



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

Editor-in-Chief: Prem Kumar Chumber

Contact: 001-916-947-8920

Fax: 916-238-1393

E-mail: chumbermedia@yahoo.com, editor@ambedkartimes.com

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Ambedkartimes.com and the so-called Upper Castes

Dear Readers,

Ambedkartimes.com received an e-mail seeking its opinion on the question of whether this World's fastest expanding web-site entertains reports, articles and essays written by scholars belonging to Non-Dalit or so called Upper Caste categories?

Let me (the editor of this site), clarify at the outset that <www.ambedkartimes.com> firmly believes in the philosophy and teachings of Bharat Rattan Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar and aims at in its modest way to keep the caravan going on. Babasaheb had very clearly said that Brahmanism is a state of mind and an ideology rooted in Hindu Shastras. Brahmanism is not a person. A particular person who belongs to an Upper Caste but does not believe in the muck of the Hindu Shastras and is critical of its Chaturvarna theory cannot be tied with Brahmanism simply by virtue of the fact that he is born Upper Caste. Such thinking totally negates the very radical philosophy of Babasaheb Dr Ambedkar who clearly condemned any kind of discrimination based on birth/caste.

After the episode of Jat-Pat Todak Mandal of Lahore in 1936, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar decided that henceforth he would not go to any Caste Hindu organization but will welcome any one from the Upper Castes if he or she believes in Annihilation of the Caste system and agree with his philosophy of emancipation and empowerment of the Dalits.

Thus, Ambedkartimes.com is of the firm view that if any one, whosoever she/he may be, tries to distort the path of Babasaheb's struggle and creates a wedge between the Dalits and the Dalit-sympatric scholars (who irrespective of their caste repose faith in the Philosophy and teachings of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar) is an enemy of the Dalits and the cause of the community.

<www.ambedkartimes.com> encourage and welcome scholars of Dalits as well as non-Dalit background to contribute their valuable writings that will enlighten the cause of the Dalits and further the on-going struggle both in India and elsewhere.

Further <www.ambedkartimes.com> does not discriminate simply on the basis of birth, rather it is duty bound to make all efforts for the elimination of this disastrous practice of Brahminical ideology that has made the life of Dalits a hell for centuries all together.

It also caution that we too should not fall victim to such nefarious designs of the Brahminical ideology and warns to be at guards so that Brahmanism should not enter the rank and files of the Ambedkarite struggle from the back door!

With Regards,

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor
Ambedkartimes.com

Home Minister's Remarks on Dr. Ambedkar: Reactions and Reflections

Replying to the two-day discussions on 75 years of Constitution in the Rajya Sabha on 17 December 2024, Union Home Minister, Mr. Amit Shah attacked the Congress and alleged the opposition party repeatedly disrespected Dr. Ambedkar. He said, "It has become a fashion to chant Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar, Ambedkar. If they had taken God's name so many times, they would have secured a place in heaven for seven lifetimes. We are happy that Ambedkar's name is being taken. Take Ambedkar's name a hundred times more, but I will tell you what your feelings about Ambedkar Ji in politics are! Why did Ambedkar ji resign from the first Cabinet of the country? Ambedkar Ji said many times I am not satisfied with the treatment meted out to the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes. I disagree with the foreign policy of the Government, and I disagree with Article 370. That is why he wanted to quit. He was given assurance, but the assurance was not fulfilled. Therefore, being ignored, he resigned."

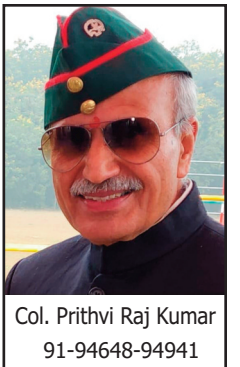
Taking the remarks insulting to the father of the Constitution and messiah of the downtrodden, the Congress Party spearheaded the Opposition attack on the Home Minister demanding an apology from him and his removal from the Cabinet. They raised the issue in both Houses of Parliament and staged protest outside. Many Dalit organizations also launched a stir against him and his party for the remarks considered utterly disrespectful and taunting against their messiah. Prime Minister Narendra Modi, on the other hand, led the government and BJP's defense of Shah, accusing "the Congress and its rotten ecosystem" of perpetuating "malicious lies to hide their misdeeds of several years, especially their insult" of Dr. Ambedkar. In a series of posts on X, he hit at the Congress "led by one dynasty" for indulging in "every possible dirty trick to obliterate the legacy of Dr. Ambedkar and humiliate the SC/ST communities. He said his government worked tirelessly to fulfill Babasaheb's mission over the last decade. At a press conference, Amit shah accused the Congress of spreading disinformation against him. He said his statement was presented in a distorted manner.

Addressing the press conference, Congress Chief and leader of Opposition in Rajya Sabha, Mallikarjun Kharge termed the remarks condemnable and reiterated Party's demand for apology from Shah and his removal from the Cabinet. He said that instead of Checking the Home Minister, PM Modi went all out to defend him. He said, "They (Modi Government and BJP) do not believe in the Constitution. When they talk of heaven and hell, it is from the Manu Smriti. They also rejected the Tricolor. They do not want the Constitution because it is not in the lines of Manu Smriti." Leader of the Opposition in Lok Sabha, Rahul Gandhi said, "Those who believe in the Manu Smriti will surely have problems with Ambedkar Ji." Congress MP Priyanka Gandhi Vadra said: "Ambedkar's name is a symbol of self-respect of crores of Dalits and deprived people. Taking

his name is a symbol of human dignity. One gets rights by taking his name." Addressing an open letter to Shah, Karnataka CM Siddaramaiah said: "The entire country has seen your lack of respect for the architect of the Indian Constitution. Do not attempt to mislead the nation by saying 'I have immense respect for Babasaheb, and my words were twisted.' We are not gullible. Own up to your words and face the nation."

Several Opposition Chief Ministers also joined the chorus against Shah. TMC president and West Bengal CM Mamata Banerjee said: "HM Amit Shah's remarks are an insult to the millions who look up to Babasaheb for guidance and inspiration. But what else can you expect from a party that has internalized hate and bigotry? Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is the father of the Constitution, this outrageous remark is not only an outright attack on him but on all members of the drafting committee of the Constitution, which symbolized India's unity in diversity, with members from all castes, creeds, ethnicities and religions." Tamil Nadu CM M K Stalin said: "Only those who commit more sins should be concerned about punya (good deeds). Those who are concerned about the country, its people and protection of the Constitution will only utter the name of Babasaheb... and they will have to utter only his name." AAP leader

Arvind Kejriwal, who led a protest near the BJP headquarters said Shah's remarks had hurt the sentiments of crores of Dalits and demanded strict action against him. He said: "The way PM Modi defended Shah; it appears that what he said in Parliament was a premeditated conspiracy of the BJP." Shiv Sena (UBT) chief Uddhav Thackeray said: "Shah's remarks show BJP's arrogance and have exposed its true face. Modi should act against Shah, and should quit if he is not able to do so." SP president Akhilesh Yadav said: "... These are the same people who wanted to change the Constitution. These people prefer a monopoly, and that is the condition of Delhi." BSP president Mayavati accused both the BJP and Congress for exploiting Dr. Ambedkar's name for political gains. She said: "... for Dalits and the marginalized, Dr. Ambedkar is their sole God. It is because of him that these communities were granted constitutional rights, a moment that, for them, equates to gaining heavenly bliss for seven lifetimes." Dr. Ambedkar's grandson, Prakash Ambedkar said Shah's remarks reflected BJP's "same old mentality." "Before the BJP came into existence, its forerunners Jana Sangh and RSS had opposed Babasaheb while the Constitution was being adopted. There is nothing new in the statement... They are not able to execute their old plans. Not because of the Congress, but because of



Col. Prithvi Raj Kumar
91-94648-94941



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Home Minister's Remarks on Dr. Ambedkar: Reactions and Reflections

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Babasaheb Ambedkar, and they will continue to sulk." More reactions of various political and social outfits are pouring in from all over the country condemning the remarks and attitude of the BJP government and the party. Various SC/ST and Ambedkar organizations are up in arms against the ruling dispensation on the issue.¹

The statement of the Home Minister that Ambedkar Ji resigned because he was not satisfied with the treatment meted out to the SC/ST people, foreign policy of the government and Article 370, does not seem to carry much weight in the light of facts contained in Babasaheb's statement given on his resignation. Babasaheb tendered resignation on 27 September 1951 which was accepted by the Prime Minister the next day requesting him to continue till the end of the session. Babasaheb issued a statement on 10th October 1951 in explanation of his resignation.² Referring to matters purely of a personal character and which he said were the least of grounds leading to tender his resignation, he pointed out that besides being a lawyer by his education and experience, he was primarily a student of Economics and Finance. He was, therefore, capable of handling more important portfolios involving administration and planning. His qualifications and capabilities were, thus, underutilized. Secondly, the deserved attention and determination of the government to make effective the constitutional provisions safeguarding the interests of the Scheduled Castes were lacking. The third matter of actual anxiety and even worry for him was the foreign policy involving colossal expenditure of about 50% of the revenue on the Army. To him, the quarrel with Pakistan was a part of the foreign policy. He always held the view that the right solution was to partition Kashmir and give the Hindu and Buddhist part to India and the Muslim part to Pakistan as was done in the case of India. The fourth matter which had a good deal to do with his resignation was the functioning of the Cabinet Committees such as Defense and Foreign Committees behind an iron curtain. Others who were not the members had only to take joint responsibility without any opportunity of taking part in the shaping of the policy. He was not a member of these Committees.³

The matter that led him finally to resign was the treatment which was accorded to the Hindu Code Bill. The Bill was introduced in the House on the 11th April 1947. After a life of four years, it was killed and it died unwept and unsung, after four clauses of it were passed. While it was before the House, it lived by fits and starts. For one full year the government did not feel the necessity of referring it to the Select Committee. It was referred to the Select Committee on 9th April 1948. The Report of the Select Committee was presented to the House on 12th August 1948. The motion for consideration of the Bill was moved by him on 31st August 1948. It was on 19th

December 1949 that the House adopted his motion that the Bill as reported by the Select Committee be taken into consideration. No time was given to the Bill in the year 1950. It came before the House for clause-by-clause consideration on 5th February 1951. Only three days were given to the Bill and left there to rot. It was taken up on the 17th September 1951 for further clause-by-clause consideration. The Prime Minister came up with a proposal that the Bill may not be got through within the time available and that it was desirable to get a part of it i.e. Marriage and Divorce enacted into law rather than allow the whole of it to go to waste. It was a wrench to him but he agreed to save a part when the whole was likely to be lost. Eventually, the PM announced the withdrawal of the Bill. This came to him as a great shock - a bolt from the blue. He was stunned and could not say anything. He had been made to go through the greatest mental torture. The aid of Party Machinery was denied to him. The conduct of the Minister for Parliamentary Affairs, who was also the Chief Whip of the Party was the deadliest opponent of the Code. The Hindu Code was the greatest social reform measure ever undertaken by the Legislature in the past or likely to be passed in the future which could be compared to it in terms of its significance. To leave inequality between class and class, between sex and sex which is the soul of Hindu society untouched and go on passing legislation relating to economic problems is to make a farce of our Constitution and to build a palace on a dung heap. This was the significance he attached to the Hindu Code.⁴ It is the Hindu Code Bill that led him finally to take the decision to quit the Nehru Cabinet. The statement of the Home Minister that dissatisfaction of Dr. Ambedkar over Article 370 was one of the grounds of his resignation is not corroborated by the facts furnished in Dr. Ambedkar's statement *ibid*.

The Hindu Code Bill faced significant opposition from conservative factions from the Congress as well as the non-Congress outfits. It was strongly opposed by Sardar Patel. Dr. Rajendra Prasad, Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya, Swami Karpatri, Shankaracharya Jere Shastri of the Sankeshvara Peeth, Pandit Malviya, Dr. S.P. Mookerjee, et al. Dr. Mookerjee's opposition was part of a broader resistance from conservative Hindu groups, including Hindu Mahasabha and RSS who viewed the Bill's progressive reforms as threat to traditional Hindu family structures and societal norms.⁵

As regards the statement of the Home Minister that if they (Dr. Ambedkar's followers/supporters) had taken God's name so many times, they would have secured a place in heaven for seven lifetimes, Dr. Ambedkar had no faith in Hindu gods and goddesses, Hindu rituals and dogmas of hell and heaven et al. Self-help, self-elevation and self-respect was the symbol on the standard he unfurled. It was the tri-

dent with which he goaded his people. He knew from history that injustice is not removed till the sufferer himself does away with his own exertions and actions. "Tell the slave he is a slave he will revolt" was the slogan he raised. He exhorted his people "You must abolish your slavery yourselves. Do not depend upon God or superman. Your salvation lies in political power and not in making pilgrimages and observances of fasts. Devotion to scriptures would not free you from your bondage, want and poverty. Your forefathers have been doing it for generations but there has been no respite nor even a slight difference in your miserable life. Like your forefathers, you wear rags; you subsist on thrown out crumbs; you perish in utter slums and hovels; and like them you fall easy victims to diseases with a death rate that rages among poultry. Your religious fasts, austerities and penances have not saved you from starvation." A non-believer in fate and re-birth, Dr. Ambedkar said to his people: "You are made to suffer wants, privations and humiliations not because it was preordained by the sins committed in your previous birth, but because of the overpowering tyranny and treachery of those who are above you. You have no lands because others have usurped them; you have no posts because others have monopolized them. Do not believe in fate. Believe in your strength."⁶ He advised them against observing Hindu religious festivals and worshipping Hindu Gods. To him, some Hindu rites such as worshipping the pindi (Phallus or linga) of Shankara are full of extreme ribaldry. He said: "Pindi of Shankara is nothing else but a representation of the union of man and women. Ganpati was formed from the dirt scraped off Parvati's body. God must be spotless and holiness incarnate, but the Gods in Hindu religion are very queer. It is, therefore, my honest belief that they should not be worshipped."⁷

Dr. Ambedkar dedicated his life for the liberation and upliftment of his people. "If I fail to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class, into which I was born, has been groaning, I will put an end to my life with a bullet" was the glorious vow taken by him.⁸ He worshipped three deities i.e. Vidya (Knowledge), Self-Respect and Sheel (character). To him, mankind cannot get peace and human dignity without knowledge. It must be made available to all. He had 20,000 books at Delhi, and he worshiped knowledge all the 24 hours. His second deity was Self-Respect. His aim was that he must feed himself and secure his people. He said, "My Self-Respect is so burning that I consider 'God' inferior to me." Sheel (Character) was his third deity. He proudly said he had not committed any forgery, cheating or some sin for self-interest. He visited England many times but never drank wine and never smoked a cigarette. Books and clothes were the only two things he liked. To preserve the Sheel (Character) was a very big thing which he had.⁹

Religion to Dr. Ambedkar means the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which men live a moral order.¹⁰ Religion must mainly be a matter of principles only. It cannot be a matter of rules.

The Hindu religion as contained in the Vedas and the Smritis is nothing but a mass of sacrificial, social, political, and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. It is unhuman and unmoral. Chaturvarnya, the progenitor of the caste system is the essence of Hindu religion. There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than Chaturvarnya. It deadens, paralyses, and cripples the people from helpful activity. Caste system has killed public spirit; destroyed the sense of public charity and made public opinion impossible. According to him, sacred books of the Hindus are political in their motive, partisan in composition and fraudulent in their content.¹¹ He said the religion of the Shastras and Smritis must be destroyed by applying to them the dynamite of reason and morality to bring about a breach in the caste system. Nothing else would avail. He set ablaze Manu Smriti containing anti-people, anti-women, and anti-national laws on 25 December 1927. His vow of liberating his people from the thralldom of ages was redeemed when he made provisions for fundamental and other rights for them at par with other citizens and provided safeguards to their interests in the Constitution. Treated as untouchables, unapproachable and unseeable for ages, they were pulled out of the darkness of inhuman injustice and the life of sub-humans and shown the bright sunshine of equality, liberty, fraternity, justice, and dignity.

It was a natural and spontaneous reaction of these people and other supporters of Babasaheb to the remarks of the Home Minister which were considered insulting and disrespectful to the father of the constitution, messiah of the deprived classes, world class leader, erudite scholar, world class economist, social revolutionary and one of the top brains of the world.

(Reference: 1. The Indian Express, December 19, Chandigarh, late City Edition and Hindustan Times, December 19, Chandigarh Metro; 2. BAWS, Vol.14, Pt.2, pp. 1317-1327; 3. BAWS, Vol.14, Pt. 2, pp. 1318-1323; 4. BAWS, Vol.14, Pt.2, pp. 1323-1327; 5. Keer, Life and Mission, 2016, pp.426, 432,433 and Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, struggles and message, pp. 430-442; 6. Keer, Life and Mission, 2016, pp.60,235 and BAWS, Vol.17/3, p.86 ; 7. BAWS, Vol.17/3, pp. 160,161; 8. Keer, Life and Mission, 2016, p.525; 9. Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, struggles and message, pp. 509-512; 10. BAWS, Vol.3, p.6; 11. BAWS, Vol. 7, p.14)

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The Office Bearers of Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Jalandhar Honored Sh. K.C. Sulekh at his Residence in Chandigarh



Chandigarh (Ambedkar Times Bureau) - Sh. Charan Dass Sandhu, President Ambedkar Mission Society Punjab, Dr. G. C. Kaul, General Secretary, Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Sh. Baldev Bhardwaj, Cashier, Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Sh. Harmesh Jassal, Auditor, Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, and Dr. Mohinder Sandhu, Trustee Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, came to

honour Sh. K. C. Sulekh, a veteran Ambedkarite, at his residence in Chandigarh on December 22, 2024, which the Ambedkar Bhawan Trust decided to Honour him on Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar's Mahaparinirvan Day, December 6, 2024 at Jalandhar. But for his health, Sh.



K. C. Sulekh could not make it to Jalandhar as per the schedule. All the office bearers of the Ambedkar Bhawan, who visited Sh. K.C. Sulekh, honored him and paid their thanks for his lifelong continuous service to the mission of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar. All the visiting dignitaries spoke one by one

in honour of Sh. Sulekh Sahib, and also presented him a framed welcome address read the occasion of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's visit at Ramdaspora, Jalandhar on October 27, 1951. Sh. K.C. Sulekh, then General Secretary, Punjab Scheduled Caste Federation, managed the stage, which he recalled nostalgically to the visiting official and also shared his many valuable memorable memories.

On the invitation of Sh. Charan Dass Sandhu and Dr. G. C. Kaul, Prof. Ronki Ram joined them on the occasion of honoring Sulekh Sahib and also shared his long academic association with him and thanked him for helping him in his research on the Ambedkar Mission.

AD DHARM IN PUNJAB ELECTIONS

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Ad Dharm movement of Punjab gained tremendous importance within a short period after its foundation in 1926. That it got recognition for a separate religion for the so called lowest if the low from the British Government speaks about its great strength. In 1931, about 500, 000 Scheduled Castes (SCs) got recorded Ad Dharm as their distinct religion. Thereafter, its record victory in the 1937 Punjab Provincial Assembly elections reinforced its popularity among the SCs. Its victory in the 1946 Punjab Provincial Assembly election to the Punjab Legislative Assembly assigned it an independent political identity. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the Ad Dharm movement, was elected from Hoshiarpur constituency. It contested both the above-mentioned assembly elections in collaboration with the Unionist Party.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia also contested the Punjab Legislative Assembly Election of 1952, but as an Independent contestant from the Garhshankar Constituency. He was offered a ticket by the Congress to contest the assembly elections as its nominee but Babu Mangu Ram Ji refused to contest the election on the Congress ticket and the same was given to Mr Kartar Singh of village Langeri of Hoshiarpur District.

J.C. JOHARI ON THE CONSTITUTION AS A CONGRESS DOCUMENT

"As already pointed out, the Constitution of India is a Congress document for the simple reason that the Congress not merely acted like a national political organisation in winning seats for the grand Consenbly. More than that it became the Parliament and the Interim Government in addition to serving as the sovereign constitutional convention at work. That is, the Congress was all - the party, the Government, the Constituent Assembly - even the country. In fine, the Congress came to serve like a great political organisation of a great nation entrusted with the great work of framing the fundamental rules of the Fundamental law of the land.

"It is rightly said: "The Constituent Assembly was a one party body in an essentially one-party country. The Assembly was the Congress and the Congress was India. There was a third point that completed a right triangle, the government (meaning the apparatus of elected government both provincial and national), for the Congress was the government too. The Assembly, the Congress, was, and the government were, like the points of a triangle separate entities, but linked by overlapping membership, they as-

sumed a form infinitely meaningful for India.

"The statement that the Indian Constitution is virtually a gift of the Congress Party in return for the great confidence that the nation reposed in it and by virtue of which it became the repository of the power transferred by the British after a lot of political wrangling, does not imply that it was the Congress as a whole that should have credit of being the architect of the Basic Law of the Land. Rather, it was a small section of the top leaders like Nehru, Patel, Prasad and Azad - what Austin calls the 'Congress oligarchy'.

"It was the small section of the top leadership that constituted the core of the Congress Working Committee and that first took all important decisions and then prompted the Drafting Committee to shape the language of the Draft Constitution accordingly. More than that, it was this top leadership that played a very effective role in the debate of the Assembly. The result was that either the House was taken under influence by these leaders, or the whip was issued to keep the possible opponents under control. It should, however, be borne in mind that the Congress oligarchy

normally refrained from placing an unduly heavy hand on the voice of the members speaking against its wishes. The main desire of the top leaders was to achieve somehow the consensus invariably on matters of great significance. (From J.C. Johari's "Indian Government and Politics")

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on the Congress Party in the Constituent Assembly (according to J.C. Johari).

"The fact of the leadership of the Congress oligarchy with the most prominent role of Nehru, in collaboration with Patel, dismisses the case of Ambedkar's being the "Father of the Constitution". Ambedkar was a non-Congressman having no place in the real decision-making body of the Congress oligarchy. The real role of this great constitutionalist should, therefore, be discovered in his unparalleled skill and competence in giving the form of draft constitutional provisions to the wishes of the top Congress leaders and then defending the work of the Drafting Committee in the House with such a force of argument that the draft provisions eventually became parts of the Constitution. As a matter of fact, he was a 'constitutional manoeuvrer whose industry and diligence was a wonder to all'

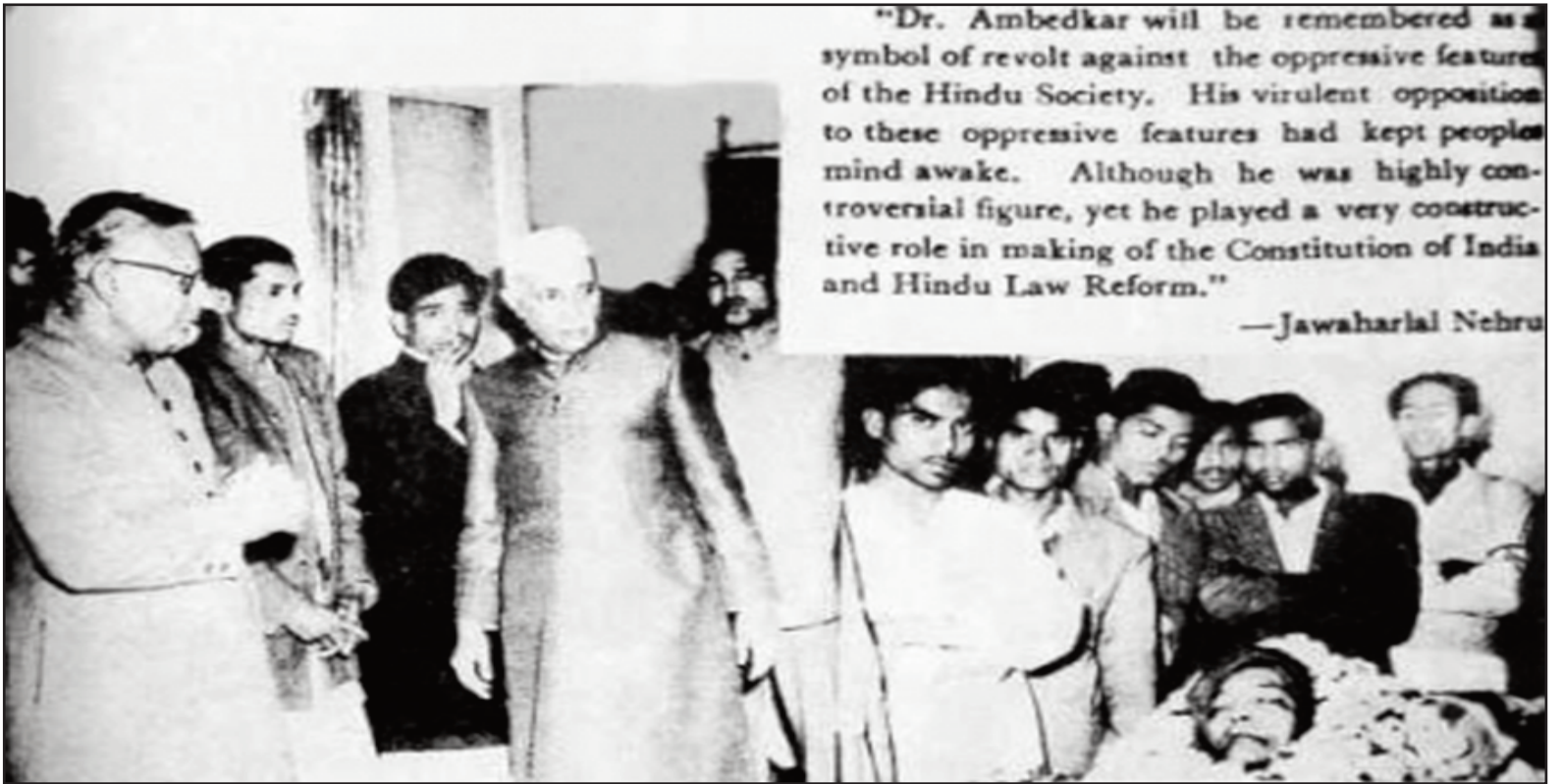
and, as Dr. Pattabhi Sitaramayya paid his glowing compliment, "a steam-roller intellect, he brought to bear upon his magnificent and tremendous task, down all palms and short puppies. Whenever he felt to be right, he stood by regardless of all consequences." "Ambedkar himself realised this fact and at one stage he said: The task of the Constituent Assembly would have been a very difficult one if it had been merely a motley crowd, a tasselled pavement without cement, a black stone here and a white stone there in which each member of each group was a law unto itself. There would have been nothing but chaos. The possibility of chaos was reduced to nil by the existence of the Congress Party inside the Assembly which brought into the proceedings a sense of order and discipline. It is because of the discipline of the Congress Party that the Drafting Committee was able to pilot the Constitution in the Assembly with the sure knowledge as to the fate of each article and each amendment. The Congress Party is, therefore, entitled to all the credit for the smooth sailing of the Draft Constitution in the Assembly". - **Source Courtesy:**

Socialist India, Vol.X, 1975

06 December 1956: Obituary in Rajya Sabha

Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru on demise of Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar

"Mr. Chairman, I deeply regret to inform the House that a member of this House who had played a very leading part in many matters passed away a short while ago. I refer to Dr. Ambedkar. Dr. Ambedkar from many many years had been a controversial figure in Indian public affairs, but there can be no doubt about his outstanding quality, his scholarship, and the intensity with which he pursued his convictions, sometimes rather with greater intensity that perhaps required by the particular subject, which sometimes reacted in a contrary way. But he was the symbol of that intense feeling which we must always remember, the intense feelings of the suppressed classes in India who have suffered for ages past under our social systems, and it is as well that we recognize this burden that all of us should carry and should always remember. It may be that some of us thought, as I have just said, that he



"Dr. Ambedkar will be remembered as a symbol of revolt against the oppressive features of the Hindu Society. His virulent opposition to these oppressive features had kept peoples mind awake. Although he was highly controversial figure, yet he played a very constructive role in making of the Constitution of India and Hindu Law Reform."

—Jawaharlal Nehru

overdid the expression of that feeling, but I do not think that apart from the manner of utterance or language, anybody should challenge the rightness of the intensity of his feelings in that matter which should be felt by all of us and perhaps even more so by those who have not in

themselves or in their groups or classes had to suffer from them. He was that. Therefore, he became this symbol.

But we in Parliament remember him for many other things and more particularly for the prominent part he played in the making of our

Constitution and perhaps this fact will be remembered even longer than his other activities. I am quite sure that every Member of this house will want us to send our deep condolences and message of sympathy to his family and to express our deep sorrow at his demise."



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FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS

By Acharya Sri J.B. Kripalani
[Select paragraphs from the
Thirteenth Rajaji Birthday Lecture
delivered on 7th January, 1978
at the GIPA, Bangalore]

History in India

It must be remembered that the idea of Fundamental Rights of the citizen was nothing new in India. It had a long history. The All Parties Conference under the Chairmanship of Motilal Nehru opined that: "It is obvious that our first law should be to have our fundamental rights guaranteed in a manner which will not permit their withdrawal *under any circumstances.*" (Italics mine).

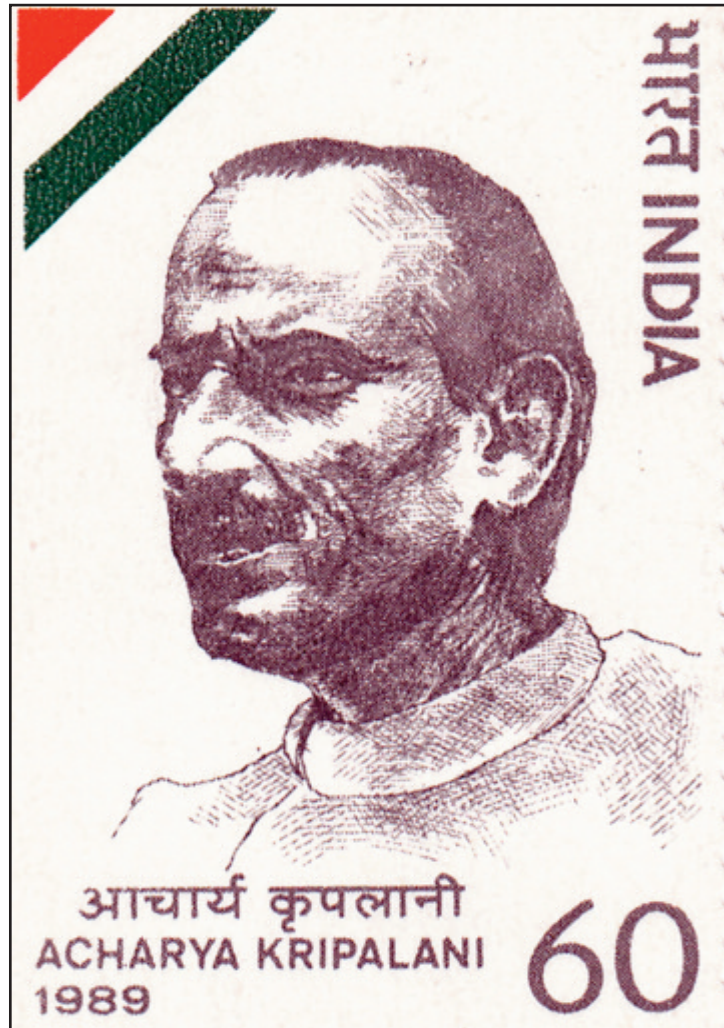
In 1945, a non-party Committee under Sapru explained the need for fundamental rights. It said: "In the peculiar circumstances in India, fundamental rights are necessary, not only as assurances and guarantees to the minorities but also for prescribing *a standard of conduct for the legislature, the Government and the judiciary.*" (Italics mine)

In 1945, at Simla, when the leaders of the Congress and the Muslim League met the Cabinet Mission, Jawaharlal insisted that, to the three subjects, Defence, Foreign Affairs and Communications, which the Centre would deal with, must be added the subject of the fundamental rights of the citizen. This suggestion of his was accepted. Even the Muslim League did not object to it.

The Working Committee of the Congress, too, emphasised the need for the "guarantee of fundamental rights of each individual, so that he may have full and equal opportunities of growth and further, that each community should have opportunity to live the life of its choice within the larger framework".

Congress was always anxious to safeguard the fundamental free-

doms of the people. When in the thirties, it was not possible to start a civil resistance movement, Jawaharlal initiated the formation of the Civil Lib-



erties Union.

Gandhiji, when he did not want to hamper the war effort of the Allies in India, decided to start the individual civil resistance movement on the issue of freedom of speech in connection with the war. By its history and tradition, the Congress always stood for the safeguarding of the citizens' Fundamental Rights.

Conditions in India

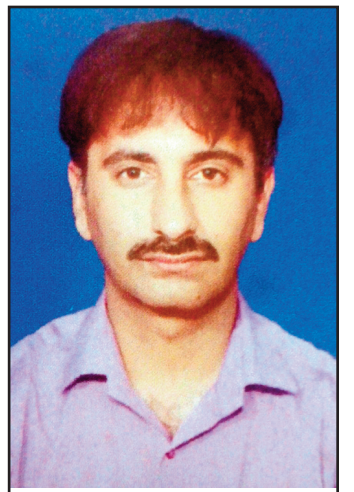
In the light of the Preamble are formulated the Fundamental Rights of our people. In India, there are additional and special circumstances for guaranteeing fundamental rights. Ours is a big country, divided into several States. It has a Federal Constitution. The old territorial divisions had generated local loyalties to regional languages and traditions, customs and conventions. These had to be reconciled with the larger loyalty to the whole of India. It was, therefore, necessary that such provisions should be made in the Constitution that an Indian citizen should be able to live in any part of the country and be free to seek employment and carry on any trade and engage in any

profession without let or hindrance, in any part of the motherland. Such and other like rights, if they were declared as inviolable, would work for the overall unity of India. It is a fact that some State Governments have put various restrictions in some such matters even today. Fundamental Rights which could be enforced in law courts would put a stop to the fissiparous tendencies present in the

country. India is also a land of many religions. Unless the right to freely practise and propagate one's religion is guaranteed in the Constitution, the fanatical religious zeal of the majority may make short of the liberty of conscience, belief, faith and religion of the minorities. This fact was realised only when the 24th Amendment to our Constitution was discussed in Parliament in the year 1972. At first, the Muslim members were in favour of supporting the amendment but, when they realised the full implication of the amendment, the Muslim and the Christian members of Parliament either remained neutral or voted against it.

The danger to the minorities is real and not imaginary. Even today, the overwhelming majority of members in our Parliament are Hindus. If a wave of fanatical Hinduism sweeps over the country and Hindu members come under its influence, they can declare India as a Hindu State, like Pakistan, which is a Muslim State. There, even the members of a Muslim sect, the Ahmediyas, have become second-class citizens.

Therefore, for safeguarding the religious rights of the minorities and for the smooth working of our democracy, it was necessary that certain natural and basic rights of the individual be declared as inviolable, beyond the power of interference by the governments and the legislatures.



NEERAJ PAUL

DECLARATION OF RIGHTS

All Parties Conference Delhi, 1928

The Committee recommend that the following articles be incorporated in the Constitution of the Commonwealth as the fundamental rights of the people:-

1. All powers of Government and all authority, legislative, executive and judicial, are derived from the people and the same shall be exercised in the Commonwealth of India through the organisations established by or under, and in accord with, this Constitution.
2. No person shall be deprived of his liberty nor shall his dwelling or property be entered, sequestered or confiscated, save in accordance with law.
3. Freedom of conscience and the free profession and practice of religion are, subject to public order or morality, hereby guaranteed to every person.
4. The right of free expression of opinion, as well as the right to assemble peaceably and without arms, and to form associations or unions, is

hereby guaranteed for purposes not opposed to public order or morality, or the law relating to defamation for the time being.

5. All citizens in the Commonwealth of India have the right to free elementary education, and such right shall be enforceable as soon as due arrangements shall have been made by competent authority.

6. All citizens are equal before the law and possess equal civic rights.

7. There shall be no penal law whether substantive or procedural of a discriminative nature.

8. Every citizen shall have the right to a writ of habeas corpus. Such rights shall not be suspended except by an Act of the Central Legislature in case of war or rebellion.

9. No person shall be punished for any act which was not punishable under the law at the time it was committed.

10. No corporal or other punishment

involving torture of any kind shall be lawful.

11. There shall be no state religion for the Commonwealth of India or for any province in the Commonwealth, nor shall the State either directly or indirectly endow any religion or give any preference or impose any disability on account of religious belief or religious status.

12. No person attending any school, receiving State aid or other public money shall be compelled to attend the religious instruction that may be given in the school.

13. No citizen shall by reason of his religion, caste or creed be prejudiced in any way in regard to public employment, office of power or honour and the exercise of any trade or calling.

14. Every citizen shall have the right to keep and bear arms in accordance with regulations made in that behalf.

15. Men and women shall have equal rights and citizens.

Srinivasa Iyengar was of opinion that the following articles should be added and if necessary the Hindu Law be modified to that extent.

"All castes are hereby declared and guaranteed to be on a footing of perfect equality, no superiority or inferiority of any caste and no hierarchy of castes shall be recognised or given effect to by the State for any purpose."

"The State shall not treat or allow to be treated any community in India as an untouchable community but shall recognise it as having the same status as other communities." J. Nehru agreed with this proposal.

Source Courtesy: Resolutions of the Conference and Report of the Committee of the Conference regarding a Swaraj Constitution for India

February-March 1928

LIST OF PERSONS WHO SERVED AS MEMBERS OF THE COMMITTEES OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY

<p>Committee on the Rules of Procedure Rajendra Prasad (Chairman) Jagjivan Ram Sarat Chandra Bose Frank Anthony Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar Bakshi Tek Chand Rafi Ahmad Kidwai Joseph Alban D'Souza N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar Purushottamdas Tandon Gopinath Bardoloi B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Mehr Chand Khanna K.M. Munshi Harnam Singh Mrs. G. Durgabai</p>	<p>Dip Narayan Sinha Nandkishore Das Mohan Lal Saksena R.R. Diwakar Muhammad Hassan Upendra Nath Barman Jainarayan Vyas B. Shiva Rao H.V. Kamath Mrs. Ammu Swaminathan Deshbandhu Gupta</p>	<p>Frank Anthony M.V.H. Collins* Homi Mody* M.R. Masani R.K. Sidhva Rup Nath Brahma* Abdul Ghaffar Khan Abdul Samad Khan J.J.M. Nichols-Roy Mayangmokcha* Phool Bhan Shaha* Devendra Nath Samanta Jaipal Singh J.B. Kripalani Abul Kalam Azad C. Rajagopalachari Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Mrs. Hansa Mehta Govind Ballabh Pant Gopinath Bardoloi Purushottamdas Tandon Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar K.T. Shah K.M. Munshi Amritlal V. Thakkar M. Ruthnaswamy* Rajkrishna Bose K.M. Panikkar Aliba Imti* Hifzur Rahman* Ali Zaheer* Abdul Qayum Ansari* Khaliquzzaman Muhammad Saadulla Ismail Chundrigar Jafar Imam* Abdul Sathar Haji Ishaq Sait Kasturbhai Lalbhai Kameshwara Singh of Darbhanga N. Madhava Rau Mohan Sinha Mehta M.S. Aney Gopaldas Desai Gokulbhai Bhatt K. Chengalvaraya Reddy Govind Das Lakshmi Kanta Maitra Thakurdas Bhargava Gurmukh Singh Musafir Begum Aizaz Rasul Hussainbhoj A. Lalljee* Tajamul Husain Sarangdhar Das</p>	<p>Hifzur Rahman* Ali Zaheer* Abdul Qayum Ansari* Khaliquzzaman Ismail Chundrigar Muhammad Saadulla Kameshwara Singh of Darbhanga Govind Das Kasturbhai Lalbhai* Lakshmi Kanta Maitra Thakurdas Bhargava</p>	<p>P. Govinda Menon M.A. Srinivasan B.H. Zaidi</p>
<p>Steering Committee Rajendra Prasad (Chairman) Abul Kalam Azad Vallabhbhai Patel Ujjal Singh Mrs. G. Durgabai S.H. Prater Kiran Shankar Roy Satyanarayan Sinha M. Ananthasayanam Ayyangar Chaman Lal K. M. Munshi S.N. Mane P. Govinda Menon C.S. Venkatachar Muhammad Saadulla Abdul Kadar Mohammad Shaikh Surendra Mohan Ghose Balwant Rai Mehta R.M. Nalavade Suresh Chandra Mazumdar Jagat Narain Lal J.B. Kripalani Gurmukh Singh Musafir K. Chengalvaraya Reddy</p>	<p>Order of Business Committee K.M. Munshi (Chairman) N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar Biswanath Das</p>	<p>Fundamental Rights Sub-Committee J.B. Kripalani (Chairman) M.R. Masani Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar K.T. Shah K.M. Munshi Harnam Singh Abul Kalam Azad B.R. Ambedkar Jairamdas Daulatram Mrs. Hansa Mehta K.M. Panikkar</p>	<p>Ad hoc Committee on the National Flag Rajendra Prasad (Chairman) Abul Kalam Azad C. Rajagopalachari Mrs. Sarojini Naidu K.M. Panikkar K.M. Munshi B.R. Ambedkar Frank Anthony B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Hiralal Shastri Satyanarayan Sinha Baldev Singh* S.N. Gupta*</p>	<p>Ad hoc Committee on the Supreme Court S. Varadachari* (Chairman) Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar B.L. Mitter Bakshi Tek Chand K.N. Katju B.R. Ambedkar K.M. Munshi</p>
<p>Finance and Staff Committee Rajendra Prasad (Chairman) Satyanarayan Sinha Jaipal Singh V.I. Muniswami Pillai C.E. Gibbon N.V. Gadgil Sri Prakasa Govind Das Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Harnam Singh H. C. Mookherjee V.T. Krishnamachari Bhawanji A. Khimji K. Santhanam</p>	<p>Committee on the Functions of the Constituent Assembly G.V. Mavalankar (Chairman) Hussain Imam Purushottamdas Tandon B.R. Ambedkar Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar B.L. Mitter</p>	<p>Excluded and Partially Excluded Areas (other than those in Assam) Sub-Committee A.V. Thakkar (Chairman) Jaipal Singh Devendra Nath Samanta Phool Bhan Shaha* Jagjivan Ram Rajkrishna Bose Profulla Chandra Ghosh</p>	<p>Provincial Constitution Committee Vallabhbhai Patel (Chairman) P. Subbarayan B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya B.G. Kher Brijlal Biyani K.N. Katju Phulan Prasad Verma Harekrushna Mahatab Kiran Shankar Roy Jairamdas Daulatram Ujjal Singh Rohini Kumar Choudhury Chaman Lal P.K. Sen C.M. Poonacha Radhanath Das Satyanarayan Sinha Rafi Ahmad Kidwai Mrs. Hansa Mehta H.C. Mookherjee Rajkumari Amrit Kaur J.B. Kripalani Shankarrao Deo R.R. Diwakar S. Nagappa</p>	<p>Committee on Chief Commissioners Provinces B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Chairman) N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar K. Santhanam Deshbandhu Gupta Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava C.M. Poonacha Hussain Imam</p>
<p>Credentials Committee Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar (Chairman) P.K. Sen Bakshi Tek Chand Sarat Chandra Bose Frank Anthony B. Pocker Ram Sahai</p>	<p>States Committee Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman) Abul Kalam Azad Vallabhbhai Patel B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Shankarrao Deo N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar</p>	<p>Union Powers Committee Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman) Sarat Chandra Bose B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya Govind Ballabh Pant Biswanath Das N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar Bakshi Tek Chand Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar D.P. Khaitan M.R. Masani B.L. Mitter K.M. Munshi V.T. Krishnamachari Maharaj Himmat Singhji A. Ramaswami Mudaliar</p>	<p>Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights, Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas Vallabhbhai Patel (Chairman) Jairamdas Daulatram Mehr Chand Khanna Gopi Chand Bhargava Bakshi Tek Chand Profulla Chandra Ghosh Surendra Mohan Ghose Syama Prasad Mookerjee Prithvi Singh Azad Dharam Prakash H.J. Khandekar Jagjivan Ram P.R. Thakur B.R. Ambedkar V.I. Muniswami Pillai Jogendra Singh Baldev Singh* Pratap Singh Harnam Singh Ujjal Singh Kartar Singh H.C. Mookherjee Joseph Alban D'Souza P.K. Salve* J.L.P. Roche-Victoria* S.H. Prater</p>	<p>Committee on Chief Commissioners Provinces B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Chairman) N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar K. Santhanam Deshbandhu Gupta Mukut Bihari Lal Bhargava C.M. Poonacha Hussain Imam</p>
<p>House Committee B. Pattabhi Sitaramayya (Chairman) Radhanath das Abdul Ghaffar Khan Akshay Kumar Das Jairamdas Daulatram Shri Ram Sharma</p>	<p>Sub-Committees of the Advisory Committee Minorities Sub-Committee H.C. Mookherjee (Chairman) Jagjivan Ram Abul Kalam Azad B.R. Ambedkar Jogendra Singh Syama Prasad Mookerjee Ujjal Singh Harnam Singh H.J. Khandekar P.R. Thakur Homi Mody* P.K. Salve* S.H. Prater Frank Anthony C. Rajagopalachari Rajkumari Amrit Kaur Jairamdas Daulatram R.K. Sidhva Rup Nath Brahma* M. Ruthnaswamy* M.V.H. Collins* Joseph Alban D'Souza K.M. Munshi Govind Ballabh Pant</p>	<p>Union Constitution Committee Jawaharlal Nehru (Chairman) Abul Kalam Azad Syama Prasad Mookerjee Govind Ballabh Pant Jagjivan Ram B.R. Ambedkar Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar K.M. Munshi K.T. Shah V.T. Krishnamachari K.M. Panikkar N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar</p>	<p>Drafting Committee B.R. Ambedkar (Chairman) Alladi Krishnaswami Ayyar N. Gopaldaswami Ayyangar K.M. Munshi Muhammad Saadulla B.L. Mitter D.P. Khaitan** N. Madhava Rau T.T. Krishnamachari</p>	<p>Expert Committee on the Financial Provisions of the Union Constitution Nalini Ranjan Sarkar* (Chairman) V.S. Sundaram* M.V. Rangachari</p>
				<p>Linguistic Provinces Commission S.K. Dar* (Chairman) Panna Lal* Jagat Narain Lal</p>
				<p>* Not an Assembly Member ** Died in 1948</p>

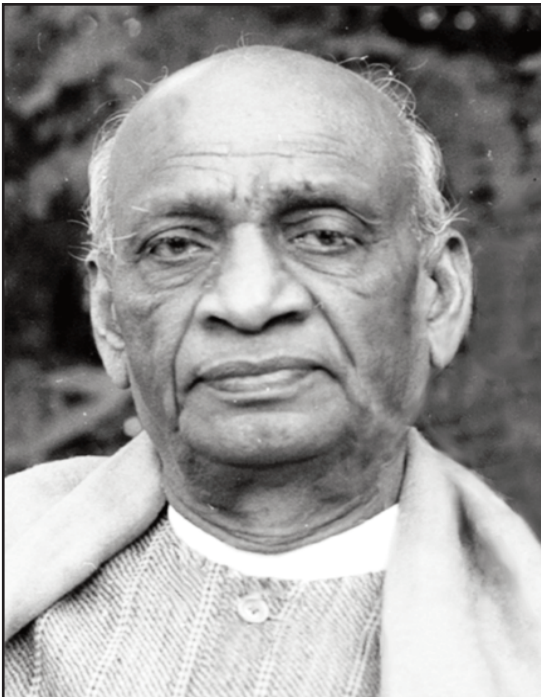
PATEL'S SPEECH

(At the first meeting of the Advisory Committee, February 27, 1947)

Gentlemen, I thank you most sincerely for the honour - the great honour - that you have conferred upon me by reposing your confidence in electing me as chairman of a committee which is composed of various interests. This committee forms one of the most vital parts of the Constituent Assembly and one of the most difficult tasks that has to be done by us is the work of this committee. Often you must have heard in various debates in British Parliament that have been held on this question recently and before when it has been claimed on behalf of the British Government that they have a special responsibility - a special obligation - for the protection of the interests of the minorities. They claim to have more special interest than we have. It is for us to prove that it is a bogus claim, a false claim, and that nobody can be more interested than us in India in the protection of our minorities. Our mission is to satisfy every one of them and we hope we shall be able to satisfy every interest and safeguard the interests of all the minorities to their satisfaction. Let us hope that our deliberations will be so conducted that we can disillusion those who are looking with a critical eye from outside that we know how to conduct

our business and we know how to rule better than those who claim that they can rule others. At least let us prove we can rule ourselves and we have no ambition to rule others. In this committee, therefore, we begin our work today with a determination and a desire to come to decisions not by majority but by uniformity. Let us sink all our differences and look to one and one interest only, which is the interest of all of us - the interest of India as a whole.

Today's work is the work of election to certain sub-committees for which the Resolution of the Con-



SARDAR VALLABHBHAI PATEL
CHAIRMAN
Advisory Committee on Fundamental Rights,
Minorities and Tribal and Excluded Areas

stituent Assembly has laid down certain directions and these committees have also been asked to finish their task within a certain period or to report to the Constituent Assembly within that period. Our committee as a whole has also been asked to report within three months. It is quite possible that we may not be able, or the committees may not be able, to finish their work within that period because the committees have to wait for their full formation because the representation is not full and therefore it is possible that we may have to ask for more time. But at the same time, you

have seen the recent pronouncements of the British Government. They have fixed a date within which complete transfer of power is to take place and therefore it is our duty to act as expeditiously as possible and finish our task to help the main Constituent Assembly to have our report before it and our report may be such as would give them least possible trouble.

For the present, the President has been good enough to nominate three members to the committee. The rest of the places have been kept vacant for a purpose which you all know. We have a certain number of seats reserved for the Muslim minority provinces. Those seats - I think seven - have to be filled in by the Muslim League and it is better that we should give them more time to take their position and then if they come in their names will be put up and the President will be good enough to nominate them. The three names who have been nominated for the present are: Mr. A.V. Thakkar, Mr. M. Ruthnaswamy, Mr. Raj Krushna Bose. The rest will be nominated later. So we now have 53.

Source Courtesy: The Framing of India's Constitution Select Documents, Vol.2

Right to Equality and Rights to Freedom

Munshi's Note and Draft Articles on Fundamental Rights, March 17, 1947

SUB-COMMITTEE ON FUNDAMENTAL RIGHTS, February - April 1947

Article III

Right to Equality

(1) All persons irrespective of religion, race, colour, caste, language or sex are equal before the law and are entitled to the same rights, and are subject to the same duties.

(2) All citizens are entitled to equal opportunities in all spheres, political, economic, social and cultural.

(3) Women citizens are the equal of men citizens in all spheres of political, economic, social and cultural life and are entitled to the same civil rights and are subject to the same civil duties unless where exception is made in such rights or duties by the law of the Union on account of sex.

(4) (a) Untouchability is abolished and the practice thereof is punishable by the law of the Union.

(b) All persons shall have the right to the enjoyment of equal facilities in public places subject only to such laws as impose limitations on all persons irrespective of religion, race, colour, caste or language.

(5) All citizens are entitled to equal opportunity:

(a) in matters of public employment and office of power and honour;

(b) in the exercise of trade, profession or calling; and

(c) in the exercise of franchise according to the law of the Union; and no citizen shall be denied the right on grounds of religion, race,

colour, caste or language.

(6) All citizens of the Union have the right to reside in any part of the territories of the Union that they chose, to settle there, acquire property, and pursue any means of lawful occupation, subject only to the restrictions imposed by the law of the Union.

(7) Every citizen has the right to emigrate to countries outside the Union and the right of expatriation.

(8) All citizens within and without the territories of the Union are entitled to the protection of the Union.

(9) No citizen may be handed over to a foreign government for trial or punishment.

(10) No person shall be denied equal protection of the laws within the territories of the Union.

Article V

Right to Freedom

(1) Every citizen within the limits of the law of the Union and in accordance therewith has:

(a) the right of free expression of opinion;

(b) the right of free association and combination;

(c) the right to assemble peacefully and without arms;

(d) the right to personal liberty;

(e) the right to be informed within twenty-four hours of his deprivation of liberty by what authority and on

what grounds he is being so deprived.

(f) the right to the inviolability of his home;

(g) the right to the secrecy of his correspondence;

(h) the right to maintain his person secure by the law of the Union from exploitation in any manner contrary to law or public morality; and

(i) the right of free movement and trade within the territories of the Union.

(2) The press shall be free subject to such restrictions imposed by the law of the Union as in its opinion may be necessary in the interest of public order or morality.

(3) The conduct of research and/or the publication of the results thereof shall be free subject to the restrictions imposed by the law of the Union in the interests of a fair return to those responsible for the results and of national defence.

(4) No person shall be deprived of his life, liberty or property without due process of law.



(5) Every citizen has the right to choose the government and legislators of the Union and his State on the footing of equality, in accordance with the law of the Union or the unit as the case may be, in free, secret and periodic elections.



D. C. Ahir

The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi youth, who

had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he, however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi



nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,

however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written

for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his



ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion. Both believed in self-help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiya (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Juergensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir

A Poet of Revolution

Shailendra

Shailendra, the people's poet, was one of the most versatile and gifted lyricists of Bollywood. He wrote warm souled poetry in simple yet extremely effective Hindustani, keeping his verses more colloquial than literary. Deeply influenced by Sant Kabir and Rabindranath Tagore, his verses had an earthy feel and always dazzled with their lyrical luster. Shailendra is considered as the greatest poet and film lyricist in the footsteps of great Satguru Kabir Sahib and Guru Ravidass Ji. He had a melancholic disposition, wrote songs of hope and despair in more than 170 films. "Teesri Kasam", turned out to be the epitome of what Shailendra stood for and Awards could not match its cost.

His poetry was natural, he could encapsulate a world in few words. He had the matchless ability to convey complex philosophical ideas in a song that everyone could understand. In an era when polished words were inseparable from a Bollywood lyricist's lexicon, Shailendra walked a new line: 'Sab Kuch Seekha Humne' (Anari), 'Ae Mere Dil Kahin Aur Chal' (Daag), 'Aaj Phir Jeene Ki Tamanna Hai' (Guide) are just a few examples of his unpretentious minimalist poetry.

He wrote songs for almost all occasions of life. His songs provided momentum to the film and took the story forward. Those lyrics were vibrantly alive and lived on long after the film itself had passed from memory. Shailendra was deeply rooted in folk tradition and brought that vocabulary, innocence, simplicity and spontaneity to the film music. He infused local words, thoughts and cultural elements from Bihar and Uttar Pradesh into folk-style songs. He penned the lyrics for the first Bhojpuri film "Ganga Maiya Tohe Piyari Chadhaibo" and many more Bhojpuri films like Ganga, Mitwa and Vidhana NaachNachav.

His name was Shankardas Kesarilal Shailendra, but for his countless admirers he was simply Shailendra. He was born in a Dalit family of Kesrilal Rao and Parvati on 30 August, 1923 in Rawalpindi (now in Pakistan). His father was a military contractor. After some time, the family moved to Mathura. As a child, he suffered a great loss in the death of his young mother. He did his schooling from Kishori Raman School, Mathura. During his formative years, he started writing poems, which were published under the pseudonym Shachipati by a magazine in Agra. After passing his

Intermediate examination, he started his career as a welding apprentice in Matunga Railway Workshop, Bombay. He spent more of his duty hours writing po-



to declare war on the USSR, we will fill it with fire', foresaw the close relations with the Soviet Union. His poem 'Jalta Hai Punjab' advised Sardar Bhagat Singh not to take rebirth in India, because he would again be hanged for the crime of patriotism. Another rousing poem 'Har Zor Zulum Ki Takkar Mein Sangharsh Hamara Naara Hai' became the battle cry of the trade union movement. His famous song 'this time the purveyor of war will not be allowed to pass' was recognised by the World Peace Movement.

Shailendra rendered the song 'Mori Bagiya Mein Aag Laga Gayo' in a mushaira attended by Raj Kapoor, who was fairly impressed. He approached the budding poet to buy his poem 'Jalta Hai Punjab' for use in his film "Aag" at a princely price of Rupees five hundred. Shailendra was circumspective of mainstream cinema and he refused stating that it was better to be a railway employee than to earn money through cheap romantic writings. In 1948, he married a distant relative Shakuntla. He could not bring his wife to Bombay immediately after marriage due to appalling housing problem.

His meager salary was worrying and when his wife was on family way, he was desperately in need of money. Suddenly, Raj's words of appreciation flashed across his mind. Apprehensive and hesitant, he sought financial help from Raj Kapoor. Raj gave him five hundred rupees for writing the title song and a peppy dance number 'Patli Qamar Hai Tirchhi Nazar Hai' for the movie "Barsaat" (1949). Both the songs soared to instant popularity and Barsaat became a blockbuster. After Barsaat, Shailendra joined the Raj Kapoor camp along with Hasrat Jaipuri, and the new duo composer, Shankar Jaikishan. This combo went on to create many musical bonanzas.

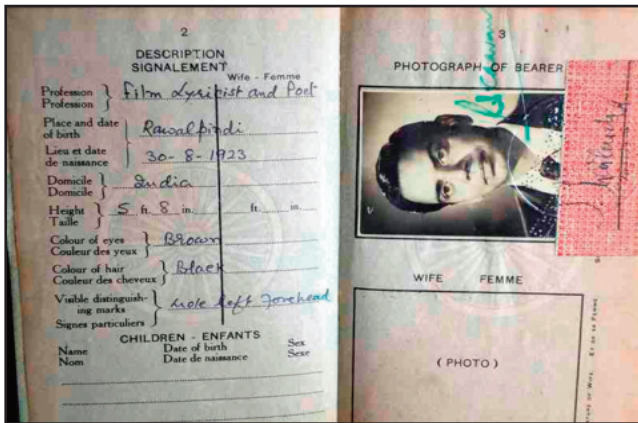
Shailendra became the master of title songs be it Chori Chori, Anari, Jungle, or Sangam. His title song of "Awara" even hit the international shores. He carved his own niche and was primarily responsible for projection of Raj Kapoor's persona as an



Bhim Raj Garg
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etry than toiling in the workshop. It was ironic that this sensitive poet found himself amidst the noise of hammers in a railway workshop. He wrote fiery poems for Indian People's Theatre Association (IPTA) and first shot to fame with 'Utha Hai Toofan Zamana Badal Raha' composed by Salil Chowdhury. His craft chiseled and his verses found space in the prestigious Hindi magazine 'Hans'.

His prophetic poem 'If you open your mouth



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A Poet of Revolution Shailendra

(Continue from page 9)

innocent, guileless simpleton. Raj Kapoor would affectionately call him Kaviraj and Pushkin. He remained on the pay-roll of R K Banner throughout his life with monthly salary of Rupees Five Hundred. As a bonus Raj Kapoor will give him a gold coin for every song he liked to his heart. He wrote the evergreen romantic song 'Pyaar Hua Iqaraar Hua Hai, Pyaar Se Phir Kyon Darta Hai Dil...' (Shri 420).

Hasrat Jaipuri and Barring Naushad and O. P. Nayyar, Shailendra had worked with almost all the leading composers of his era. His association with Shankar Jaikishan produced memorable compositions in films like Barsaat, Awara, Shree 420, Anari, Junglee, Sangam, Aayi Milan Ki Bela, Raj Kumar and many more. He also had a special rapport with Sachin Dev Burman for whom he penned wonderful songs like 'O Jaanewale Ho Sake To Laut Ke Aana...' (Bandini) and 'Aaj Phir Jeene Ki Tamanna Hai' (Guide). He also wrote beautiful lyrics under the baton of Salil Choudhary in films like Madhumati, Jagte Raho, Parakh, Meera and Khusro.

70 films), followed by Salil Chowdhary, S. D. Burman and Roshan. He also wrote the dialogues for Bimal Roy's "Prem Patra". Interestingly, Shailendra did some cameo roles in films like "Boot Polish", "Musafir" and "Teesri Kasam".

Shailendra was held in high esteem by his co-lyricists like Hasrat Jaipuri and Sahir Ludhianvi etc. In the year 1964, Sahir Ludhianvi was the winner of the best lyricist Filmfare award for the song 'Jo Wada Kiya Wo Nibhana Padega' (Taj Mahal). Sahir went up to the stage to receive the award and announced that the true winner of the award ought to be Shailendra for the song 'Mat Ro Mata' (Bandini). He called a reticent Shailendra to the stage and handed him the black-lady trophy. Lyricist, writer, and director Gulzar has stated on many occasions that Shailendra was the best lyricist produced by the Hindi film industry. Javed Akhtar, an eminent Hindi film script writer once said, "Shailendra comes from the tradition of Kabir, Meera and Khusro. You get that kind of simplicity of these folk poets in Shailendra's lyrics."

Shailendra ventured into film production with the movie "Teesri Kasam" (1965) based on

lease. This was the last blow to Shailendra. His tender poetic mind could not bear all this.

"Teesri Kasam", drained all of Shailendra's resources. He was shattered with this outcome and lost all interest in writing poetry and in life itself. The creative force within Shailendra extinguished, he wrote only one song 'Rulake Gaya Sapana Mera' for "Jewel Thief" and Vijay Anand wanted him to write the remaining songs also. But Shailendra locked himself in his room and refused to meet anybody, he took to drinking heavily and became a recluse.

He was reeling under heavy debt and being hounded by moneylenders, coupled with alcohol abuse, ultimately led to his death. What a stroke of fate that in the year 1966, he passed away on December 14, which happened to be his constant companion Raj Kapoor's birthday. His promise to write the song 'Jeena Yahan Marna Yahan' for the movie "Mera Naam Joker" was fulfilled by his son Shaily Shailendra.

His film "Teesri Kasam" won the National Film Award for the best Feature film of 1966 after his death. Bollywood's prominent lyricist Shailendra



Shailendra had written the songs of almost all the successful films of Bimal Roy like Do Bigha Zameen, Sujata, Parakh and Madhumati etc. These melodious songs not only added to the popularity of these films and but Shailendra's own market value also sky-rocketed. As his film career soared, Shailendra showcased his versatility. He wrote serious songs like 'Din Dhal Jaaye Haya' (Guide) and 'Sajan wa Bairi Ho Gaye Hamaar (Teesri Kasam) and simultaneously penned light mood chirpy songs Chahe Ko Mujhe Junglee Kahe and Aiyaiya-Sukoo Sukoo (Junglee).

Shailendra's sheer diversity of thought is quite unique and his repertoire includes: Romantic ('Pyaar Hua Iqaraar Hua', 'Yeh Raat Bheegi Bheegi'), Metaphysical ('Wahan Kaun Hai Tera', 'Zindagi Khwab Hai', 'Sajan Re Jhoot Mat Bolo') Longingness ('Aja Re Pardesi', 'O Jaanewale Ho Sake', 'O Basanti Pawan Pagal') and Anguish ('Kya Se Kya Ho Gaya', 'Dost Dost Na Raha').

In a career spanning two decades, Shailendra wrote about 900 songs. He worked the most with Shankar-Jaikishan (over 400 songs in about

Phanishwar Nath Renu's classic story 'Maare Gaye Gulfaam'. When Raj Kapoor came to know that Shailendra was going to make a film, he was shocked fearing a revolt in the RK Banner. But his fears were unfounded, later he himself proposed to work in this film for free. However, accepting this proposal was a big mistake of Shailendra, the price of which he could not repay throughout his life. Whenever Shailendra approached Raj Kapoor for a date, Raj Kapoor's reply was, "We are a family, I will come whenever you say." It was because of this 'man of the house' that 'Teesri Kasam' was stalled. Shailendra was suffering huge losses due to this procrastination.

Directed by Basu Bhattacharya, the film had Raj Kapoor and Waheeda Rehman in the lead. The making of the film took long five years rendering Shailendra, a bankrupt. He was pressurized by the financiers to change the ending of the film but he didn't cave in. The film was released without much publicity in Delhi and UP circuits. It became the straw that broke the camel's back and was pulled out of cinema halls on the third day of its re-

dra became the first recipient of Filmfare's Award for the Best Lyricist introduced in 1959. He won the black-lady for the song 'Yeh Mera Deewanapan Hai' from "Yahudi". Next year, he also won this Award for 'Sab Kuchh Seekha Hum Ne' from "Anari" (1960). In 1969, Shailendra won the best lyricist Filmfare Award third time for the song 'Main Gaoon Tum So Jaao' (Brahmachari) posthumously.

After seven decades of his death, Shailendra, still finds space in our hearts. He wrote songs that became a defining and enduring feature of the Indian identity abroad (Awara Hoon...) and penned the timeless anthem 'Mera Joota Hai Japanese' that has found space even in Hollywood's whipsmart 2016 blockbuster "Deadpool". In 2016, a street in Dhauri Pyau locality of Mathura was named after Shailendra "Geetkar-Jankavi Shailendra Marg, Mathura". The glimpses of Shailendra's life are amply reflected in his various verses but the philosophy of his life is succinctly portrayed in his lyrics 'Kissi ki Muskrahton Pe Ho Nisar' (Anari). His songs with their rich human values will keep his memories lingering on.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Special Feature on Birth Centenary Mohammed Rafi: The Cultural Icon of Punjab



Bhim Raj Garg
91 + 98765-45157

Punjab has produced a galaxy of great gurus, sages, saints, seers and peers, who have showered their blessings to this land. When we talk about art and culture, an angel of music Mohammed Rafi was born in a small village Kotla Sultan Singh of Amritsar. The singer of the millennium, Mohammad Rafi with rich tonal voice, versatility and crystal clear intonations rendered thousands of unique heart-wrenching songs varied from fast peppy numbers to classical songs, lamenting melodies to highly romantic songs, qawwalis to ghazals and bhajans to patriotic songs. He had so poignantly brought in emotions in his renderings with his extremely exquisite melodious and mellifluous voice for over seven decades. Saraswati's abode was in his sublime divine voice. The emissary of Punjab, Rafi's charismatic mellifluous voice boomed not only across India but around the world. The inseparable connection between him and Punjab is little known to many.

Mohammed Rafi was born to Hajji Ali Mohammed and Allah Rakhi on 24 December, 1924. A faqir used to chant 'Maaye Ni Khedan De Din Char' while seeking alms in his village. The little child, Pheeku (Rafi) enchanted by the melodious tune, used to trail the saint from a distance. That sowed the seeds of music in him. He grew up in an orthodox household where music and singing was frowned upon. At the age of nine, he moved to Lahore and started working in the family enterprise.

Once Pandit Jiwan Lal Mattoo of

industry to be known as Mohammed Rafi. Rafi's singing talent was first recognised on a grander scale in 1937, when he unexpectedly performed at the All-India Exhibition, Lahore. The audience included renowned singer K. L. Saigal, who predicted that Rafi would one day become a great singer. In 1942, Rafi was introduced to film industry by music director Shyam Sunder by recording a duet "Pardesi Sohneya Oye Heeriye Oye" in the voices of Zeenat Begum and Mohammad Rafi for the Punjabi movie 'Gul Baloch' (1945). In this film, Rafi sang another duet 'Aa Chann Ve' with Munawar Sultana under the baton of Lachhi Ram and a chorus 'Sun Sun Nikki Jehi Gall' under the music direction of Pt. Amar Nath. Rafi's songs became very popular even before the release of Gul Baloch on 23 August, 1946. The rest is history.

Rafi then moved to Bombay on invitation of actor-producer Nazeer, who

claim that Rafi's first Hindi film song was 'Jab Dil Ho Kaabu Mein' (Gaon Ki Gori-1945).

Naushad gave him chances in Anmol Ghadi (1946) and Shahjehan (1946) etc. Rafi gave a cameo performance on 'Woh Apni Yaad Dilane Ko' (Jugnu-1947). An icing on the cake was a superhit duet 'Yahan Badla Wafa Ka' with Noor Jehan composed by Firoze Nizami and his popularity soared to new heights. He also appeared on the big screen in films: Laila Majnu (1945), Shahjehan (1946), Samaj Ko Badal Dalo (1947) and Shahaed (1948). After the assassination of Mahatma Gandhi, the team of Husan-

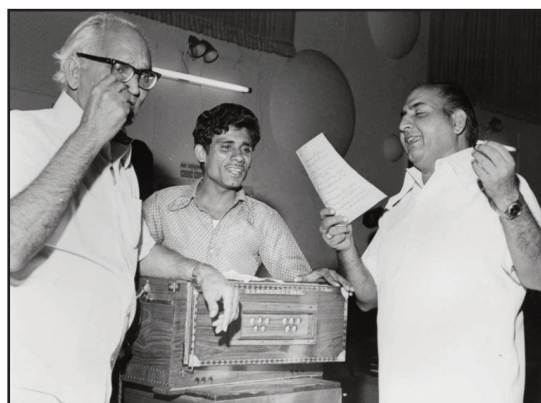


lal-Bhagatram, Rajendra Krishan and Mohammad Rafi overnight created the moving eulogy 'Suno Suno Ae Duniya Walo'. The year 1949 was the undisputed hinge over which the floodgates of Mohammad Rafi's melodies opened..

border. His duets with Lata Mangeshkar 'Kaali Kangi Naal' and 'Tumba Vajdae Na' also made to the top of the musical charts. He became the most sought after playback singer in the Punjabi Cinema.

Next year he became a busy singer in Hindi films and he gave playback in only three superhit Punjabi movies Bhaiya Ji, Chhai and Madari. His song 'Aji O Munda Moh Laya Taveetan Wala Damdi Da Sakk Malke' (Chhai) caught the fancy of the Punjabi youth and it became rage even beyond the Punjab territory. In 1951, he sang three songs under the baton of Sardul Kwatra and his duet with Asha Bhosle 'Tun PeenghTe Main Parchhavan' hit the bull's eye. Punjab was still reeling under the pain of partition, when his philosophical rendering 'Darh Vatt Zamana Katt Bhale Din Aawange' (Jugni-1953) became a healing touch. By now, Rafi became a force to reckon with in Hindi Cinema, he found little time for Punjabi movies. However, he made a thunderous come back with 'Jatt Kudiyaan Ton Darda Mara' (Bhangra-1959). In 1960, he gave playback to the dance director Sohan Lal Khanna in the popular bhangra number 'Teri Kanak Di Raakhi Mundiya' (Do Lachhian).

Rafi was a prolific singer in Punjabi films like Heer Syal, Pagri Sambhal Jatta, Billo, Guddi, Walait Pass, Chaudhary Karnail Singh, Geet Bahaaran



Radio, Lahore went for a hair cut to the saloon, where Pheeku was singing Waris Shah's Heer in quintessential Amritsari style. Impressed by his voice, Jiwan Lal took young Rafi under his wings and trained him in classical music and some commonly used Raagas in Punjabi folk music. Rafi picked up the intricacies of music from well-known vocalists and instrumentalists like Abdul Waheed Khan and Chotte Ghulam Ali Khan. Later in life, this casual Radio artist rose to the unprecedented heights in Indian Film In-

paid him one hundred Rupees and a rail ticket from Lahore to Bombay. The story of Rafi's first recording as narrated by Naushad "In order to give a marching effect to the patriotic song 'Hindustan Ke Hum Hain' (Pehle Aap-1944), he asked the chorus singers to wear Military heavy shoes and sing the song making a rhythmic sound by hitting the booted legs in unison. After the recording, Rafi's feet were bleeding but his face was glowing with the joy of singing his first song in a Hindi movie." However, some sources

Rafi was extremely nostalgic about his Punjabi roots. He recorded many Punjabi folk, film songs and Gurbani Shabads etc. After the partition, he devoted equally to playback singing in Hindi and Punjabi movies. He made significant contribution to Punjabi cinema by rendering 262 songs in 105 Punjabi movies. He recorded five songs in Punjabi film 'Lachhi' (1949) under the music direction of Hansraj Behl. His solo 'Jag Wala Mela Yaaro' became immensely popular on both sides of the

De, Khedan De Din Char, Pardesi Dhola, Laajo, Sat Saliyan, Dharti Veeran Di, Sapni, Sassi Punnu, Laaiye Tod Nibhaiye, Dupatta, Kankan De Ohle, Dukh Bhanjan Tera Naam, Bhagat Dhanna Jatt, Morni, Guru Manio Granth, Lachhi, Dhyanu Bhagat, Ladlee, Mahi Munda and Sassi Punnu (1983).

His repertoire of Punjabi melodies included Daana-Paani Khich Ke Liaunda (Guddi); Ghar Babul Da (Chaudhary Karnail Singh); Vekhiya (Contd. on next page)

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Greetings and Good wishes to The Ambedkar Times and The Desh Doaba

"The media's the most powerful entity on earth. They have the power to make the innocent guilty and to make the guilty innocent, and that's power. Because they control the minds of the masses." - **Malcolm X**

There is no point in mentioning about the importance of media in our lives particularly for those who live and enjoy freedom of expression in the open and democratic set up. It gives birth to 'Expressions of Freedom' as my senior colleague in the diplomatic fraternity, Ambassador Bal Anand has asserted in his book "Expressions of Freedom". The Ambedkar Times and the Desh Doaba has done well in this regard both in freedom of expression and expression of freedom over the years particularly with reference to the rights and aspirations of the under-privileged and marginalized in India and abroad. It is not an easy job to launch and run a paper particularly in a foreign land. But my friend Prem Chumber and his associates could do it in California in the USA with a great success. I thought of taking this opportunity, when we generally greet our friends and relations and wish them all the best on Christmas and New Year, to greet and applaud Chief



Editor Prem Chumber and the Ambedkar Times and the Desh Doaba further success and prosperity in the years to come. These media organs have been of great help in disseminat-

ing the much needed information and bring into focus the interests of the society particularly the weaker sections.

The Ambedkar Times and The Desh Doaba are rightly dedicated to the mission and thought of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Babu Mangu Ram Mungowalia. Both these champions of equality and fraternity were aware of the importance of media and started their own papers like The Mooknayak and The Adi Danka which became the mouthpieces of the concerns and interests of the downtrodden in those difficult days. It may not be out of place to mention that another scion of Chumber family, C.L. Chumber elder brother of Prem Chumber was also a dedicated activist.

He also started and edited The Qaumi Udariya in Jalandhar which was dedicated to Manyawar Kanshi Ram. Prem Chumber carried on and

moved forward the caravan in the USA. It is a matter of great satisfaction.

It is a matter of concern that in India the under privileged and marginalized do not have access to the main stream media. It is not good for our democratic polity and unequal society. We should support and appreciate the good job done by the small players like The Ambedkar Times and The Desh Doaba in filling the gap. More is needed to be done as Corazon Aquino rightly said, "The media's power is frail. Without the people's support, it can be shut off with the ease of turning a light switch."

Happy New Year to the readers of The Ambedkar Times and The Desh Doaba



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

Mohammed Rafi: The Cultural Icon of Punjab

(Continue from page 11)

Pishore Vai (Pardesi Dhola); Ji Karda Ae Is Duniya Nu (Geet Baharaan De); Na Disse Tu (Satluj De Kande); Chan De Mathe Daag (Dharti Veeran Di); Akhaan De Theekre Wich (Sassi Punnu); Jaach Mainu Aa Gai (Shonkan Mele Di); Mitter Pyare Nu (Nanak Nam Jahaj Hai); Russke Tu Challi Gayiyon (Papi Tarey Anek); Sanu Bukk Naal Paani (Ladlee); Eh Mor Kiyon Pailaan (Mahi Munda); Na Russ Heere Meriye (Chann Pardesi); Laggi Wale (Sassi Punnu); Mera Wichhdeya Yaar (Sohni Mahiwal) and Matlab Di Eh Duniya (Duniya Matlab Di) etc.

Apart from Punjabi film music, Rafi cut many records of non film Punjabi folk songs, Shabads, Naats etc. A 78 rpm record of two Shabads 'Har Ko Naam Sada Sukhdai.' and 'Jis Sar Upar Tu Swami' released in 1950s became an all time hit and these shabads were regularly played in the mornings from the community loud-speakers of the village Gurudwaras. Rafi had also recorded many Punjabi folk songs like 'Saadi Russ Gayi Jhanjran Wali Sade Bhaane Rabb Russ Giya.' and opera 'Heer Ranjha' became immensely popular.

Hindi film songs with Punjabi lyrics/ wordings like 'Main Koi Jhoot-Boliya' (Jagte Raho), 'Le De Saiyyan Orhni' (Pavitra Papi), 'Main Jatt Yamla' (Pratigya) and many more have ever remained popular. Mohammed Rafi gave a special twist to such songs to make these popular amongst non Punjabi speaking populace. Having excelled in playback, Rafi composed music for eight non film songs including four songs written by a Punjabi poet Mohinder Singh Bedi. Rafi's conversation at home and in private circles was always in the Punjabi

accent. Rafi was remorseful at failing to perform live in Lahore as the Indo-China War shattered that dream and he never got a second chance to visit Lahore.

Rafi had established fairly wide base of association with bollywood from the legendary Shyam Sunder to Bappi

the soulful 'Hum Bekhudi Mein' to the comic 'Sar Jo Tera Chakraye', from the philosophical 'Dekhi Zamane Ki Yaari' to the frivolous 'Aiya Karoon Main Kya SukooSukoo', he could sing anything.

To help every little composer trying to gain a toe-hold in the quick-

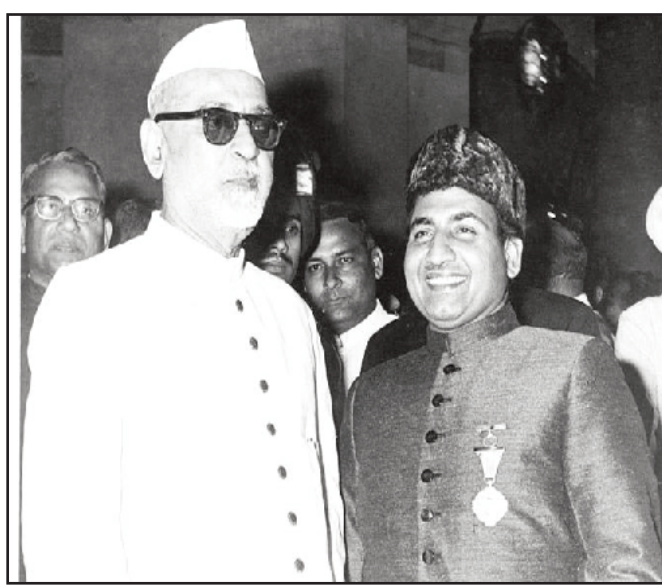
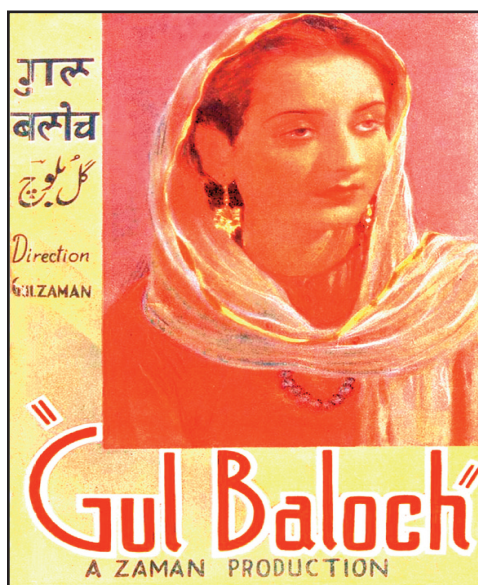
jaji (Punjabi) and Rafi extended his helping hand to settle them in Bollywood.

He performed in live concerts at over 30 venues across the globe, reaching out to millions of fans in United States, U.K., Canada etc. Rafi rendered his last song 'Tu Kahin Aas Paas Hai Dost' (Aas Paas-1980). He sang approximately 6,000 songs in different Indian languages and many foreign languages like English, Persian, Arabic, Sinhalese, Creole and Dutch etc.

At thirteen, Rafi got married to his cousin Bashiran Biwi and they were blessed with a son Sayeed and a daughter Zakia. However, after a few years, the two got separated. In 1944, he married Bilquis Bano, from whom he had three daughters and three sons. He followed a home-to-recording-and-back-home-schedule. He had a funny habit to fly kites, a typical Amritsari

trait. He would sulk like a baby if his kites were cut. He won numerous Awards and accolades, starting with the Silver Medal given by Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru on the first anniversary of Indian Independence. In 1965, he was decorated with the Padma Shri. He won the coveted National Award for the song 'Kya Hua Tera Wada' (1977). He won Filmfare Award for the Best Male Playback Singer six times.

Rafi suffered a major heart attack and the world of music lost one of its brightest luminaries on 31 July, 1980. Mohammed Rafi still shines like a Polaris on Indian film music horizon. Celebrities have fans, but Rafi had worshippers, even some of them have "Rafi Temples" in their houses.



Lahiri. Rafi revered Naushad as his Guru, mentor and guide while Naushad considered Rafi, God's gift to film music. His voice had unique feature of screen adaptability and Rafi could mould his voice to the persona and style of the actor. Rafi did have a special liking for 'Jatt-Yamla' Dharmendra, who always openly showered his love on Rafi.

Rafi brought radical change to the Hindi film music by introducing the concept of singing to one and a half "Saptaks" (scales) rather than the usual one Saptak. He possessed such a wide singing range that he could easily sing in three octaves without veering out of control. From the classical 'Madhuban Mein Radhika Nachi Re' to the swinging 'Aaja Aaja Main Hoon Pyar Tera', from

sands of filmdom was Rafi's singing philosophy. So unique was his vibrant vocal mystique that he kept the small-time composers professionally alive particularly those belonging to Punjab. Nissar Bazmi was a small composer in India but became a big name in Pakistan. When Bazmi was in distress, he approached Rafi to sing 'Chanda Ka Dil Toot Gaya' (Khoj-1953) for the maximum Rs 50 that his producer could afford and Rafi charged Bazmi just the token fee of Rupee one. Similarly, he obliged S. Mohinder with foot-tapping rhythm of 'Tera Kaam Hai Jalna Parwane' (Papi). Likewise, given the aid of Rafi's vocals, G.S. Kohli was able to come up in Lambe Haath. Sapan-Jagmohan as a duo got their break in Begaana (Hindi) and Jee-