



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

VOL- 16

ISSUE- 6

April 17, 2024

California (USA)

www.ambedkartimes.com

www.deshdoaba.com

Babu Jagjivan Ram Former Deputy PM A True Democrat and Savior of Downtrodden

Prem K. Chumber Editor-In-Chief:
Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Babu Jagjivan Ram (April 5, 1908 – July 6, 1986) was known for his patriotism, straight forwardness, and concern for lower castes and poor. When in 1937, the Britishers wanted to set up a puppet government in Bihar, Babuji was approached with an offer of a large sum of money and a Ministerial berth and many other similar benefits to shake hand with them, but he simply refused to be on their side. Rather, he stood like a rock with his people who were to tally committed to lay their lives for the liberation of the motherland. He earned the love of the people and leaders of the Indian freedom movement for his patriotism and integrity. Showering praises on Babu Jagjivan Ram for his bold stand on to be remained with his people, Gandhiji said that he 'had emerged as pure as gold in the test of fire'.

Babuji was a born fighter and a crusader for freedom, dignity and social justice. During his middle school education, he refused to avail scholarship meant for Scheduled Castes students and earned it by appearing in open competition and becoming successful on the basis of his meritorious academic performance. It was also during his Arrah Town School days that he smashed twice separate pitcher meant drinking water for Scheduled Castes students and forced the principal to withdraw his discriminatory decision of segregated water arrangement at the premises of the school. He proved his exceptional talent by excelling in studies despite extreme poverty at home as his father (Sobhi Ram) passed away (1914) while Babu Jagjivan Ram was still in his village primary school. He and his mother (Vasanti Devi) fought boldly against poverty and social exclusion all around.

Despite such an oppressive social environment and poor economic conditions at home, Babuji acquired proficiency in Hindi, Bengali, English and Sanskrit besides Bhojpuri – his native Bhasha. It was his command over Hindi and English that attracted the attention of Pt. Madan Mohan Malviyaji during the welcome address by him that finally took him to study at the prestigious Banaras Hindu University. It was at the Banaras Hindu University that Babuji organized, for the first time, Scheduled Castes students to protest against the denial of basic services like meals for Scheduled Castes students in the hostel and hair cuts by local barbers. After qualifying his Inter Science examination at BHU, Babuji left BHU and completed B. Sc. degree from the Calcutta University in 1931. It was during his stint at Calcutta University, Babuji organized Mazdoor Rally at Wellington Square in 1928. This mammoth rally in which approximately 50,000 people participated brought Babu Jagjivan Ram closer to Netaji Subash Chandra Bose who got convinced of his organizing skills and political acumen.

Babu Jagjivan Ram devoted his entire life strengthening India and empowering poor and lower castes. He was a great inspirer and organizer of people against oppression. He was an eloquent orator, a distinguished parliamentarian and a talented administrator. From his school days to the celebration of freedom at midnight, he remained in the forefront of various struggles (including the Civil Disobedience Movement in 1930 and the Quit India Movement in 1942) launched during the historic freedom movement of India. On the national political platform, he established himself as the savior of lower castes and poor people. He became the youngest minister in the interim government of Jawaharlal Nehru in 1946, Labor Minister in the first cabinet of India as well as member of the Constituent Assembly of India. He played a constructed role in the meeting of the Constituent Assembly of India for promoting the cause of the Scheduled Castes and poor people. He served as a minister of various portfolios at the level of Central Government exceptionally for more than forty years as a member of the Indian National Congress. In 1977 and joined the Janata Party alliance, along with his Congress for Democracy. He also served as Deputy Prime Minister of India (1977-79). In 1981, Babuji formed Congress (J). Till his passing away in 1986, he remained active in the service of the nation and the downtrodden.

"Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" Weeklies fondly remember Babuji on his Birth Anniversary and pay him floral tribute!

Read more: www.ambedkartimes.com

Remembering Advocate Bhagwan Das: A Profile

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

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

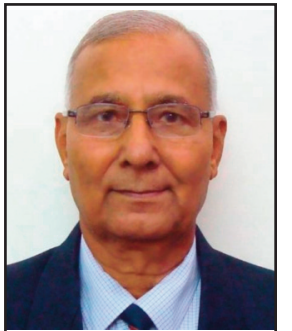
His mother tongue is Urdu. He learnt English from class 7th. His command over English and his British accent compelled many to label him as a "Black English Man." He is AdibFazel in Persian. He can speak and write in Hindi and Punjabi. Just like Dr. Ambedkar he was not allowed to read Hindi and he had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

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

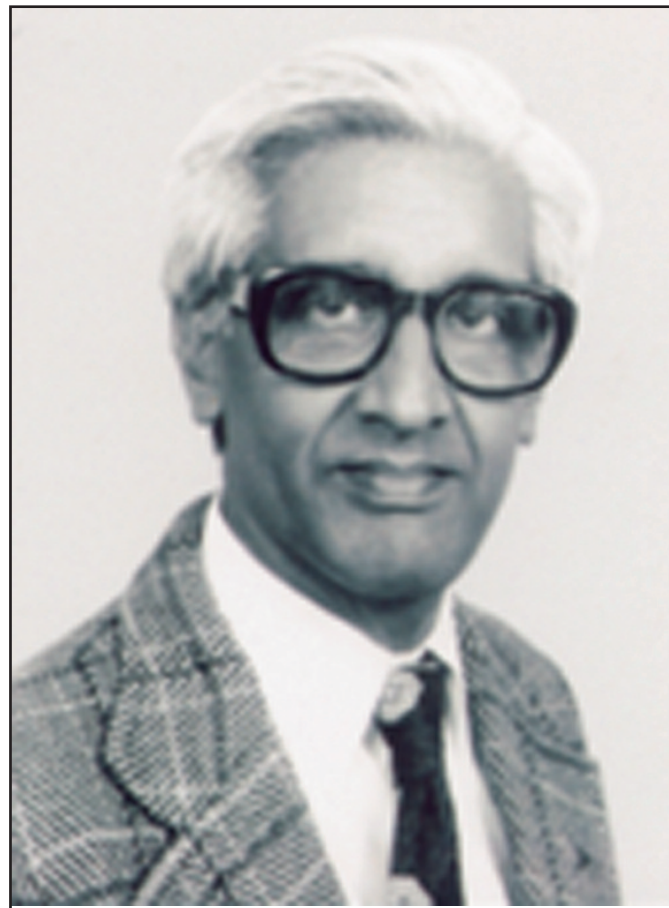
contact with Dr. Ambedkar at Delhi from 1942 till his death. He also adopted Buddhism in 1956 when Dr. Ambedkar launched his Buddhist Conversion Movement on 14th October, 1956. He has written his autobiography which has been published as "In the Pursuit of Ambedkar" in English and: "BabaKeCharnon me"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

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

Mr. Das was invited to deliver a lecture on 'Discrimination by the Peace University, Tokyo (1980) and also addressed several meetings organised by the Burakuminsof Japan. He gave testimony before the United Nations in regard to the plight of Untouchables in South Asia, in the meeting of Sub-Committee on Human Rights held at Geneva, Switzerland in August, 1983. He visited England in 1975, 1983, 1988, 1990 and 1991 in connection with lectures and seminars. He participated in the seminar held in 'Hull University in



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



Bhagwan Das: A Profile (23.04.1927 -18.11.2010)

and has participated in the Conferences held in Kyoto, Japan, 1970; Princeton USA (1979); Seoul, Korea (1986); Nairobi, Kenya (1984) and Melbourne Australia (1989). He was appointed Director, Asian Centre for Human Rights (Asian Conference on Religion and Peace) in 1980 and continued to serve in this capacity till 2004 monitoring the news of violation of human rights in Asian countries and organising camps for training of human rights workers, speaking and writing for the cause.

Mr. Das was invited to deliver a lecture on 'Discrimination by the Peace University, Tokyo (1980) and also addressed several meetings organised by the Burakuminsof Japan. He gave testimony before the United Nations in regard to the plight of Untouchables in South Asia, in the meeting of Sub-Committee on Human Rights held at Geneva, Switzerland in August, 1983. He visited England in 1975, 1983, 1988, 1990 and 1991 in connection with lectures and seminars. He participated in the seminar held in 'Hull University in

(Contd. on next page)

Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

"Buck Family Automotive" Named Small Business of the Month

Excited to announce Buck



Family Automotive as our Small Business of the Month for March 2024. It is located at 7637 Fair Oaks Blvd in Carmichael and is open weekdays from 8:30am to 5:00pm (closes at 4:00pm on Fridays).

Jeff and Rosie Buck own and operate the business that opened in 2019. Along with being an Asian vehicle expert with a dealership background and master level ASE certification, Jeff and his team use the latest and the most state-of-the-art diagnostic technology and precision tools to give their clients the most reliable and complete service. Buck Family Automotive gives back to the community by participating in the automotive technology program through the San Juan School District where Jeffrey serves as a mentor to students hoping

to enter the industry. In addition to managing business operations, Rosie also serves as the President of the Carmichael Chamber of Commerce. If you are looking for a top-tier automotive repair facility in Carmichael, Buck Family Automotive deserves your business!

If you know of a small business that you think is deserving of being recognized, you can nominate them by clicking on this link.

College Financial Aid Extension Approved by Assembly

A recent glitch in the federal college application system blocked access for over 100,000 students. That's why I supported a bill this week to extend the deadline for the Free Applica-



tion for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) until May 2, 2024. This extension will provide students with additional time to complete their FAFSA applications, ensuring that financial barriers do not stand in the way of their educational aspirations. Please contact my district office at (916) 294-9774 if you have

questions or require additional assistance.

Little League Opening Day

Baseball is back! I enjoyed participating in the Foothill Farms Little League opening day parade and cere-



mony. Little League is a wonderful organization with approximately two million boys and girls who play worldwide, and I look forward to another wonderful season for the kids playing here

in Sacramento County.

New Podcast Episode

I n this week's



Assemblyman Hoover

episode of the Point of Order Podcast I was joined by my intern Ian Mayer to discuss legislative internships, March Madness, the Select Committee on Happiness, ongoing struggles for Prop. 1, why Taco Bell is closing dining rooms in Oakland, the growing cost of High Speed Rail, and transparency at the State Capitol.



Remembering Advocate Bhagwan Das: A Profile

(Continue from page 1)

1990 as a representative of the Ambedkar Centenary Celebration Committee, UK and also a seminar on Human Rights in India held at London University, School of Asian and Oriental Studies in February 1991.

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

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

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

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

Mr. Das has written more than five hundred articles, papers for seminars, short stories for vari-

ous newspapers and journals. His papers on 'Revival of Buddhism'; 'Some problems of minorities in India'; 'Reservation in Public Services' have been published in Social Action brought out by Indian Social Institute, New Delhi and Delhi University Buddhist Department. He has written many papers on Reservation and Representative Bureaucracy, Discrimination against the Dalits in Public Services and Minorities etc. His short stories were published in Sarita (Urdu), NayaZamana (Urdu), Milap (Urdu), Bheem Patrika (Urdu and Hindi). He has edited "Slavery and Untouchability" incomplete book written by Babasaheb Ambedkar. He also edited "Untouchable Soldiers- Mazhbi and Mahar" wrote M.A. Thesis by Ardith Basham, an American Scholar. He has also written about Dalit politics under the title "Dalit Rajniti aur Sanghathan." (Dalit Politics and Organisations)

He was a member for the 'Committee for evolving new strategies for the development of Scheduled Castes and Tribes - VIII Plan' set up by the Government of India and also a member of Ambedkar Centenary Committee of the Government of India. Mr. Das has written many books in Urdu, English and Hindi on Dr Babasaheb Ambedkar; Untouchables; Scavengers and Sweepers; Human Rights Discrimination etc. Prominent among them are Thus Spoke Ambedkar (Vol I to IV) a pioneer work; Ambedkar on Gandhi and Gandhism (Ed); Ambedkar Ek Parichay Ek Sandesh (Hindi); Main Bhanghi Hoon (Hindi), the story of an Indian sweeper told in the first-person (this book has been translated into Punjabi, Kannada and Marathi and German); Valmiki Aur Bhanghi Jatiyan (Hindi); Valmiki (Hindi); Dhobi (Hindi), Revival of Buddhism in India and Role of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar; Dr. Ambed-

kar Ek Parichay Ek Sandesh; Dr. Ambedkar aur Bhanghi Jatiya and Bharat me Bauddh Dhammkapunrjagrathasamasyayan. He has translated into Urdu former President of the USA Lyndon Johnson's book 'My Hope for America'; Dr Ambedkar's 'Ranade, Gandhi and Jinnah' in to Urdu; besides editing Bhadant Anand Kaushalyayan's 'Gita Ki Budhivadi Samiksha.'

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

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

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

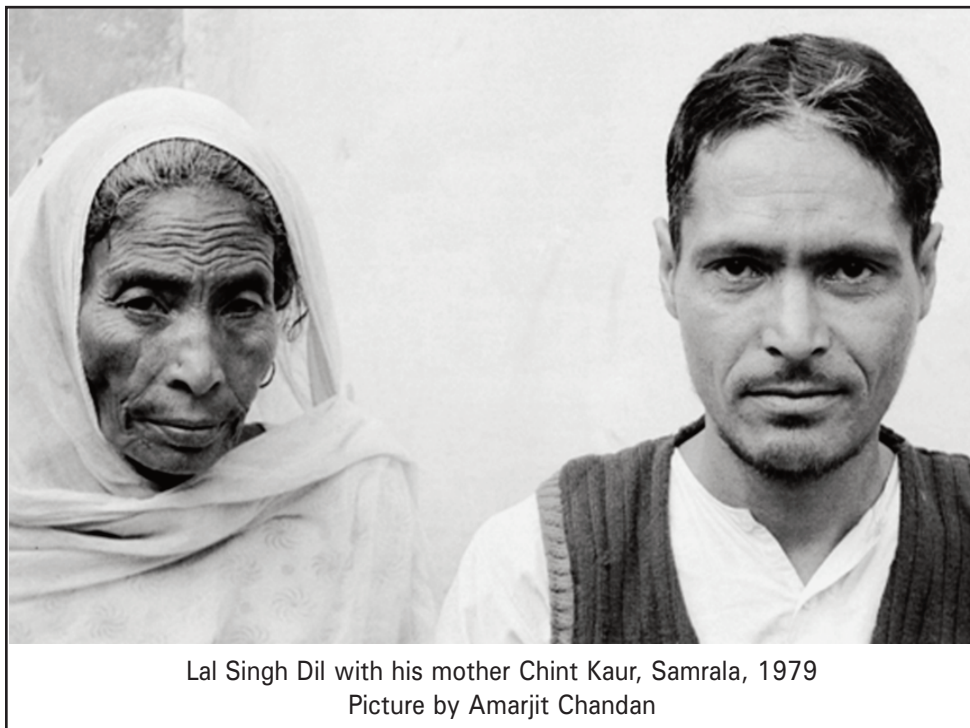
Lal Singh Dil: Voice of the Voiceless

Lal Singh Dil (April 11, 1943 – August 14, 2007), revolutionary poet, left an indelible mark through his poetry on the struggle for equality, social justice and freedom that began in late 1960s in Punjab, popularly known as Naxalite lehar (movement). He was born at his maternal village, Ghungrali Sikhān, near Samrala, a small town in Punjab on the Chandigarh-Ludhiana highway. He belonged to a Dalit family, Ramdassia Chamār (an ex-un-touchable community of tanners). Dalits were mostly deprived of agricultural land and other sources of livelihood. Like other community members, the mainstay of Dil's family was manual labour on the agricultural lands of their village farmers. During off-seasons, landless Dalits earn their livelihood through various forms of manual wage works, such as labouring at construction sites or other manual-intensive daily-wage work. His father Raunqi Ram worked as a daily wager throughout his life. During a conversation with Gayatri Rajwade, Dil recalled a time when his grandmother used to sit and grind wheat the whole day for a single paisa. And in Dil's own words, "[a]t the end of the day, we would dust our clothes, collect the wheat stuck on our clothes and mix that with water and drink it before sleeping" (based on forwarded (April 7, 2021) email from Nirupama Dutt to Amarjit Chandan dated August 13, 2007).

Despite extreme poverty at home, Dil's mother Chint Kaur sent him to school at Samrala. The atmosphere at the school was not very congenial to Dil. He wrote: "When I graduated to the higher classes, I started picking up some skills which thrilled me. I especially liked to trace out a picture and then shade it. I traced an image of Ravidas Bhagat, which showed him standing. Below the image was a pair of shoes and some cobbler's tools. The teacher in charge of the class was intrigued looking at the drawing and then laughed at it with disdain that was shared by the students. I brought the picture home in my satchel." (Simran Kaler available at: <https://poetlalsinghdil.wordpress.com/category/simran-kaler/> accessed on April 8, 2021). Against all odds, Dil became the first matric qualified member of his clan. His mother sold her ear-rings to enable him to reach college to become a schoolteacher. He studied for a year in A.S. College, Khanna, close to his hometown. Thereafter, he got enrolled in Junior Teachers' Training course at SHG College in Behlolpur, again near his hometown, but had to leave after two years without completing the course. He also joined a Gyani, an honours course in Punjabi literature, but again had to quit without completing it. From his school days, Dil had to support his studies along with by working part-time as a manual wage labourer/herder as well as providing tuition; this was likely one of the main reasons behind the repeated

failures to complete several study courses which he had joined after successfully qualifying in the matriculation examination.

Along with extreme poverty, Dil also experienced social exclusion and caste-based oppression during different intervals in his life. He recalled various instances of such bitter experiences in his autobiography *Dastan* (The Story). How as a small boy of five or six, he was whip-lashed and driven out of a landowner's fields in his village for daring to bathe at his well was just one such instance which expressed the gruesome scale of the prevalence of caste-based oppression in a society that otherwise boast of its casteless social



Lal Singh Dil with his mother Chint Kaur, Samrala, 1979
Picture by Amarjit Chandan

order. He also narrated how a comrade, a senior dominant caste writer, took away a jug of water when he tried to reach it at a party meeting, and how he felt deeply humiliated to learn that the mother of his female classmate, whom he was very fond of, had 'purified' the tumbler in which he had given tea, by casting it in the fire of the household hearth. Amarjit Chandan, a close comrade of Dil, writes in his "A Complete Story of an Incomplete Journey", an introduction to the *Dastan*, how Dil had suffered and exposed graphically the prevalence of the arrogance of caste superiority in his locality, at his school, and in the Naxalite organizations and even in police custody.

Though Dil was forced to withdraw from his studies, he continued to reflect critically on his surroundings. He continued to capture subtle nuances of the exploitative system around him till his last moment. The medium that he chose to give expression to his experiences and observations during his struggleful life was the subtlety of poetry. He was one of the most popular poets of the Naxalite movement in East Punjab, with a gravitas to match. As narrated in his autobiography, Lal Singh Dil was subjected to many inhuman tortures during police custody, and remained in jail for a long period of time. It was during his imprison-

ment that his first collection of radical poetry entitled *Satluj di Hava* (The Satluj Breeze) was published in 1971. His poetry immediately became an icon of the revolutionary struggle in Punjab as well as of the sorrows and sufferings of the poor and Dalits in the state.

After his release from the jail, Dil went underground where he spent about 15 years of his active life. He did all sorts of labour to keep himself and his struggle going on. He did not ask any help from any quarter. During free time from his hard manual labour, he continued to write and penned two more books: *Bahut Sāre Suraj* (So Many Suns), 1982; *Satthar* (A Sheaf), 1997; and an autobiography *Dastān*. His entire poetry is available in a

collection entitled *Naglok* (The World of the Nagas) published in 1998 and 2008. Nagas were the sons of the soil. It is commonly believed that Nagas were snake worshippers and the sovereign rulers of their land before the alleged arrival of the alien Aryans. He talked about them nostalgically in some of his poems. Two of them – *Sham da Rung* (The Shades of Evening) and *Lamma Larra* (The Long Caravan) are reproduced below. A narrated long poem called *Billa Aj Phir Aaya* (Billa Visited Again Today) was published posthumously in 2009.

Dil had started writing poetry at his early age, while he was still studying at school. That some of his poems were published in reputed vernacular magazines like *Preetlari*, *Nagmani* and *Lakeer*, even before the publication of *Satluj di Hava* (The Satluj Breeze) in 1971, his maiden collection of poetry, proved his hold over intricacies of poetry writing. His life and poetry, writes Nirupama Dutt, a writer and journalist: "... became grist to the mill of revolutionary politics, which worked happily for Dil, as he envisioned a new order free of caste and creed" (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019. Available at: <https://scroll.in/article/927571/i-saw-how-he-sought-to-break-the-chains-of-caste-nirupama-dutt-on-translating-lal-singh-dil> accessed on April 7, 2021).

Though familiar with Dil's poetry earlier, Nirupama came to know about the man himself only in the 1990s, when Dil returned to Samrala after spending many years out of Punjab (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019). By that time the spring thunder

was almost over and many of the activists had resumed their normal course of life. Some of them had settled into respectable positions in the higher echelons of government, media, academic and

even business. A few of them settled abroad. However, for Comrade Dil, the only refuge was his mud house in his caste ghetto at Samrala, and the citadel of his thoughts and philosophy; he was quintessentially a gyan yogi. He was a lonely fellow, Gulzar Mohammad Gorla, one of the closest associates of Dil in Samrala, told me during an informal conversation a few days after his passing away. He also mentioned that with the financial support from some of his comrades abroad, Dil opened a small tea-stall near the bus terminal close to his home in Samrala. It was also during this time that Dil used to spend long periods in solitude in the cremation grounds of his hometown for reasons best known to him. Nirupama met him at this stage, and since then she has been writing intermittently about Dil in newspapers and journals.

After Dil's death in 2007, Nirupama translated his autobiography and selected poetry that introduced him widely beyond his Punjabi speaking region. In 2017, Trilok Chand Ghai, an academic of Delhi University, translated 100 poems of Dil, entitled *Lal Singh Dil: Selected Poems – exclusion, deprivation and nothingness / translated from Punjabi* (Delhi: LG Publishers). Five of these poems were published in the reputed translation magazine MPT (Modern Poetry in Translation), 3 (18) – *Transitions*, Oxford UK, 2012, and two of them were reproduced in MPT's golden jubilee anniversary publication *Centres of Cataclysm*, Blood Axe Books in 2016. Writing about Ghai's translation David Constantine, poet editor, MPT observed 'And Trilok Chand Ghai's English serves that cause. Translators carry fraternity across the frontiers of space and time. Again and again, in these translations, there is a tone, an accent, a phrase as in music, that will touch readers of English as the poet himself does through his mother tongue.' Harbhajan Singh, Punjabi poet and critic expressing his opinion about Dil's poetry writes: 'These poems don't give us joy; they shame us. The poems that give us pleasure work to stabilize the already established values. The shaming poems uproot a person from his fixed position and challenge him to renew himself.' On the same back cover flap of the book, Amarjit Chandan wrote: 'Contemplating the word images of the people portrayed by Lal one is reminded of Amrita Sher-Gil's paintings'. His poetry is full of images of hard life, poverty, isolation, struggle, grief for the hapless, and faith in the victory of the toiling people. He wrote extensively on the *Ghandilasand Tapprivasi* (ever roaming vagrants

(Contd. on next page)



Ronki Ram

Shaheed Bhagat Singh Chair Professor
of Political Science
Panjab University, Chandigarh
ronkiram@yahoo.co.in
Visiting Professor, Centre for Sikh
and Panjabi Studies,
University of Wolverhampton, UK

Lal Singh Dil: Voice of the Voiceless

(Continue from page 3)

(itinerants) and fuel-gatherer nomad girls. Below are reproduced two of his poems Sham da Rung (*The Shades of Evening*) and Lamma Larra (*The Long Caravan*) that crisply depict the life of the *Ghandilasand Tapprivasi*:

The Shades of Evening

*The shades of evening like many before
The paths are heading for settlements
The lake turns back from offices
thrown out of work
The lake is drinking its thirst
Some city has set off on the road to
the village
Throwing off all wages someone is
leaving*

*Dogs are dear to young men
fancying loving faces in palaces
is not for them*

*These starving ones have left behind
yet another's land*

The long caravan moves on

His poetry valiantly confronted the deeply entrenched caste-based social exclusion and other variants of oppressive dominant social structures. Dil sarcastically touched the subtle nerve of caste that followed its victims even after death in his often quoted poem *Zāt* (Caste) reproduced below:

Caste

*You love me, do you?
Even though you belong to another*

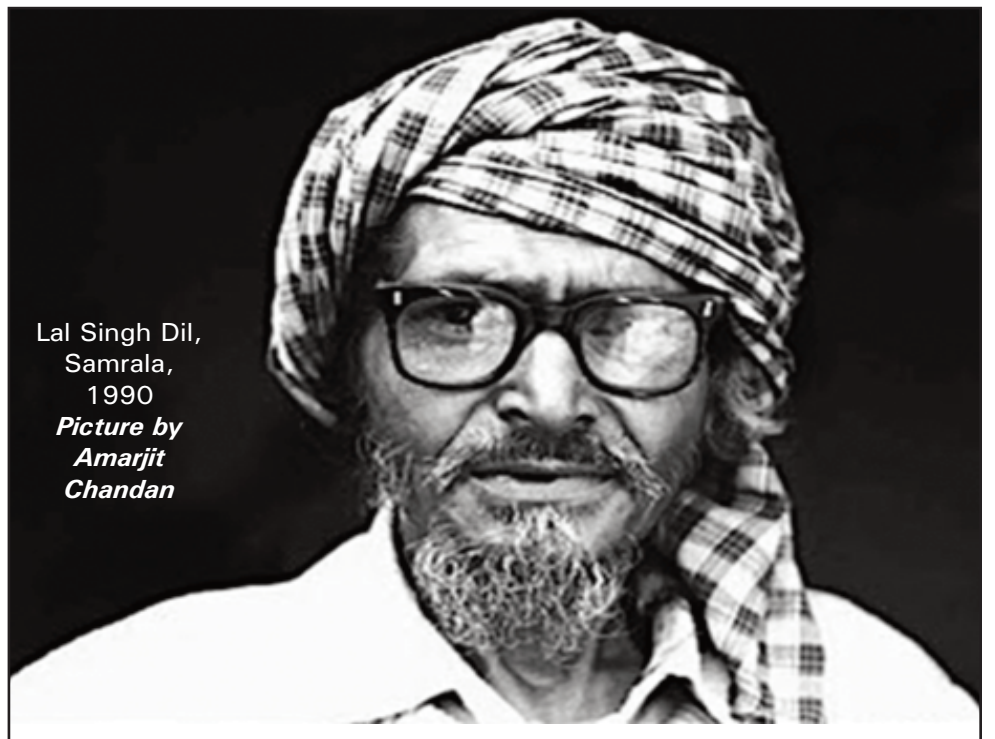
Dil was a humble and visionary poet never hankered after fame, and was happy to work incognito. He was often present in progressive programmes in different parts of the state, but never made efforts to make his presence felt. I vividly remember him once standing so unassumingly on a side of the entrance to the seminar hall of Amardeep Singh Shergill memorial College, Mukandpur (SBS Nagar, Punjab). Neither did he made any gesture nor did any of the visiting dignitaries take notice of him. One of the participants whom I was accompanying, conveyed this to me about him. Dil used to

Available at <https://scroll.in/article/927571/i-saw-how-he-sought-to-break-the-chains-of-caste-nirupama-dutt-on-translating-lal-singh-dil> accessed on April 7, 2021).

What distinguished Lal Singh Dil from his contemporary revolutionary poets was his sole concern not only for the lowest of the low, but also for those who were severely marginalised and thrown out of the society in toto, and forced to live vigrant life. He deeply sympathised with the landless manual workers, daily wagers, nomadic men and women, especially the black cloth-donning girls who gathered fuel to keep



From left: Lal Singh Dil, Amarjit Chandan and Prem Parkash, Samrala.



Lal Singh Dil,
Samrala,
1990
Picture by
Amarjit
Chandan

*Someone comes wiping on his dhoti
the blood of weak animals on his goad
The shades of evening like many before*

The Long Caravan

*Leaving behind another's land
Loaded with the humiliation of rebukes
the long caravan moves on
along with the lengthening
shadows of evening
Children on donkeys' backs,
fathers cradling dogs in their arms
Mothers carrying cauldrons
on their backs
their children sleeping in those caul-
drons
The long caravan moves on
carrying on their shoulders
the bamboo of their huts
Who are these
starving Aryans
which India's land
are they headed to occupy*

*caste. But do you know
Our elders do not even cremate their
dead at the same place*

His poetry also boldly communicated the vivid expression of his verbal revolt against the oppressive dominant social structures. Dil audaciously underlined the presence of rebellion beneath the repression in another widely lauded poem *Shabad* (Words):

Words

*Words have been uttered long before
us,
And for long after us,
Chop off every tongue if you can,
But the words have still been uttered*

(Translated from the Punjabi by Nirupama Dutt. Available at: <https://parchanve.wordpress.com/category/authors/lal-singh-dil/> accessed on April 8, 2021).

keep himself busy in his own unique way and was never heard indulging in self-propagation as well as complaining about his personal concerns.

He was reticent to the core, but at the same time there existed a volcano of revolutionary thoughts and ideals within his frail physical frame. He wanted to see radical political transformation during his lifetime, and was impatient to put an end to the sufferings of those considered the lowest of the low. Nirupama said that 'Dil was looking for the revolution that would break all shackles. In his poetry he became the sensitive spurned child and engaged with god, empowered as he was by hopes of thundering spring.' How sweet are these words dedicated to god. I wish my last words would be, "I have complete faith in you!" I want to steal this line and dedicate it to the Revolution' (Scroll.in, 23 June 2019.

the fire burning in the hearths outside their thatched huts under the open blue sky.

Though he was not able to continue his study and reach higher education, his deep association with the existential harsh situations at the grassroots level taught him precious lessons about the varied dimensions of life – his bitter experiences at school and college, in the Naxalite movement, police custody, and day-to-day social interaction across religions, imbued and enriched his poetry with subtle nuances, anecdotes, signs and symbols, which enabled readers to see beyond the immediate and catch a glimpse, however fleeting, of life as seen through very different eyes, the eyes of the oppressed and the wretched of this earth. Dil's poetry, in fact, is the voice of the voiceless and the cradle of struggle for an egalitarian social order.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

URGENT CARE CLINIC

DR. TAKHAR'S FAMILY MEDICINE & URGENT CARE CLINIC

8191 Timberlake Way, Suite # 400, Sacramento, CA 95823
Phone: 916-688-8888 Fax: 916-688-8837

Clinic Hours: Monday to Friday 9:00 AM to 5:30 PM, Saturday 9:00 AM – 4:00 PM & Sunday closed

We speak your language: Panjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Farsi, Arabic and Spanish



Goodie Takhar, PhD

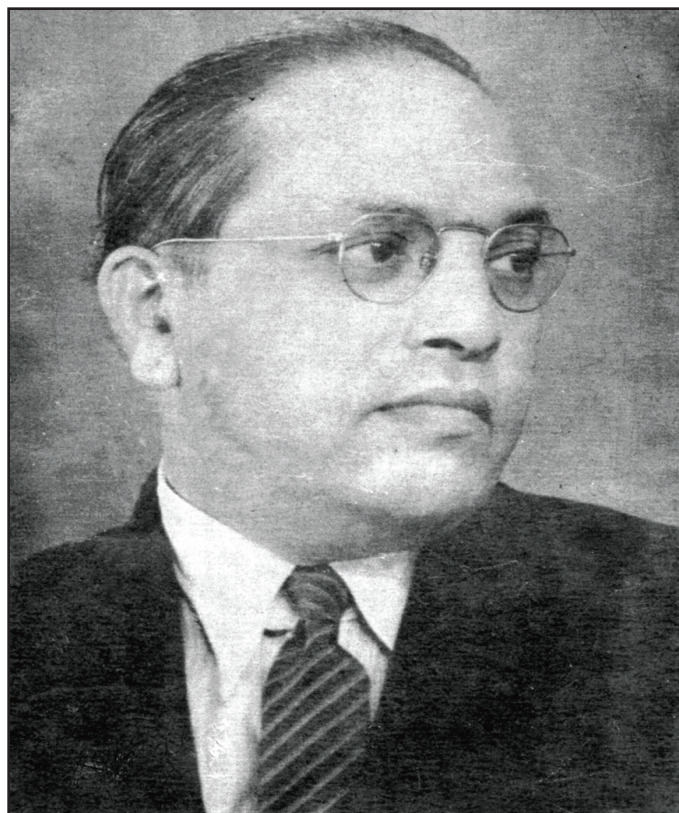
Be a Lamp unto Thyself: Atta Deepo Bhavah

14th April is the day when a phenomenon in the form of a child named Bhimrao Ramji Sakpal, later known as Babasaheb Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar appeared on the planet earth and brought millions of people of this land from the age old bondage to liberty; injustice to justice; inequality to equality; marginalization to elevation; ignominy to dignity; darkness of ignorance to the light of knowledge; and from subhuman to human status. Born in the family termed and treated as untouchable in the Hindu Social Order, he rose to the status of a symbol of knowledge, sun on the earth, one of the top brains of the world, the greatest Indian after Gandhi, messiah of the downtrodden, champion of women's rights, liberator of the humanity, a nationalist and father of the Constitution of India. His life of over 65 years (14 April 1891 to 06 December 1956) has been a saga of struggle and sacrifice, and a beacon to the humanity.

This day is celebrated with great pomp and show the world over not only by his followers but also the people and organizations of multiple socio-politico-cultural shades. Seminars, debates, lectures and speeches on his life, philosophy and mission mark the celebrations year after year. But the prevailing socio-economic conditions of the people for whom he lived and sacrificed speak loudly of the failure of the powers that be and his people in particular to translate his philosophy and vision into reality to the desired extent. The caravan which he took out of the quagmire of blatant barbarity against a large section of humanity, and brought on to the smooth highway on journey to its destination of 'one nation one people where everyone is an Indian first and the Indian last' is unfortunately sliding back rather than moving ahead or staying where it was. On the occasion of his golden jubilee celebrations at Bombay, Dr. Ambedkar declared that there should be no more his birthday celebrations because he was deeply conscious of the evils of hero-worship and the havoc it had caused in this country down the centuries. He wanted his people to utilize time, energy and resources to free their brethren and sisters from want and hunger and be master of themselves to be really free. He didn't want them to be dependent on any single personality or God or some Superman for their salvation. He believed that their salvation lay in their own hands, through their own efforts. He inspired them to have always high aim as low aim in life was a crime to him. The aim of his movement was not only removing his people's disabilities, but also to bring about a social revolution that would remove all manmade barriers of caste by providing equal opportunities to all to rise to the highest position in life. He believed that success of his movement to unite all the Hindus in a single caste would render the greatest service to the Indian nation in general and to the Hindu community in particular. In his view the surest way for the elevation of the

marginalized people lay in higher education, higher employment and better ways of earning living. That is why he gave his people the motto: "educate, agitate and organize". He firmly believed that religious fasts, austerities and penances did not save his people and their forefathers from starvation and miserable life.

They subsisted on thrown out crumbs, wore rags, perished in utter slums and hovels and fell easy victims to diseases with a death rate that raged among poultry. He asserted that the problem of his people was political and not social. Law being the abode of all worldly happi-



ness; he wanted them to capture the power of law-making. That was the only way to their salvation. He took a solemn vow to die in the service and cause of those millions of children of lesser God, and that he would end his life with a bullet if failed to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class into which he was born, had been groaning.

In his message to the Depressed Classes at Bombay in May 1936, Babasaheb exhorted them to follow the message of Lord Buddha given to 'Bhikkhu Sangha' just before his Mahaparinirvana: "Be self illuminating like the Sun; don't be dependent for the light like the earth. Believe in yourself, don't be dependent on others. Be truthful. Always take refuge in the truth and do not surrender to anybody." He inspired the people to be their own guide and take refuge in their own reason. He wanted them to live the life of a roaring lion following the path of truth and justice.

An illuminating conversation between Dr. Ambedkar and a noted writer of international fame Dr. Mulk Raj Anand took place on a balmy evening in May 1950 at Bombay's Cuffe Parade. Forty years later Dr. Anand recalls the dialogue which is reproduced below for the readers particularly Babasaheb's followers and flag bearers of his mission to mull

over and take cue as a way forward. "Mulak Raj Anand (MRA): Namaskar, Dr. Ambedkar.

B.R. Ambedkar (BRA): I prefer the Buddhist greeting—"Om mani pad-maye"! 'May the lotuses awake'!

MRA: I agree. How thoughtless we are! We inherit words without questioning their meaning! Of course, namaskar means 'I bow before you'.

BRA: That perpetuates submission! "May the lotuses awake" is a prayer for enlightenment.

MRA: Indeed, old habits die hard. We adopt them unthinkingly....

BRA: In everything.

MRA: Come to think of it, one is born stamped Hindu or Muslim or Christian! Hindu parents give their child a name during the naming ceremony, sanctified by a priest reciting verses in Sanskrit, which the child does not understand. A sacred thread is put on his body. Lo and behold! The boy is a Hindu!

BRA: Idiocy!

MRA: If you mean by the Greek word, idiot — going round and round in circles!

BRA: One must question old habits, ideas and practices. Education should encourage the new young to ask the teacher one new question a day...

MRA: The best way to teach teachers! They

often don't know what is not in the text books. As a matter of fact, even in one's mature youth, one can only grow by asking questions. I learnt this from Henri Bergson's book 'Creative Evolution'. I was in difficulties about various philosophical problems after reading Hegel, Kant and Desecrates. Bergson said: One can heighten consciousness by questioning every philosophical proposition...

BRA: Buddha argued with Brahmins about every one of their beliefs. They had degraded whole people as out-castes. They said, God had ordained your Varnas — Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Buddha asked: What about man himself — the individual? Because a man is born in a family which handles corpses of dead cattle, he is condemned to be an untouchable. All forest people are Junglis to the Hindus...!

MRA: Rejected.

BRA: Indeed! Everyone who works with hand was, and is, rejected. Those who skin animals! Those who carry dung! Those who do menial job on the land! All branded and bonded forever! After five thousand years it is still worse! And untouchable can't enter a temple even if he has a bath before he goes there. He can't draw water from the village well — he must take it from the filthy pond outside the village! He can't graze his cattle on the landlord's land. He is dirty because he cleanses dirt. Always con-

sidered impure! An animal can be touched, not a man called the untouchable...

MRA: As a member of the Constituent Assembly, have you been able to assert the rights of the individual? I see that your Committee gives funda-

mental rights — the right of the individual to freedom. But we see that you have also conceded the right to property as a fundamental right... Does not the right to property give a decisive advantage to those who have inherited wealth? So the poorest of the poor, the untouchable, will always be at a disadvantage.

BRA: In our Constitution, we have put forward the ideal of a secular, socialist democracy...If everyone can have the right to till the land from the State tenancy rights then equality of privileges can be assured and there need be no exploitation. So far untouchables and even many caste Hindus and Muslims do not have tenancy rights, all these landless peasants are mere hands.

MRA: Then the right to work should have been recognized as a fundamental right.

BRA: I was only one of the members of the Drafting Committee.

MRA: So you became a lamb before the lions!

BRA: I bleated good deal! I am now roaring.

MRA: As a lawyer, you know how the judges will always decide in favor of the high castes upper class Hindus.

BRA: Of course, the only non-Brahmin in our Government of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru fought hard against the right to own property being a fundamental right... But Babu Rajendra Prasad felt that Nehru wanted to make India into Russia. The caste Hindus, therefore, only conceded the other rights of man as directive principles... to be fought for in Parliament.

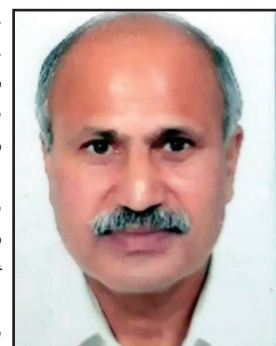
MRA: Which would be weighted in favor of men of property!

BRA: The socialists can win a majority one day and ask for redress. Anyhow, the outcastes and the tribals have been declared Scheduled castes. They will be given certain privileges to uplift them — like reservation for admission to schools and colleges and scholarships.

MRA: The caste Hindus will always resent reservation.

BRA: We must organize ourselves. Arouse the disinherited to fight. There are more outcastes than Caste Hindus—if we include the Muslims, who are also regarded as untouchables by the casteists, and the tribal people. Together, with the socialists they can abolish ownership of private property! No landlords, no tenants!

(Contd. on next page)



Col. Prithvi Raj Kumar

91-94648-94941
Chief Postmaster General (Retd.)
(Additional Secretary,
Govt. of India)

Be a Lamp unto Thyself: Atta Deepo Bhavah

(Continue from page 5)

No landless laborers!

MRA: State capitalism also might prove to be dangerous. You know what Stalin has done in Russia. Imposed a set of bureaucrats on the people in the name of communism!

BRA: Of course, we must protect the individual from invasion of his rights from other individuals. Liberty of the person must always be a primary concern. That was in my mind when I urged for fundamental rights.

MRA: If that was in your mind then you might urge the Parliament to revise fundamental rights. We must fight against both State capitalism and private capitalism. You know how the vast majority of the people everywhere are subject to the will of the employers.

BRA: Indeed. Liberty, so far seems to be the liberty of the landlord to increase rent. The capitalist always wants to reduce wages and increase hours of work. Capitalism is a dictatorship of private employer.

MRA: The fundamental rights – right to life, liberty and happiness – remain a dream...

BRA: I was only one of the members of the Drafting Committee.

MRA: So you became a lamb before the lions!

BRA: I bleated good deal! I am now roaring.

MRA: As a lawyer, you know how the judges will always decide in favor of the high castes upper class Hindus.

BRA: Of course, the only non-Brahmin in our Government of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru fought hard against the right to own property being a fundamental right... But Babu Rajendra Prasad felt that Nehru wanted to make India into Russia. The caste Hindus, therefore, only conceded the other rights of man as directive principles... to be fought for in Parliament.

MRA: Which would be weighted in favor of men of property!

BRA: The socialists can win a majority one day and ask for redress. Anyhow, the outcastes and the tribals have been declared Scheduled castes.

They will be given certain privileges to uplift them – like reservation for admission to schools and colleges and scholarships.

MRA: The caste Hindus will always resent reservation.

BRA: We must organize ourselves. Arouse the disinherited to fight. There are more outcastes than Caste Hindus—if we include the Muslims, who are also regarded as untouchables by the casteists, and the tribal people. Together, with the socialists they can abolish ownership of private property! No landlords, no tenants! No landless laborers!

MRA: State capitalism also might prove to be dangerous. You know what Stalin has done in Russia. Imposed a set of bureaucrats on the people in the name of communism!

BRA: Of course, we must protect the individual from invasion of his rights from other individuals. Liberty of the person must always be a primary concern. That was in my mind when I urged for fundamental rights.

MRA: If that was in your mind then you might urge the Parliament to revise fundamental rights. We must fight against both State capitalism and private capitalism. You know how the vast majority of the people everywhere are subject to the will of the employers.

BRA: Indeed. Liberty, so far seems to be the liberty of the landlord to increase rent. The capitalist always wants to reduce wages and increase hours of work. Capitalism is a dictatorship of private employer.

MRA: The fundamental rights – right to life, liberty and happiness – remain a dream...

BRA: The new young must go on fighting. They can change the Constitution.

MRA: This may not be possible without upturning like the 1789 revolution of France.

BRA: Strange to hear this from you. I thought that by making Gandhi the liberator of untouchables in your novel (Mulak Raj Anand wrote a novel 'The Untouchable'), you have been converted to non-violence.

MRA: I could not live up to the ideals of Mahatma. We had to face Hitler and Mussolini. I went to Spain and joined the international Brigade. Though I fainted at the sight of blood in a clinic and was asked to opt out... But one had to take sides in the Second World War. A poet called the so-called war for freedom of the democracies against fascism, the fight for a "half lie" against a "big lie".

BRA: You know, though the Mahatma was all for the Harijans, he did not get up his beliefs in the Varnashrama dictated by the Bhagwad Gita... By calling them sons of Hari, the Supreme God, he thought he was exalting them. In fact, they were left at the lowest level.

MRA: Is that why you have adopted Buddhism as your religion?

BRA: May be that (Varnashrama) was the chief consideration for me to convert into Buddhism. Also by remaining a Scheduled Castes citizen, one accepts the status of the outcaste. I have felt the faith of the Buddha, which does not believe in the Hindu god Brahma, aspires for human beings, men and women, to be free of dogmas, obscure myths and legends! One can pursue knowledge! One can disown casteist heroes of the Hindus like god King Rama, the avatar of Vishnu and many other sentimental myths of Hinduism.

MRA: Indeed I find Buddha's hunches far more plausible than the guesses of the Brahmins. He was the first existentialist of the world. He cried out: Dukha, dukha, dukha! The Hindus were always for make-beliefs. God is ananda. A consolation prize for beggars who ask the feudal Lord God for favors by offering gifts of flowers, bribes of garlands and fruits! – via the priests.

BRA: That is why most of the priests have big bellies.

MRA: What is your message for the rejected?

BRA: I say to the untouchables: Be a lion! Hindus sacrificed goats before the image of Kali. You be your own light – atta deepo bhava!

MRA: Like the Buddha said to Ananda: Be a lamp unto yourself !..."

Babasaheb practiced what he preached. He lived and pursued his mission without fear of death and without depending on God or Superman or devotion to scriptures. To live in fear was to him to die before actual death. He took a vow that though born a Hindu which was not in his hand, but would not die a Hindu. He breathed his last as a Bodhisatva. His glorious vow was to end his life with a bullet if he failed to do away with the abominable thralldom and inhuman injustice under which the class, into which he was born, had been groaning. The untouchability was abolished under the Constitution. He said "struggle and more struggle sacrifice and more sacrifice". He struggled throughout and sacrificed his family, children and life for his people, nation and humanity. He exhorted to 'do or die'. He did before he died. He said 'now or never'.

He never waited for tomorrow. He wanted to see his people sitting on the pinnacle of a palace. One can see many of them adorn the pinnacle of success. He said "educate, agitate and organize". He was M.A, PhD, M.sc, D. sc, Bar at Law, and his library had more than 50,000 books. He authored classic literature on multiple subjects. He organized his people into fighting force of reckoning. He said it. He did it. The question is, if he could do what he said and did, why can't we? Are we immortal? Can there be a better tribute to the superhuman than the emulation in letter and spirit of what he said and did?

(Source:

* Writings and speeches of Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar, Vol.1, Vol.3, Vol.17 Pt. 1, Vol.17, Pt.3, Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Life and Mission, Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Struggle and Message and N.C. Rattu, Remeberances of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar)



SKY TRANSPORT SOLUTIONS

STRIVE FOR MORE

ਟਰੱਕਾਂ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਈ
ਸਕਾਈ ਟਰਾਂਸਪੋਰਟ ਸਾਲਿਊਸ਼ਨ
ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਸੇਵਾਵਾਂ



SPECIAL BIT INSPECTION AND DOT AUDIT COMPLIANCE:

SPECIAL DOT COMPLIANCE
FOR SAFETY, AUDITS AND
RECORD KEEPING.

NOTARY PUBLIC SERVICES.
ON THE SPOT VIN VERIFICATION SERVICES.
DOT OUT OF SERVICES??
AUTHORIZED IRS E- FILE PROVIDER.
WE HAVE COMPLETE SOLUTIONS
FOR OUT OF SERVICE DOT.

ICC, DOT, IFTA, IRP Plates,
PERMITS, NYP, KYU, OR,
Canada Permit, CORPORA-
TION AND LLC FILLING
SERVICES, 2290, PTI,
Trailer plates.

PLEASE CONTACT US FOR MORE INFORMATION

PHONE: 209-855-6938, FAX: 209-762-6540

Email: skytransportsolution@gmail.com

Give us a chance to provide you best services

121 E 11th St. Tracy, CA 95376



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".

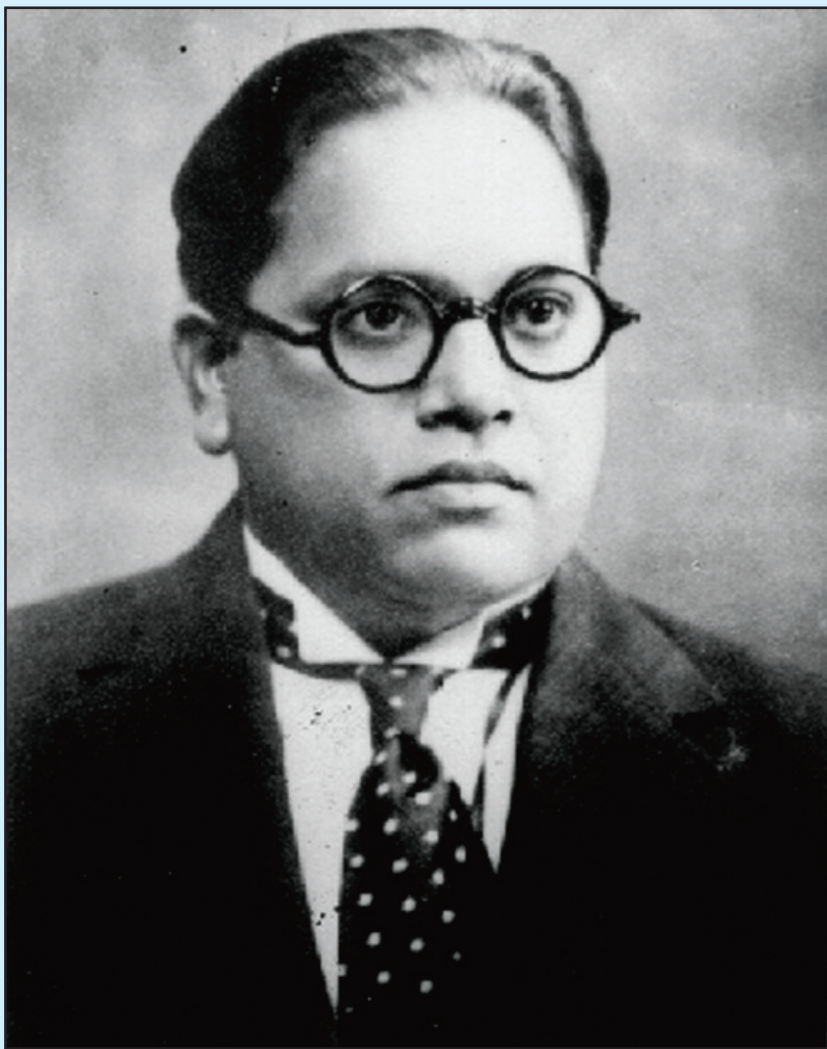
Courtesy: Dr. Ambedkar and Punjab by D. C. Ahir



SRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (CA)

2150 Crestview Drive, Pittsburg CA 94565
Tel : (925) 439-2355

ਜਉ ਤੁਮ ਗਿਰਿਵਰ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਮੋਰਾ ॥ ਜਉ ਤੁਮ ਚੰਦ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਭਏ ਹੈਂ ਚਕੋਰਾ ॥1॥
ਮਾਧਵੇ ਤੁਮ ਨ ਤੋਰਹੁ ਤਉ ਹਮ ਨਹੀ ਤੋਰਹਿ ॥ ਤੁਮ ਸਿਉ ਤੋਰਿ ਕਵਨ ਸਿਉ ਜੋਰਹਿ ॥1॥ਰਹਾਉ॥



Guru Piari Sadh Sangat Ji,

Devoted families are requesting entire
Sangat to attend the following functions:

April 21, 2024

133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. Bhimrao Ambedkar

Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Gurughar on the occasion of 133rd Birth Anniversary of Dr. B R Ambedkar. Baba Saheb was a leader, politician and a scholar. As independent India's first law minister, he was the principal architect of the Constitution of India. There are numerous contributions of Baba Sahib to India.

April 26-27-28, 2024

Baba Sheikh Farid Birth Anniversary

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੇ ਤੂ ਅਕਲਿ ਲਤੀਫੁ ਕਾਲੇ ਲਿਖੁ ਨ ਲੇਖ ॥
ਆਪਨੜੇ ਗਿਰੀਵਾਨ ਮਹਿ ਸਿਰੁ ਨੀਵਾਂ ਕਰ ਦੇਖੁ ॥6॥

Devoted families will be celebrating birth anniversary of Baba Sheikh Farid by hosting Akhand Path and Langar Sewa. Akhand Path will start on Friday April 26, 2024 at 10:00 AM and will conclude with Bhog ceremony on Sunday April 28. Baba Farid's teachings are enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib. May Waheguru bless dedicated sewadars.

June 28-29-30, 2024

Pittsburg Gurughar's 39th Anniversary

Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg's 39th anniversary will be celebrated on June 30, 2024. Akhand Path will start on Friday 06/28/2024 at 10:00 am and will be concluded with Bhog ceremony on Sunday 06/30/2024. Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Gurughar with the help and cooperation of entire Sangat. Ragi Jatha of Giani Balwinder Singh ji will adorn the occasion.

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

www.srigururavidasstemple.com

Sangat Sewadars

Chairman
Ramesh Suman

President
Vinod Kumar

Secretary
Dilbag Singh

Treasurer
Sunita K. Singh