, a role model.

Born Different, though !

They say I was born different
But that's none of my doing!
People call it Nature's freak
But, in it ,where is my role !

I try my best though
They say I am slow
It is not true , I know
Ideas come in a flow
Only I cannot show
I am as human
As other children around !

People say my grandparents
Blamed my mother for it.
And she would blame me !
Where do I figure
In shaping this
I do not know !

At home ,too
I get more rebuffs
Than embraces or pats !
More beatings than eatings!

Pity me not , Dear Folk !
Only understand me
Be warm to me
And love me if you can !

Life's Faces

Religions tell that the same life
Informs every animate being.
Then it should mean that all life,
Whatever its form,
Is linked to all forms as siblings are.

Yet this kinship doesn't always
Find a visible face.
Or else , there wouldn't be
So many countries
And so many governments
And so many clashes
To establish hegemony over others.

There surely are some saintly guides,
Individuals as well as groups,
Leading through noble counsel
But they are very few
And their voices often drown
In the clamour for national chauvinism
Putting humanity repeatedly to shame
When the neighbouring country
Suddenly bombards your civilians
For a fault which doesn't lie in them !

Highways have highway-men,
And markets are full of cheats,
Neighbourhood is fraught with jealousy,
Downtowns are known for day light stabbing !
Animals neither cheat nor envy!
They don't kill for sport!
Only hunger can guide them to do so!
But man often puts on some animal face
To bring bad name to the animal kingdom!

Faces behind the actual face can be
Of wolves or foxes or hyenas
Or venomous serpents
Or those of ever-eating pigs
Or of cunning crows
Or docile lambs !
Only very few wear their own real face!
That's the unenviable fate of our race !

Penury weighs you down the scale

Charles Lamb wrote about poor relations :
That was two hundred years ago...
So poverty made people a mote



DESH BIR
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Born in 1951 and brought up and schooled in Kangra district of erstwhile Punjab (now Himachal Pradesh), Desh Bir did his M.A. in English from DAV College, Jalandhar and topped the GND University, Amritsar. Taught at DAV College, Jalandhar for three years before joining Punjab Govt. Education Service in 1976 as a Lecturer at Govt. College Hoshiarpur. He was selected in Central Services based on combined UPSC exam for IAS etc in 1978, but chose to stay in Education. He was promoted as Principal, Govt. College, Hoshiarpur, in July, 2006 and retired in October, 2009. After retirement, he was appointed as Ombudsman, NREGA for five districts of Punjab for four years. Has nearly 170 creative articles published in English Newspapers like Daily Post, Deccan Herald, The Tribune, Daily World, Punjab Advance and Kashmir Vision. Lately, he has taken to poetry for pouring out his intensely felt perceptions

In the eyes of the rich relatives
Who thought them to be 'a fly in the ointment'
Or 'a frog in their chamber'!

Whether here or in Europe or America...
Poverty is always a curse
Which man can't simply wish away.
It makes you sink to the bottom
Physically, emotionally and socially, too.
It makes you a pariah
And by and by we come to accept it
Or are made to accept it as the divine scheme!

And that generated the silliest division
Here in my holy land
And they created castes out of a non-issue
And they sowed seeds of acrimony
Simply because some people
By a quirk of fate
Were born poor
And could not mount the ladder of wealth !

Passive acceptance by the afflicted
And callous enforcement by the perpetrators
Made the sufferers go through
Pangs of silent humiliation without protest
And it went on and on....
And that became a stiff tissue
And finally became a festering wound
Creating polarization which leads nowhere
But to greater dislike between the two.

Only financial inclusion shall one day lead
The poor man to a position of esteem
And pull him out of the bottomless pit of caste
To match with advantage
His peers now posing as superiors
Though this superiority
Is only a façade to hide their inability
To appreciate 'Manas ki jaat, sabhe eke pahichanvo!'

The Stub of Childhood

The stub of childhood in you
Is always looking up for a chance
To peer through time's window
And impinge on your actions,
Thoughts , dreams and speech!
No matter how hard you push it back
To keep from public view

Simply because you think
That you have grown old
Or perhaps that's how
The world looks upon you.

That child in you is your best part
Never stub it , nor snub it nor rub it !
Only eighties don't bring you
To the proverbial second childhood.
You have been that child...
Even at forty and fifty and sixty!
Only you do not acknowledge it
Since you think you have grown up
And should not look a child.

That is being unfair to yourself.
Let the child in you be adored,
First by you and then by others
Because that's your most likeable version!
At every turn of events
In a single day
We revert to our childhood events
Dozens and scores of times
And that defines our life in the present!

Re-live the pranks with playmates,
Remember your acts of mischief at school
Or having teased your siblings
Or having bothered your parents
With your carelessness.
And then you will have a pleasant time
With everyone around....
Spouse , friends , children or associates.
Let truth not be nipped !
Your truth lies in your childhood!
Never stub it ! Never snub it !
Let it prevail !

Rough patches

We usually look for
A smooth sailing
And often dread rough patches !
Uncharted paths
Frighten us
And we opt for the usual
And the comfortable
And allow ourselves
To turn into weaklings!

Unless brought to face a challenge
We remain passive swimmers
Drifting like leaves in a stagnant pool!
A sudden jolt can seem to break you,
But that is just for a moment!
The trauma gets absorbed
And you instantly accept
The fact of the new situation.

The next moment onwards
You start arranging the fallen blocks
To reconstruct from the salvage
As even the darkest event
Is bound to propel you
To rise , brace up and rebuild
Whatever you can
Out of what you have still left out.

This happens in the vegetable world
Where even traumatic pruning
Of fruit trees leads to better crops.
The tree understands
What is expected of it
And responds to the situation
And throws up new shoots
With more productive hormones!
The orchard is once again
A thrilling , throbbing green patch
Telling man that Rough patches do lead
To renewed and fuller life !

Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna

Just Released book of Ambassador Ramesh Chander

Bootan Mandi is a land mark business and residential locality situated at the thoroughfare of Nakodar Road now re-named as Ambedkar Marg in Jalandhar. It used to be a non-descript slum area till 1970s where leather tanning cottage work and raw leather business were being run by the so-called Chamars in the Hindu caste-hierarchy of yester years. The place is now a flourishing residential area and also a good business centre which has, of late become an avenue of dalit identity hosting the land-marks from Ambedkar chowk to Satguru Kabir Chowk namely; Guru Ravidass Bhawan on Link Road, sprawling KabirMandir at Bhargava Camp, Maharish Balmik Mandir at Abadpura, Ambedkar Bhawan at Rameshwar Colony (Bootan Mandi), the site where Babasaheb Ambedkar came and addressed a

Onkar Nath. The author thoughtfully dedicated the book release function to the cherished memory of his gracious wife, Vidya Chander who had been his support and conscious keeper. Apart from the guests of honour and the author, Dr. GianKaul, Retired HOD of Punjabi in DAV College Jalandhar who also very kindly wrote the Foreword of the book, Prof. BalbirChander, Retired HOD of Political Science of Doaba College Jalandhar, Social and Community Activist, Paramjit Mahey, Social and Community Activist Manohar Lal Mahey, Staunch Ambedkarite belonging to the FABO of UK, Harbans Viridi and Buddhist Scholar and Community Activist, Harmesh Jassal addressed the quality audience at the solemn function which was ably steered by Mahesh Chander. Though the book has been received and appreciated

media coverage both in the print and electronic media locally and beyond with special reports (available on the social media like Youtube and Facebook done by OnkarNath for Ground Realities, Tarsem Badhan for Desh Doaba and Dilbagh Salan for TV 22. The Asian Independent and the Samaj Weekly of the UK prominently carried the story on the book.

The book has been divided into three parts – i) From the Pens of the Sons of the Soil: it contains write ups, essays and poems written by some of my fellow Bootan Mandians namely; Paramjit Mahey, Mahesh Chander, Madan Bolina, Khuswinder Billa and Harmesh Jassal on the various aspects of Bootan Mandi and its role in generating awareness in the dalit communities in the contemporary times. This part of the book is in Punjabi language

AapKhadauna
Das Giya;
Jhanda Chak
Bagawat Da
Tu
BaghiHona
Das Giya

**Boo tan
Mandi:** Nerve
Centre of
Dalit Chetna
has been re-
ceived very
well not only
in India but
abroad too, if
one goes by the comments and obser-
vations in the social media and infor-
mal social discourse. With a view to be
fair and transparent, in all good faith, I
mention here some of the remarks



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



mammoth rally in October, 1951, Sikh Gurdwara Santpura, Guru Ravidass Chowk, Satguru Guru Ravidass Dham, Seth Kishan Dass's House where Babasaheb visited and relished the traditional Punjabi meal of SarsanKaSaag and Makki Roti in 1951, Bibi Malavi Mandir, Swami Lalji Dass Dera, Ambedkar Community Centre, Budh Vihar, Guru Ravidass Mandir in Sidharath Nagar, Ambedkar Park and Ambedkar Degree Collage and Satguru Kabir Chowk (Wadala Chowk). From this landscape, one can easily make out that Bootan Mandi is rightly called the 'Rajdhani' of dalits.

The book of Ambassador Ramesh Chander – Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna, which was released on April 28, 2024 at Ambedkar Bhawan, is dedicated to the centenary year of Bootan Mandi with a view to record the oral history floating here and there and recognize the sterling role played by BootanMandi

and Bootan Mandians in making the place as the 'capital of dalits' of the region and beyond. BootanMandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna was released by the 'Nari Shakti of BootanMandi' – IAS Babita Kler, PCS Anupam Kler and supported, in absentia, by Sessions Judge Jaswinder Sheemar and Chief Judicial Magistrate Pushpa Kler and a close friend of the author; Deputy CAG

widely has already been liberally presented/distributed to the interested readers in and around Bootan Mandi and also abroad in the UK, the USA and Canada yet for the benefit of more readers it is made available at Ambedkar Bhawan Jalandhar with Nirmal Benji (Telephone No. 9872359727). It is a matter of satisfaction to note that the book received due and appreciable

for the benefit of those who don't know English - ii) The second part is the Bits and Pieces: it comprises of 51 of my blogs on the role and contribution of Bootan Mandi and Bootan Mandians in carrying the caravan of Guru Ravidass and Babasaheb Ambedkar for empowerment of the weaker sections of the society which made Bootan Mandi the nerve centre of dalitchetna – iii) the third part of the book is the Editors Pick: it contains poems and articles concerning Bootan Mandi like; Bootan Mandi the AmeerItihas by Parshotam Saroya, poems of PritamRamdasspuri and Jai Ram Parwana, Poems and Nazams of two of the missionary poets; Gurdass RamAlam and Charan Dass Nidhadak. The poems of Pritam Ramdasspuri and Gurdass Ram Alam are the one which were recited by them in honour of Babasaheb Ambedkar during his visit to BootanMandi in October, 1951. Apart from these pieces in Punjabi, two items – i) a write-up on the famous poem of Gurdass Ram Alam "Achhoot Da Ilaaz" by Dr. Sarvpriya Raj and ii) the speech of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar delivered at Bootan Mandi on October 27, 1951 have been included. The lines of CharanDass Nidhadak, about Babasaheb Ambedkar, have been a source of motivation and dedication:

Jatheband Ho Pairan Utte

(unedited) which the book has attracted. As a diplomat, I would tend to say 'we agree to disagree'.

Rahul Balley, Delhi

I received a copy of your book *BootanMandi*, a good initiative. Thanks for it.

I have read HarmeshJassal article. The pages are attached for your ready reference. What I observed that Mr Harmesh Jassal did not do proper research before writing this piece. Or he attentively ignored it even knowing the facts.

I am confident you being an active Dalit must be knowing very well that there is a good amount of literature available in which the name and contributions of Punjab General Secretary and his leading role is already elaborated. His wife and son was in jail during the agitation.

I believe what ever prejudice one has against any leader or person, but as a writer one cannot ignore the historical facts. If one does it he cannot be a writer.

History judges a writer when he writes without prejudice, hatred or enmity.

Harmesh Jassal has completely ignored the names of those leaders who were in the leading role of Punjab agitation. He did not mention at all.

Harmesh Jassal even did not mention the names of villages for example Sofi Pindi or Wariana or many such others from where people participated in Punjab Agitation.

It is an incomplete piece of writing. Hope you will notice it and try

(Contd. on next page)

Thanks with a sense of Gratitude



I thank, with a great sense of gratitude, Ambedkar Times Inc of California (U.S.A.) who have been supportive and cooperative in my pastime of writing and sharing with the readers through the columns of the esteemed Ambedkar Times for more than ten years. My friends, Chumber brothers – both Chiranjilal and Prem Kumar have been kind and considerate throughout in this regard. C.L. Chumber, I recall, was connected with Bootan Mandi in his community activities and his journalistic pursuits. Sometime in mid-1980s, honours to release their new venture, The Kaumi Udarian fell on me at the annual Guru Ravidass Gurburab at Bootan Mandi. The book in hand-Bootan Mandi : Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetnacarries a blog of mine at Part 2 of the book under the head "Beyond the News-The Ambedkar Times" to recognize of their contribution to the community and the society at large

I wish Ambedkar Times Inc. and Chief Editor Prem Chumber all the best in the years to come.

(Ramesh Chander)
Jalandhar

January, 2024

Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna

Just Released book of Ambassador Ramesh Chander

(Continue from page 6)

to print a Corrigendum.

Mind it, this incomplete article will not make dent on HarmeshJassal as a contributor since he is not well known among the so called intellectuals (your circle) but definitely it would make dent on your personality being an author of this book.

I shall, however, review this book in the coming issue of Bheem Patrika.

[07/05, 10:06 am] Ramesh Chander: Dear sir, please see these pages about my father saheb. I feel you have incomplete knowledge about father saheb. It is because of your engagement in the service.

Hope you do not know these two meetings of Kanshi Ram with Balleysaheb.

1. At SSD annual conference in Agra, Kanshi Ram was in the audience, my father invited him to the stage but he did not come

2. In Karol Bagh, Kanshi Ram and BalleySaheb slept together in one room and discussed politics and other issues relating to Dalits. There were of course ideological differences. Balley was purely an Ambedkarite and Buddhist and wanted to urge the Dalits to come to politics sans Bramanical ideology. What happened Kanshi Ram shared stages with Murl Manohar and other BJP leaders, even Mayawati became three times CM with the help of BJP. The end result Dalits lost their political grounds . BJP, RSS defame Mayawati by saying that Mayawati is not poor Dalit, she is having crores of rupees(ref news papers). Not only the BJP/RSS planted or still planting several stories. This kind of politics being played by BSP earned the status of political prostitute(who can be bought and thrown when there is no benefit). Is this beneficial to the Dalit samaj?

Today Mayawati is afraid of going against BJP as she knows the party will open file (I am not saying this read article of Rahul Verma of CPR published recently in HT). In Punjab Mayawati joined hands with SAD , the head of this party burnt the copies of the constitution. All media reports demonstrate that that Mayawati field candidates only to benefit BJP. The majority of the BSP tickets goes to rich, gangsters Muslims not to poor Dalits. Is this how Dalit will gain Raj? This is the difference between Kanshi-Ram, Maywati and BalleySaheb.

3. Despite this, balleysaheb openly supported BSP candidate through Press conference(ref local news papers).

4. The problem is that Balleysaheb name is dragged unnecessarily for social and political benefit, by so called intellectuals and budding leaders especially after retirement, in order to establish them in the public but one cannot change the facts. You might have heard the song , *Jey Public hai, sab Jantihai , anderkyahai, baharkyahai*

5. Have you ever wrote or spoke a word against BJP punjab leaders(even Dalit) who openly abused Kanshi Ram in Hoshiarpur? Have you ever raised a

voice or has Mayawati raised when Shivlinga was placed before the statue of Baba SahebDr.Ambedkar in DrAmbedkar Foundation, Delhi of which you proudly claim a member?

6. Have you wrote against ArunShourie or has Mayawati spoke against Arun-Shourie when he wrote a book namely " Worshipping a false god" . It was BalleySaheb who wrote a pamphlet *ShouriekaShor* , this is the difference between a true Ambedkarite and Buddhist and political opportunistic.

6. Balleysaheb has gone, Kanshi Ram has gone but history will remain there. When an honest intellectual will write he will mention everything.

7. Balley prepared leaders like Prof GC Kaul, Prof SurendraAjnat and many others not only in India but also in foreign countries. He was very well transparent, accomodative and magnanimous that is why good people came forward to carry the caravan of Baba Saheb. Yes, he was not for duplicitous people who have only agenda of taking benefit. And I believe a leader must have these qualities to identify who is a friend or who is a foe of the mission. After gone ,AmbedkarBhawan, the institute about which you are talking, is still there and would remain there. I am proud my father and other colleges built this. Today it is the only place where activities are taking place and brainstorming.

[07/05, 10:06 am] Ramesh Chander: Thanks Rahul ji. I value your observations on HarmeshJassal's article and others remarks. My take on the issue is:

1. Authors are responsible for their views as I wrote in the prologue and introductions.

2. The theme or focus of the book is BootanMandi in totalling and not individual incidents like political movements and personalities.

3. I fully respect and regard Balley Sahib and his sterling role in the community matters as a leader by his own right.

I will to see your review of the book in the larger interest of the community.

Regards.

[07/05, 12:33 pm] Ramesh Chander: in reference to point number 2 when he can mention other names that does not amount to totalling. Any how, he is the one who tell publicly that he learnt the nitty gritty of journalism from Balleysaheb.

[07/05, 12:33 pm] Ramesh Chander: Thanks. I will share your observations with HarmeshJassal.

However, please don't get perturbed on these small points. Balley Sahib was too big a man and that we all know.

Regards.

[07/05, 12:33 pm] Ramesh Chander: no sir We are his sons, it is our duty to set the historical facts in a right context and content. I do not bother Jassal , I bother about your image. keep in mind we do get easily perturbed .

[07/05, 12:33 pm] Ramesh Chander: Thanks. I respect your emotional outburst. I respect and regard your father as an intellectual man with conviction. I have nothing much to add.

You may write a piece if you like. I will host in on my Blog with my own comments for the benefit of our readers.

Regards.

[07/05, 12:33 pm] Ramesh Chander: no need sir we have our own platform, any how thanks

Sheela Bhatia UK[01/05, 12:51 pm] **Sheela:** Namaste Ramesh ji. Everything went so well. This big and very first history of ButanMandi. Keep it up Ramesh ji. Great

[01/05, 8:58 pm] Ramesh Chander: Thanks. When I said 'received well' it did not mean commercially but otherwise. You know our people are yet to learn the importance of these thongs. Nevertheless, I have no regrets as long as my friends like you are supportive of me. I am writing a blog which will cover all details.

Regards.

[01/05, 9:14 pm] Sheela: This is the only drawback of our cummunity but it's normal.one has to get up and give them jagrati and you are doing it. Brilliant .But wikipedia of the Bootan-Mandi you have established it. That you should be proud of it. Just start thinking of translating them in to their language. That can give them little knowledge of course if they want the knowledge.

[03/05, 1:42 am] Sheela: This is very important and honourable day for you Ramesh ji .I can't thank you enough for The honour you have given me. With a very nice and soothing music you have created a wonderful programme. And looking at the picture of myself with my dear father made me so much emotional. Thank you. Take care and be happy

[07/05, 10:52 pm] Sheela: Please Ramesh ji you shouldn't take that much stress out about the book sending .I shall get it eventually. If you take it so seriously quite honest with you that wouldn't make me happy. Please Please take care and don't worry about anything at all. Just enjoy your days. Ramesh Chander Chandigarh

Heartiest congratulations and best wishes on this once-in - life time and rare blissful occasion when your uncanny knack to delve deep ,very well in evidence since early twenties despite humble beginnings, blossoms and flowers into launching a book ' BOOTA MANDIANS' today with graphic portrayal of events and well-meaning connected people, which might become a' Beacon of Light'for people with discerning minds who might become our struggles 'flag -bearers and stand guard against the cultural monster with emotive issues' for our symbolic - only SYMBOLIC in our Punjab -struggle against an order and safeguard the values enshrined in the constituion to safeguard our interests and avoewd objective of ' Equality,Liberty and Fraternity enshrined in our constituion for our upliftment.

The book, being third in a row in the past one year, speaks volumes of your untiring efforts and abiding interest aimed at spotlighting our people's life- long struggle with BOOTA

MANDI as having been a nerve centre and hub of people's struggle and awakening right from the inception of Ad- dharam Mandal in the first quarter of last centuries days right to emergence of reverend Dr . B. R . Ambedkar' s emergence and invaluable contribution for social and economic justice.

Hopefully, your reflections andthoughts compiled in the book with years of pains- taking efforts and knack for details would further carve out a deep niche for you in the minds of ourprople and, despite complete' change- over' in the scenario particularly in the recent past , our deprived sections would contnue to look upon the BOOTA MANDIANS with inspiration for our socio- economic struggle for' equality' and our people's interest would contnue to be uppermost Jaswinder Sheemar Hoshiarpur

Commendable intellectual and literary work by writing such an important book on the subject matter Bootan Mansi nerve centre of Dalits. I think in the present era you are the one who selected very appropriate subject matter to pen down its history. I appreciate your literary skills and definitely will read the book.I wanted to part of book launch but due to official restraints couldn't make itI must congratulate you on your book launch Gajender Singh

Heartiest congratulations sir, it's wonderful book you release to know more about our community, so proud of you

Arun Kumar FABO UK

Congratulations. We need to preserve our history. We'll done. Keep it up. Congratulations. Our forefathers were not educated and our history was lost. Whatever is available, is written by others. As a result of their contributions and sacrifices, we are able to progress. You are doing a wonderful work to preserve our history. The book Bootan Mandi would be a reference book fir future researchers. Well done. Sohan Sehjal

Proud moment for all the residents of bootanmandi history should be preserved thanks sirji Ambassador V.B. Soni

Great initiative. More such booka should come out. The community's achievements must fund place in the annals of history. Good luck fir the popularity of the book.

Vikram Mehra Chile

Can't wait to get a hold of the book ! Keep it up uncle ji and I hope you write many more books to create awareness and share ur experiences. Plz take care of ur health.

It was just to give the taste of the dialogue an discourse the book has raised for the benefit of the wider audiences.

As I said in the prologue and introductions to the all the three segments of the contents of the book that there may be many inadvertent shortcomings because of lack of knowledge and information and I would welcome to listen from my readers. It is gratifying to say that many of my friends and readers have been kind to share their

(Contd. on next page)

Bootan Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna Just Released book of Ambassador Ramesh Chander

(Continue from page 7)
thoughts with me informally with regard to the book. In some cases I found that some of the hard facts and that too important ones were left out by me either due to lack of knowledge and information or due to lapse of memory. After reading the book one of my old friends, Hussan Baudh came and met me to point out some of the lapses. I did not mention about his father, Babu Hazara Ram who was the first government employee from Bootan Mandi and rose to be the first gazetted officer in the Punjab Government as ETO. Hussan also told me that his uncle (Tayaji), Kartara Ram Madhas who found mention in the book was the founding father of the weekly

paper Ujala but also its first Editor. Post independent political scene divided BootanMandi in two camps; one that of Congress Party led by Seth Sunder Dass and others and second that of Scheduled Caste Federation of Babasheb Ambedkar led by Seth KisanDass. Kartara Ram Madhas contested the 1952 elections as a candidate of the SC Federation against Master Gurbanta Singh of the Congress Party and lost. Adding more, Hussan informed that Darshan Baudhi played a leading role in founding not only the Budh Vihar but also Guru Ravidass Mandir in Sidharar Nagar of Bootan Mandi. Yet another somewhat glaring lapse was pointed out by my friend, Prem Shant; the Punjab Legislative Assembly inci-

dent in 1970-71 to imitate Shaheed Bhagat Singh's bomb incident in the then Punjab Assembly.

The incident was a dare-deviltry of some of the young and enthusiastic Bootan Mandians namely; Prem Shant, Ram Lal Dass, Ramesh Madhas who could manage to enter Speakers Gallery of the House in Session on the strength of passes issued by the Speaker Darbara Singh himself and Chaudhary Sunder Singh on recommendations of Lahori Ram Balley. They threw leaflets registering their voice against the anti-dalit policies of the government and raised slogans in the historic style of ShaheedBhagat Singh. Fortunately, the House did not take any harsh view of this and let off these

young community activists after some token punishment. Manohar Lal Mahey also spoke to me about some assertions made by one of the contributors in the book, Harmesh Jassal. I told him to bring this to my notice in writing with a view to put the things in perspective as the writers were responsible for their views expressed in their articles.

I would only be happy, if I could elicit more such responses and fill in the inadvertent gaps in the narration of the book.

Dunia Ne Tajarbaat-O-Habadish
Ki Sakal Mein
Jo Kuch Mujhe Dia Hai Lauta
Raha Hoon Mein

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