



# Ambedkar Times Weekly

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## Remembering Shri Ishwar Das Pawar on his Death Anniversary (June 11)

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief

(Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba)

Sh. Ishwar Dass Pawar is known for his significant contribution for the upliftment of Scheduled Castes. He had the honour of becoming the first Civil Servant Officer from the community. After assuming the portfolio of Passport Officer, many people belonging to Ad Dharmi



Ishwar Das Pawar  
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

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

The lesson to serve one's community, Sh. Pawar Ji learnt from the teachings of Ad Dharm movement. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of the glorious Ad Dharam movement of Punjab, influenced Pawar Sahib deeply. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji used to visit him in Chandigarh at his residence and Mrs. Pawar look after them passionately as both of them were well aware of their commitment towards the Dalit Samaj. ID Pawar was not only a source of aspiration for his people but also great support to help them at various levels of administration for their day-to-day life requirements. Ambedkar-times forum takes lots of pride in serializing Sh. I. D. Pawar's autobiography "My Struggle in Life". Our thanks also to Sh. Pamas Rai Bhatti whose contribution towards the publication of this valuable treasure of our Samaj was duly recognized by Pawar Sahib in the preface of "My Struggle in Life"

Our heartfelt tribute to

Ishwar Das Pawar Sahib on his Death Anniversary

## Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar-Man who lived by example

### On 15th death anniversary- A Tribute by Ambassador V.B.Soni

There are heroes and there are legends .Heroes get remembered but legends never fade away. Some among them get recognition which they richly deserve in their life time. Baba Saheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar turned out to be an all-time hero. More than 66 years after his parinirvan his image is getting bigger and bigger. He is getting recognition across the political spectrum. He was far ahead of his time. He has earned for himself a position in the pantheon of heroes that will be difficult to match for some time to come. He will be the role model for generations to come. His message and appeal transcends beyond his community or even nation. For me I had the privilege to be associated with a living legend-Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar. Providence brought me closer to him when I got married to his daughter Kamlesh in 1968, after being selected for Indian Foreign Service. From then on I would sit for hours to gain insight into his brilliant mind. He related at length the story of his struggles in life, how he overcame them, emerging as the top luminary in the legal domain. He had such a treasure trove of memories of his fighting battles. All these have been recorded in his autobiography which this publication AMBEDKAR TIMES has been in the forefront to feature at regular intervals.

Chaudhry Sahib was a well-read, erudite, and scholarly person. He was full of praise for the role played by early pioneers in education field, viz. Jyotirao and Savitri Bai Phule, particularly for the girl child. His desire to know more and more about the community wellbeing was insatiable. He kept seeking for information on books, journals/magazines on his favourite subject from the newly emerging world of internet. He took pains in giving me all the information and clarifying any doubts that I had on the subject of mutual interest.

Pawar Sahib's common refrain used to be that the pernicious caste system has been perpetuated as the means to keep hierarchy, as per the high caste Hindu mind-set, in order to maintain their own superior ranking, advantage and privilege. Referring to the so called 'good and kind people', his impression was that superficially they may appear sympathetic but deep within they too are interested in keeping the discriminatory practice and inferior status to continue as it is. Nothing concrete was done to change it.

During my extended numerous one-to-one sessions with Pawar Sahib one particular topic that kept recurring was the "Ad Dharam" movement, started by another visionary leader in the 1930s Mangu Ram. He spearheaded the protest movements of the scheduled castes in Punjab. The movement signified its central concept that the scheduled castes were not members of Hinduism or any other "upper castes religion". Rather, they were members of a distinctly separate religious community indeed, the oldest religion of India. Fur-

ther, upper castes were their descendants. Mangu Ram joined the Ghadar movement, the international network of militant Punjabi nationalists, based in San Francisco.

On return to Punjab, he got involved with the liberation of his own scheduled caste people from oppression. He invoked the name of the spiritual leader of their movement, Guru Ravi Das. The followers would swarm the village bathing tank, enter local temple, or drink water from the



V.B.Soni  
Ambassador (Retd.)

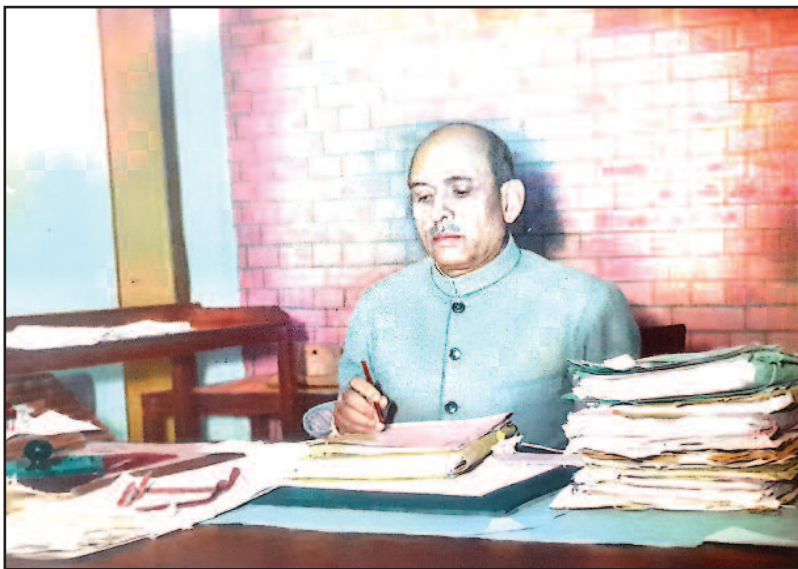
upper caste well, as an act of defiance.

Most of the activists of the movement were aimed at improving their community. They exhorted followers to abstain from use of alcohol and drugs. Women were to be included as equals in the modern society envisioned. Education was given due importance. According to its

philosophy, the poor only have three kinds of power, "qaumiat (collective solidarity), mazhab (spiritual symbols), and majlis (organisation)." By utilising the scheduled castes under the name and symbol of Ad Dharm, power was sought to be created for the powerless vacuum of the poor. The massive support created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Many of their candidates won political elections but along the way, lure of power derailed them from their main objective.

During our interaction Pawar Sahib often used to lament the fact that the movement started losing the strength or diversity of membership that the old movement had.

Choudhry Pawar Sahib passed away on June 11, 2007 at the ripe age of a year short of 100 years. The best tribute one can pay to his legacy is to learn from his profile of courage and follow the example he set. He was a pioneer in many ways. Fighting against heavy odds and caste prejudices, he was one of the first person from Punjab from the community to become a law graduate, to join judiciary service as officer. During the various positions held he did everything possible to propagate their cause. While at Home Department, he made issue of passport to the community members aspiring for jobs in U.K. and the U.S. simple and easy. While working for Services Selection Board, he brought changes in recruitment rules to make their selection without bureaucratic hurdles. As Member of Chandigarh Housing Board, he ensured that no hurdles were put, in allocation of dwelling place of their own. May he continue to guide us.





# Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar-Man who lived by example

## Ishwar Das Pawar



Pawar, Ishwar Das; BA, LLB; Former District and Sessions Judge; Born on May 9, 1908 Dehlan (Punjab); married to Lakshmi Devi, three sons and two daughters; education D.A.V. College, Lahore; joined Service in Punjab High Court, Lahore 1932; Sub-Judge, Punjab Civil Service (Judicial) 1940; Under Secretary to the Government of Punjab, Shimla for a year; member, Punjab Subordinate Services Selection Board for 8 years. Retired as District and Sessions Judge 1966; Presiding Officer, Industrial Tribunal for Punjab (including Haryana), also for industrial dispute cases referred to the Tribunal by the GOI; practiced as an Advocate, Punjab and Haryana High Court for 4 years; Member: Punjab Planning Board for 5 years, Chandigarh Housing Board for 6 years, Local Advisory Committee and other various Committees of the Union Territory of Chandigarh for several years; publications-- My Struggle in Life; Reservation for Scheduled Castes: Awards Merit Scholarship;

Courtesy: Asia's who's who of men & women of achievement



(Left to right) Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar with Pamas Rai Bhatti



Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar with his wife Lakshmi Devi



(Left to right) Pamas Rai Bhatti with Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar



Left to right; Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar (Other four are not known to us)



Left to right- Dr. Atma Singh, Rao Bhim Singh and Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar



Pawar family: Sitting from left to right Lakshmi Devi, Kamlesh Soni, V.B. Soni, Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar. Standing from left to right: Naresh Pawar, Ramesh Pawar, Sudesh Pawar and Suresh Pawar.



Chaudhry Ishwar Das Pawar with his wife Lakshmi Devi giving kaniya Dan to his daughter Kamlesh at the time of her marriage to V.B. Soni.





# Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



**Sue Frost**

## Sacramento County Unincorporated Areas Looking to Legalize Cannabis

With the legalization of recreational cannabis in 2016, we have seen a status quo in terms of where you can legally purchase it in Sacramento County, with only Sacramento City and tiny Isleton currently allowing it. Due to a recent action by the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors, unincorporated Sacramento County could be added to that list - which would impact communities like Orangethale, Antelope, North Highlands, and Rio Linda/Elverta. I would like to take this opportunity to explain to you what happened, what my stance is, and where we are going from here.

On May 10th, the Board of



Supervisors had a workshop to hear a report on the positive economic impacts of allowing recreational cannabis sales. During this discussion, multiple Supervisors said they would like this to be approved, and asked staff to bring a formal item back to the Board of Supervisors as soon as possible so that this issue could be placed on the November ballot for a public vote. Even though it's legal in California, jurisdictions have to get residents to have a public vote in order to get it approved locally.

The push to get this allowed in Sacramento County is entirely due to money. Based on the report that we received, cannabis retail would generate anywhere between \$5 million to \$14.5 million each year for the County general fund. And with projected budget shortfalls in the near future, that money could be incredibly important.

I was reluctant to support bringing this back for a formal vote however, as I personally felt that this topic was being too quickly rushed and wasn't giving the public enough of an opportunity to have their voices heard. While the economic aspect of this issue is important, I feel of equal importance are the public safety and public health aspects - both of which the Board of Supervisors has not had any discussion over. As such, I made a request that before this is formally voted on, that we have full presentations from both public safety and public health to get their take on this issue. This request was broadly acceptable to the rest of the Supervi-

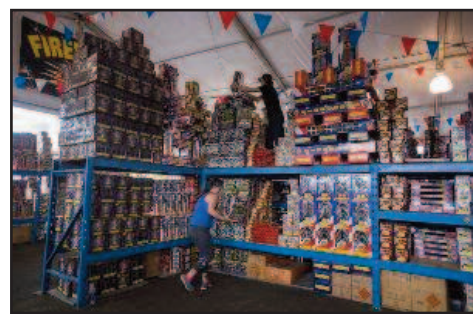
sors, and will happen in the near future.

When it came time for a vote on whether or not to bring this back for a formal vote to put this on the November ballot, the issue passed by a vote of 3-2 with me voting "no". While I have not made my mind up on whether or not to ultimately support this, I continued to feel that this issue was being rushed too quickly and that we shouldn't decide to organize a vote on this until after we have heard from public safety and public health.

Based on that vote, the Board of Supervisors is now slated to vote on whether or not to put this on the November ballot on July 26th. In order to get placed on the ballot it will need a minimum of four Supervisors to approve it, meaning at least one of the two Supervisors who voted "no" on May 10th will have to switch their vote to a "yes". In the meantime, I hope you will tell me your thoughts by responding to this post so I can start to get a feel for how my constituents want me to vote.

## County Social Host Ordinance

The Board of Supervisors, at its May 11 meeting, introduced an ordinance amending Sacramento County Code Chapter 4.54 to add host liability and penalties for violations of county code relating to fireworks. The ordinance continued to the May 24 Board



meeting for adoption, and will go into effect June 24, 2022.

Strategies to help address fireworks safety concerns in the past have focused on education and mitigation, including press releases, informational handouts and fireworks inspections.

Enforcement efforts have also included illegal fireworks buy-busts, confiscation and citations, arson investigations and proper disposal of illegal fireworks.

However, a public safety tool that has been increasingly used successfully in other jurisdictions is a "host ordinance" that places accountability for sales and/or use of illegal fireworks on property owners.

"Host," as it relates to this ordinance, means a person who knowingly permits or allows fireworks to be lit, exploded or sold on private property owned or controlled by the per-

son, and the person knows or reasonably should have known that the fireworks would have been lit, exploded or sold.

Amending Sacramento County Code Chapter 4.54 creates new host responsibilities that include liability and penalties with increased fines for violations of the county code relating to Fireworks and provides an additional tool for reducing harm caused by use of illegal fireworks. Penalties for violations are as follows: \$1,000 for the first violation \$2,500 for the second violation within one year of the first violation \$5,000 for each additional violation within one year of the first violation \$10,000 for each violation that occurs within the American River Parkway

The ordinance to add host liability for illegal fireworks allows fire, law enforcement (including park rangers) and code enforcement agencies to hold the owner or person in charge of real property or conducting an illegal fireworks event responsible for costs of response associated with the presence of emergency personnel, the discharge of illegal fireworks on private property or the American River Parkway, and any aiding and abetting the discharge of illegal fireworks.

## How to identify legal and illegal fireworks:

All legal fireworks are called Safe and Sane

All legal fireworks bear the state fire marshal's seal

Anything that goes up in the air, travels or explodes is illegal and dangerous

Residents should report illegal fireworks sales and usage at the following phone numbers/emails:

Unincorporated County: 916-874-5115 or

reportfireworks@saccounty.net

Sacramento: 916-808-FIRE

Folsom: 916-355-7231

Elk Grove: fireworks@elkgrovepd.org

Rancho Cordova: 916-362-5115

Citrus Heights: 916-727-5500

Galt: 209-366-7000

Aren't sure who or how to report? Call 3-1-1 to be connected to the right place.

## Sacramento County Microbusiness Grant Program

Are you a business owner in Sacramento County of a microbusiness



(less than 5 full time employees) who was negatively impacted by COVID in 2019? If not, do you know any?

Please click the link below to apply for a \$2,500 grant from the County.

<https://sac4micro.org/>

## What you Need to Know For the 2022 Election

The June 7 Primary Election is just days away and 18 Vote Centers opened this last weekend Saturday, May 28 for people that would like to vote in person, need to register



to vote (and cast their conditional ballot), those that need assistance in language, or to use the accessibility touch screen machines.

This Saturday, June 4, the remaining 69 Vote Centers open, giving voters 87 different locations to cast their ballot in person, register to vote, drop off a voted ballot or receive special assistance while they vote.

Remember, if you are not voting in person, ballots must either be dropped off in a drop box by 8 p.m. June 7 or postmarked June 7 through the mail to be counted. If you are voting in person, on Election Day, you must be in line to vote by 8 p.m.

## Committed to a Safe and Secure Election

Electioneering, voter intimidation or any other disruptions at the Vote Centers will not be tolerated. Anyone that creates a disruption or breaks Election code on electioneering at a Vote Center will immediately be requested to leave the property. Electioneering isn't just talking to voters about candidates, propositions and measures. Electioneering also includes wearing clothing, hats or buttons depicting a specific candidate, proposition or measure. Voters that are wearing campaign material will be asked to remove it before allowing them to vote.

All ballots are transported to, processed and tabulated at our Registrar's office. New this year, we are adding Apple AirTags to our ballot bags coming back from drop boxes and Vote Centers to ensure we always know where our ballots are located. Our tabulation machine room is secured, under 24-hour surveillance and has very limited access in and out. Once our staff starts tabulating ballots, we will have a 24/7 live

(Contd. on next page)



# Humble Tribute to Chaudhary Ishwar Dass Pawar



The Editor-in-Chief of the esteemed Ambedkar Times, Prem Chumber informed me that the

Ambedkar Times will carry a Special issue with regard to Chaudhary Ishwar Dass Pawar, a legendry personality of the community, with a view to remember him and pay a befitting tribute to the noble soul and a community activist of his own standing. It is a great gesture for information and benefit of the community, particularly the weaker sections of the society.

Chaudhary Ishwar Dass Sahib (May 9, 1908 – June 11, 2007) was a son of the soil of Pun-



Ishwar Das Pawar  
District and Sessions Judge (retd.)

jab – a first law graduate of the community, PCS (Judicial) rose to become the Session Judge and worked in various Departments of the government and served as a Member on the Service Selection Board and Chandigarh Housing Board. An ardent supporter of Babasaheb Ambedkar and Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Chaudhary Sahib, did a great deal of work to help his fellow brethren in whatever way possible under the system. My father often spoke very high of him particularly with regard to his unstinted help in getting passports to the community aspirants who intended to go abroad. It was a matter of co-incident that he passed

away on June 11, A d - D h a r a m Foundation Day. I take this opportunity to pay my humble tribute to Chaudhary Ishwar Dass

Pawar, father-in-law of my senior colleague and mentor, Ambassador Vidya Bhushan Soni, and wish the readers of the Ambedkar Times all success and further progress.



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

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stream camera in the tabulation room for security and transparency purposes. The live stream can be found on the Elections website homepage.

Wondering if your ballot made it to our office and has been processed? Sign up for "Where's My Ballot" which will alert you when your Vote by Mail ballot is processed and signature checked by our staff.

**Results – They Aren't Final on June 7**

While the first release of results happens after 8 p.m. on June 7, those results are in no way final. The county Elections Office began tabulating today - the first release of

results will only be inclusive of early voting. All in-person voting on June 7, as well as drop box and Vote by Mail ballots received on June 7 and after will be tabulated and released in subsequent results. California allows for 29 days after the Election to certify the vote.

**Vote: Pick a Way, ANY Way**

Choose how, when and where you want to vote.

By Mail: All registered voters received a ballot in the mail. Place the voted ballot inside the pink envelope provided, sign the envelope and return – your postage is paid!

Vote Center: With the passage of the California Voter's Choice Act, traditional polling places were

replaced with Vote Centers that are open for up to 11 days, including Election Day. This means voters can choose when, where and how they want to vote – at ANY Vote Center in the County. Avoid the lines, vote early!

At the Vote Center you can drop off your completed ballot OR vote in person. There is even weekend voting!

**18 Vote Centers open Saturday, May 28 for a full 11 days**

An additional 69 Vote Centers open for four days beginning June 4, 2022

Eligible residents can also register to vote, update their registration and cast their ballot at a Vote

Center, even on the day of the election.

Drop box: Voted/signed ballots may be placed in any of the 74 secure Drop box locations throughout Sacramento County.

When using a drop box, ensure that is an official, secure box provided by your County Election's Office. All official County drop boxes are pink and have the Sacramento County wave logo on them!

A complete list of Vote Center and Drop Box locations can be found online.

For more election and voter information, visit the Sacramento County Voter Registration and Elections website.



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(Special on Environment Day)

# Special attention needs to be paid to environment

Every year on June 5, all the countries of the world seem to be trying their best to celebrate Environment Day as a show off, but in reality we are not doing anything to protect the environment. The practice of celebrating Environment Day began in 1972 after the first international conference on the environment in Stockholm, Sweden, that lasted from 5 to 16 June. At the conference, all the participating countries agreed on 26 environmental issues. Along with the economic development of the country, special emphasis was laid on providing a clean environment for every human being and it was also stated that every citizen has his / her responsibility to keep the environment clean. The conference also pledged to promote sustainable economic development, utilize renewable and non-renewable natural resources in such a way that the needs of the future population can be easily met while meeting the needs of the present population. For proper management of air, water, land, flora and fauna formation of committees was suggested.

Fifty years have passed since this conference and in all these years all the countries of the world have been celebrating Environment Day on 5th June every year, but they have not taken seriously any of the issues discussed in the conference. On the top, temperature is rising every year and emission of greenhouse gases is increasing. Earth's average temperature has risen 1.1 degree Celsius since the Pre- Industrial Revolution Period. Every part of a degree of increase in temperature is very important. An increase of one degree in average temperature increases the incidents of heavy rainfall by 7 per cent, the incidents of heat waves by 5 per cent and the incidents of wildfires by several times. An increase of one degree in the average temperature of ocean water increases the wind speed in cyclones/hurricanes by 5 per cent and a cyclone/hurricane with higher wind speed causes more damage.

Rising global temperature is now causing a sharp rise in extreme heat and cold waves incidents. In India, the summer season started in March instead of May this year. Aver-

age temperature for both March and April broke a 122-years old record. The arrival of heat waves in the month of May made the people miserable. Rising temperature in March has also a devastating effect on crop yields. Wheat yield in the plains has declined by 4 to 5 quintal per acre, while apple production in the hilly areas has also declined significantly.

India's air and water are severely polluted. According to the World Air Quality Report released by IQ Air in March 2022: in 2021, 35 of



the 50 most polluted cities in the world are in India and the national capital Delhi has been the world's most polluted capital for the fourth consecutive year. According to a report by Greenpeace Southeast Asia, 1.6 million people died in India in 2020 from air pollution related diseases. Sadly, children are also dying in large numbers in India due to air pollution. According to a report by the State of Global Air 2020, 1 lakh 16 thousand children in the country could not even complete the first month of their lives in 2019 due to air pollution. According to a 2021 report by the World Health Organization (WHO), 7 million people worldwide die each year from air pollution and 9 out of 10 people breathe in polluted air. Nearly six decades ago, all the developed countries of the world, especially England, France, Germany, Sweden, the Netherlands, Finland, the United States of America, Canada and a few others were badly affected by the air and water pollution caused by the Industrial Revolution. The air and water of these countries were so

polluted that every year hundreds of people in these countries died due to air and water pollution. Air pollution killed 4,000 people in a week in England in 1952. Frightened by such incidents, developed countries convened the first international conference on environmental protection in 1972. Although developed countries have now managed to control air and water pollution, the grim truth behind how it was managed is that these countries are slowly setting up their polluting industrial units in devel-

oping countries. As a result the developing countries are now plagued by air and water pollution. China, the United States of America, and India are still emitting large amounts of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere, which are rapidly warming the atmosphere. If we talk only about carbon dioxide gas in this regard, its quantity was only 280 parts per million (ppm) before the Pre-Industrial Revolution Period which has now increased to 421.57 ppm.

Since the Stockholm Conference in 1972, there have been several conferences to protect the environment and natural resources, but no meaningful results have yet emerged. After the alarming and threatening revelations of a report by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) in 2014, however, all the countries took immediate action and called for a sharp reduction in greenhouse gas emissions under the Paris Climate Agreement. A blueprint was drawn up, but neither the blueprint has been implemented since then, nor has it followed the

conference in Glasgow in November 2021, which was the sequel to the Paris Climate Agreement.

The IPCC, ahead of the Glasgow conference, in the first installment of its Sixth Report, clearly

stated that the increase in the average temperature of the earth is due to the impact of human activities. That is why all the countries must work together to reduce greenhouse gas emissions expeditiously. Although the IPCC has been urging countries around the world to take action to save the earth and all living beings, citing the deteriorating state of the environment, but the countries that emit large amounts of greenhouse gases are deliberately turning a blind eye.

To protect the environment, the governments of all the countries need to take action at their own level. Countries that emit more greenhouse gases at the international level should come forward and fulfill their responsibilities. China (28 per cent) and the United States of America (15 per cent) are now emitting 43 per cent of total greenhouse gases into the atmosphere. India, which is the third largest emitter of greenhouse gases after China and the United States of America, should also fulfill its responsibility to reduce emission of greenhouse gases. The Government of India should take steps to address the environmental degradation at all levels as the geographical location of our country is such that it is being hit by all kinds of natural calamities. According to a 2020 report by the Council on Energy and Environment, 75 per cent of the country's districts are affected by some form of natural disaster every year. If we really want to celebrate the Environment Day, we must take concrete steps and review every year the efforts made for the protection of the environment at every level. The economic development model should also be nature-friendly and pro-people.



**Dr. Gurinder Kaur**

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**Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD**

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**Goodie Takhar, PhD**



# Jathere (ਜਠੇ) - What It Means To Me - Knowing and Respecting Ones Ancestry

I belong to the Mahey clan (Gotra - ਗੋਤਰਾ) of Punjab pertaining to the 'untouchable denomination' of Hindus. I don't know exactly but I was told that there were Maheys in Jaat community (Sikhs) in Punjab also who are (Shudras) in accordance with the Hindu Varna system. This requires further research and verification, however. I know that both Hindus and Sikhs in Punjab and beyond venerate their ancestors or perform Jathere worship. My family is no exception and tends to go with the main stream of the community and the society not as some special effort or connotation but as obvious and natural corollary to follow the famous saying 'While in Rome do as Romans do' being a small cog in the big wheel.

For good or bad, I don't know, it is a matter of some relief or satisfaction for me that at least for the last two generations of my family starting from my grandparents (Rulda Ram and Nandi) and down to my parents (Sodhi Ram and Preeto) and my brothers and sisters and also our children, at present, are not ritualistic or dogmatic about religious matters consciously or otherwise. We are God fearing people by upbringing and day to day living. I and wife

Vidya tend to stand with the family and the community in their thick and thin without giving any consideration to this 'ism' or that 'waad' for social interaction be it at Home, Gurudwara, Mandir, Vihar, Masjid, Church and so on. We are neither theist nor atheists by thinking and conduct but are more inclined to be agnostic at the back of our minds. I and my wife Vidya always felt like joining our extended family to stand with them through thick and thin including 'Jathere' or 'Sharaad' events not that we tend to be ritualistic or superstitious but as a matter of harmony and peace, as we please, in the family. We are not alien or opposed to the concept or thought of veneration or remembrance of elders or ancestors. I thought of this explanation to put the matter in its perspective without getting dogmatic about this social interaction.

With this background, I come to our visit to Mahey Gotra Jathere in a remote Village Ryatpur Jattan in District Nawan Shehar (Shaheed Bhagat Singh Nagar in Punjab along with my brothers, Krishan Lal and Paramjit with our families on May 28, the day of annual congregation (Mela) at the site. My brothers and their families go there every successive year. This year my daughter-in-law Sulekha was keen to go to pay respects to our elders and in turn I informed my brothers that my son Rupesh and Sulekha would also accompany them. Kishan, knowing well my mind and inclination of generally not doing these rituals, suggested that it would be good if also joined them, if not anything else let it be a family outing. I agreed and

joined them. Instead of our cars, we decided to hire a Tempo where all of us could be accommodated for easy logistics. Thanks Kishan, it was a good fun.

Ryatpur is situated about 5 kms in the interior on Anandpur Sahib Road from Garhshankar. In fact, it was my second visit to our Jathere - the first was in March/April, 1983-84, at the time of the marriage of our sister Maya and we were in India on Home-leave from Sana'a (Yemen) to seek blessing of our ancestors. I don't remember much as there was nothing much built or erected at the non-descript site at that time except some tid-bits with our co-passengers of the extended family namely; Buja Ram and Dalipa Ram among others on the tractor-trolley which was our transport mode. Buja Ram kept us going with his earthy wit and art of story-



telling. There are some interesting anecdotes of the visit with Bujha Ram which I would share separately at some other occasion. Excuse me for saying the truth; I was not much impressed by the Jathere site, management and their functioning. We started early to avoid the rush of the Mela and return back before it gets crowded. But it was not to be. We reached there at around 8 in the morning after about 1.30 hours travel from Bootan Mandi Jalandhar. The temporary parking arrangements in the nearby fields were made but it was chaotic. Hundreds of the Mahey clan was already there on bikes, cars, hired vehicles etc. The bandovast like sound system, drinking water, sitting (squatting) were still underway. The long queues of faithful to venerate their Jathere were already in the making. But there was hardly any pre-planning, it seemed, by the management and nobody was bothered or perturbed visibly. I met many of our known people like; Senior Executive of BSNL Hemant Mahey, Senior Banker Sita Ram Mahey and my other fellow BootanMandians Bawa Mahey among others with their families. Thousands of thousands were



likely to come and the crowd by swelling by the minute. I could feel that this trend of visiting or worshipping Jatheres was getting strong over the years. The reasons for this, to my mind, are increasing economic profile of the community and inherited belief to 'respect and regard of the Jatheres' rarely with a sense of conviction but as a 'Bheddchall' - camp follower in the given social structures of the main stream of the society or Hindu or Sikh social and spiritual norms. The management, I could guess, was interested only in collecting money and offerings in kind. Let us hope they learn from others of the upper strata of the society and conduct themselves. I was told that on the Mela day on May 28 every year a Mahey Family from Delhi comes and undertake the expenses on the Langar (community meal). There may be



many more like them waiting in the wings or doing something or the other to venerate and please their Jatheras. Just to satisfy my curiosity as to how come somebody thought of fixing or locating the Mahey Jatheras to this non-descript place at village Ryatpur, I enquired about this from many but could not find any plausible answer. Nobody could inform that why May 28 was fixed for the annual Mela. I think Jathera culture will remain and would rather get strengthened in the years to come. There is no point in making it an issue, if people get some peace of my in the process, let it be. More so, remembering ones ancestors may not be considered bad by any social norm.

I took help of the 'Google Baba' to know more about the Jathere tradition and culture and found this, "What is meant by ancestor worship? - Ancestor worship refers to rituals designed to commemorate and venerate the spirits of one's deceased forebears. While it is often associated with the Confucian notion of filial piety, ancestor worship crosses the boundaries of religious traditions, geographical regions, and

socioeconomic groups. In certain societies, the veneration of ancestors whose spirits are frequently held to possess the power to influence the affairs of the living is in vogue. It further explains, "Ancestor worship is a religious practice based on the belief that deceased family members have a continued existence, that the spirits of deceased ancestors will look after the family, take an interest in the affairs of the world, and possess the ability to influence the fortune of the living."

With my personal information and experience gathered during my call of diplomatic duties in various countries, I found that ancestor veneration is also prevalent in many countries of Africa, China, Japan, Vietnam and many countries of Europe. There is no harm

in remembering ones elders and ancestors to invoke their blessings for the good and further well-being. But it does not make any sense and is rather immoral to worship Jatheras, if one tends to ignore, neglect and trouble his or her parents while they are alive. Respect for elders and parents should become a social norm and we all would be at ease and happy. I conclude this with a poetic assertion of Allama Iqbal:

"ਗੁਜਰ ਗਯਾ ਅਬ ਚੋਠ ਦੌਰ ਸਾਕੀ, ਕਾ ਲੁਘੁ ਕੇ ਪੀਤੇ ਥੇ ਪੀਨੇ ਵਾਲੇ।  
ਬਨੇਗਾ ਸਾਝ ਜਠਾਨ ਮਯਖਾਨਾ, ਠਰ ਕੋਈ ਬਾਦਹਸ਼ਵਾਰ ਠੇਗਾ।  
ਤੁਮਹਾਰੀ ਤਹਜੀਬ ਅਪਨੇ ਖਜਰ ਸੇ ਆਪਕੀ ਖੜੁਦਕਸ਼ੀ ਕਰੇਗੀ।  
ਜੋ ਖਾਝੇ ਨਾਜੁਕਧੈ ਆਖ਼ਿਆਨਾ ਬਨੇਗਾ, ਨਾਪਾਏਦਾਰ ਠੇਗਾ।  
ਖੁਦਾਕੇ ਬਨੁਦੇ ਤੋ ਹੈ ਠਜ਼ਾਰੋਂ, ਵਨੌਮੋਂ ਫਰਿਤੇ ਹੈ ਮਾਰੇ-ਮਾਰੇ।  
ਮੈਂ ਤਸਕਾ ਬਨੁਦਾ ਠਕੁੰਗਾ ਜਸਿਕੋ, ਖੁਦਾ ਕੇ ਬਨੁਦੋਂ ਸੇ ਪ੍ਯਾਰ ਠੇਗਾ।"

**Postscript:-** With regard to Jathere and Sharaad, I have no believe in offerings of food and clothes which might go to my ancestors. These are superstitions only without any logical explanation, to my mind. But still sometimes tend to do certain thing which does not conform to your thinking. I narrate a story to support this. Khuswant Singh, a famous writer and columnist and an authority on Sikhism and Sikh scriptures was not a religious person as such. He wrote that he found 'Guruvani', many a times, self contradictory or illogical but he always found solace by listening to its recital or singing in the Kirantan (musically sung Guruvani). It explains the unbiased human psyche. No further explanation is called for.



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# CANDLE-LIGHT VIGIL HELD AT SHRI GURU RAVIDASS TEMPLE PITTSBURG (CA)

Brutal shooting by an 18 year old Salvador Ramos, killing 19 innocent young students and two teachers at Robb Elementary School in Ubalde, Texas on May 24th ,2022 deeply shocked and impacted Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha and the members of the Congregation with grief and sorrow.

After recitation of Path Sukhmani Sahib, a CANDLE-LIGHT VIGIL was held at this temple on June 4th, 2022 (Saturday) evening with

prayers for peace and tranquility of the lives lost in these ruthless and indiscriminate killings. Our entire congregation conveys its heartfelt sympathies and feelings of solace and compassion for the aggrieved families over this horrific tragedy.

We also strongly urge the related law enforcement agencies to investigate this unfortunate incident and take all the possible remedial measures to prevent the re-occurrence of any

such carnage in future.

Mr. Prem Chumber, Chief Editor Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times also endorsed the candle-light vigil ceremony held in the memory of the innocent victims of the brutal massacre.

Pictures taken at the candle-light vigil are also appended herewith for viewing. We also appreciate the members of the community for their participation in the candle-light vigil ceremony. **With all the sympathies.**



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# Tributes to late Mr. Tarsem Singh (Tony)

Mr. Tarsem Singh, lovingly known as Tony left for his heavenly abode recently during his short visit to his home village in India. Mr. Tony was very well known for his calmness, humility, selfless and voluntary help in the Guru Ghar kitchen at Sri Guru Ravidass Temple, Pittsburg (CA). He rendered his services every Sunday, irrespective of any family or personal considerations.

Sudden and untimely demise of such a dedicated Sewadar would naturally impact the entire community with the feelings of grief and sadness.

In the loving memory of late Mr. Tony the religious services with the recitation of Path Shri Sukhmani Sahib, followed by Shabad Kirtan and Antim Ardass were hosted by Guru Ghar Sangat on June 5th, 2022 (Sunday).

A small sapling was also planted in Guru Ghar premises to memorialize the dedication of Mr. Tony's services to Guru Ghar. Mr. Abhishek Narabat, General Secretary of the Sabha who also managed the stage, paid his glowing tributes to the departed soul for his selfless services.

We pray to Waheguru to bless the late Mr. Tarsem Singh Tony with peace and tranquility and provide solace and strength to the bereaved

family to bear this irreparable loss.

We also appreciate Mr. Prem Chumber, Chief Editor Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times for conveying his condolence message on Mr. Tony's sad demise and for publishing this obituary report in Ambedkar Times.

**O.P. Balley**  
**Founder Member**  
**Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha,**  
**Pittsburg (CA)**

