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PAYING FLORAL TRIBUTE TO

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on his 95th Birth Anniversary

Prem Kumar Chumber (Editor-in-Chief)

Ambedkar Times (English) & Desh Doaba (Punjabi)

Dr. Martin Luther King was to America what Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi were to India. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was born on January 15, 1929 in the illustrious family of pastors of the Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, where his grandfather and father served, and he himself served as co-pastor until his assassination on April 4, 1968. Originally, he was named Michael Luther King, Jr., but later changed his name to Martin. His was a time when coloured people were segregated from the mainstream. So he did his elementary studies in segregated public schools in Georgia; earned the Bachelor of Arts degree in 1948 from Morehouse College, a reputed institution of Atlanta for the coloured people from which his father and grandfather had also graduated. He received Bachelor of Divinity (B.D.) degree in 1951 after putting in three years of theological study at Crozer Theological Seminary in Pennsylvania. At Crozer Theological Seminary, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., was elected president of a predominantly white senior class that speaks volumes of his scholarship and popularity among his peers. He received his PhD degree in 1955 from the Boston University, where he was enrolled in graduate studies on a fellowship won at Crozer.



After completing his doctorate, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., became active in the American civil rights movement. Soon he emerged its non-violent spokesperson and popular leader, and led the struggle from front until his assassination in 1968. He is known for his sterling contributions to American civil rights movement. In one of his most famous works - "I Have a Dream" speech delivered in 1963 during his historic march on Washington - he spoke of

his dream of a United States that is free from segregation and racism. He played a crucial role in putting an end to racial segregation in the US and securing the rights of the black Americans. It was largely his peaceful struggle that can be credited for the passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. The Civil Rights Act prohibited racial segregation and discrimination in the workplace. The Voting Rights Act granted African Americans right to vote. His vision of equality and civil disobedience was based on the ideals of Christianity and non-violent techniques of Mr. M.K. Gandhi who devised Satyagraha (truth-based method of peaceful resistance) to liberate India from the colonial rule the British. He led 382 days of bus boycott agitation that made the Supreme Court of the United States declare unconstitutional the laws forcing segregation on buses on December 21, 1956. During this more than a yearlong boycott, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., had to face personal abuse, arrests and his home was attacked. In the next eleven-year period of his struggleful life (1957-68), he completely devoted his life for the cause of equality, social justice and empowerment of the marginalised sections of the whole world. He "travelled over six million miles and spoke over twenty-five hundred times, appearing wherever there was injustice, protest, and action; and meanwhile he wrote five books as well as numerous articles" (Nobel Lectures, Peace 1951-1970, Editor Frederick W. Haberman, Elsevier Publishing Company, Amsterdam, 1972). He was the youngest man to be honoured with the Nobel Peace Prize at the age of thirty five.

"Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba" Weeklies take immense pride in paying floral tribute this great son of the 'Land of Dreams' who devoted his whole life for the emancipation and empowerment of downtrodden.

Dr. MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. VIGOROUS CRUSADER FOR SOCIAL EQUALITY



95th Birth Anniversary of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. was celebrated all over USA on last Monday, January 15th, 2024 which was observed as a federal holiday in honor of his life-long struggle for equality and social justice.

This was a very prominent day in historical perspective, commemorating his pivotal and leading role as a civil rights leader in ending the entrenched segregation of African Americans in USA. As a result of his non-violent but courageous and indefatigable campaign for human rights and social equality, the civil rights Act of 1964 and the voting right Act of 1965 were signed into laws by President Lyndon Johnson.

Dr. King was born on January 15, 1929 in a family of Baptists, preachers and pastors. His birth name was Michael King Jr. which was later changed to Martin Luther King Jr., influenced by Martin Luther, a protestant Reformation leader in Germany. During his long struggle for equal rights for all, Dr. King went to jail 29 times and had to pay the ultimate price by sacrificing his life for the cause which was so deeply embedded in his heart and soul.

Dr. King was highly influenced by the power of civil disobedience led by Mahatma Gandhi. In 1959 Dr. King went to India and collected lot of information from the members of Mahatma Gandhi's family which inspired him to motivate millions of people to stand up for action. He admired Mahatma Gandhi by saying that he was a "Guiding Light of Nonviolence". His eloquent and landmark speech "I HAVE A DREAM" is globally considered as a God-gifted talent which electrified a massive following in his non-violent approach to

send his message across. It brought him in spotlight to make him to emerge as a national proponent of organized non-violent resistance.

In another famous quote Dr. King observes that - "Darkness cannot drive out darkness, only Light can do" "Hate cannot drive out hate, only love can do" There is a lot of similarity and homogeneity in the ideological approaches of Martin Luther King and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. Both were champions of human rights and social justice.

Both suffered carping humiliations, indignities and discriminations in their lives. Discriminations based on caste in India and racial segregation in USA are still posing as hardened crusts of social separatism.

While commemorating the sacrifices and untiring endeavors of Martin Luther King Jr. on his birthday, which changed the course of human history, we also pay our hearty tributes to the crusades for social equality launched by Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, Great freedom fighter Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia and Manyavar Kanshi Ram Ji during the 20th century in India, the land of their birth.

We, on behalf of Supreme Council Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA also admire Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber, Chief Editor: "Ambedkar Times" and "Desh Doaba", weeklies for his lucid expressions on the historic roles played by the above mentioned leaders for the noble cause of social emancipation and human dignity. May the light and grace of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. keep illuminating the human conscience forever.



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GURU GOBIND SINGH CREATED KHALSA, A NEW MAN

Sikhism is a unique, continuous and complete revolution. The ultimate goal of any revolution is to create a new man. Only the Sikh revolution has succeeded in creating a new man. Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa, a new man on Vaisakhi in 1699. Vaisakhi is a harvesting festival.

Peasantry was the main force of the Sikh revolution.

Punjab is mainly an agricultural state. Therefore, Guru Gobind Singh chose Vaisakhi to create Khalsa. The word Khalsa was used by Bhakat Kabir in Guru Granth Sahib. The general

man. Most of the philosophies in the world believe that man is imperfect and can never be perfect. The Sikh ideology believes that man is perfect because he is created by "the perfect" and there is no difference between the creator and the creation, only a curtain of ignorance separates the creation from the creator. If we are perfectly enlightened and the curtain of ignorance is lifted then we realize that we are part of the ultimate reality, the eternal truth.

Guru Gobind Singh did not give only a theoretical concept of a perfect human being

but also glorified death which occurs when one is engaged in these internal and external battles. Guru Gobind Singh justified use of weapons when all peaceful means have been exhausted to fight against oppression.

Guru Gobind Singh's concept of Khalsa was a concept of transformation of a man into a new man who has dissolved and transcended his old identity based on caste and creed.

Khalsa is a new man with a new identity.

He is the image of the timeless creator. This creation of



Ambedkar Times (English) & Desh Doaba (Panjabi) congratulate all its contributors, readers, and well-wishers on this auspicious occasion on the Parkash Utsav of Sahib-E-Kamal Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

Vivekananda on Guru Gobind Singh

Speaking of the great powers that used to be infused in those days into the initiates of Guru Gobind Singh, Swamiji recited a popular doha (couplet) on Khalsa. Sava Lakh Se Ek Ladaun Tabi Gobind Singh Nam Kahaun.

The meaning is - When Guru Gobind Singh gives the Name i.e., initiates, a single man becomes strong enough to triumph over a lakh and a quarter of his foes. Each disciple, deriving from his soul filled with such wonderful heroism. While holding forth thus on the glories of this religion. Swamiji's eyes dilated with enthusiasm seemed to be emitting fire, and his hearers dumb-stricken and looking at his face kept watching, the wonderful sight. After a while the disciples said: "Sir, it was very remarkable that Guru Gobind Singh could unite both Hindus and Mussalmans with the fold of his religion and lead them both towards the same end. In Indian history, no other example of this can be found. Swamiji: "Men Can never be united unless there is a bond of common interest. You can never unite people merely by getting up meetings, societies and lectures, if their interests be not one and the same. Guru Gobind Singh made it understood everywhere that the men of his age, be they Hindus or Mussalmans, were living under a regime of profound injustice and oppression. He did not create any common interest. He only pointed out to the masses. And so both Hindus and Mussalmans followed him. Yes, in Indian history, such an example is indeed very rare.

Swami Vivekananda's Works

Vol. VI P. 469, Conversations and Dialogues



impression is that the word Khalsa means pure. Therefore, Khalsa is spiritually pure, who has attained the spiritual enlightenment and has cleaned oneself from all impurity of Ego.

When someone completely frees himself from Ego then he merges with God, all doubt and duality end and there is complete unification with the ultimate reality. The Persian word Khalas means sovereign.

It means the land which is not in the revenue record and is directly under the king, in other words it is a Sovereign land.

Therefore, Khalsa means the Sovereign army of God which is not under control of any human being. Khalsa is a saint soldier. He has attained the highest spiritual level by subduing the five messengers of wickedness, Kam (lust) Krodh (anger), lobh (greed), moh (attachment) and ahankar (arrogance). He has conquered these internal enemies by bhakti (devotion) and him as the sovereign army of God, is ready to fight injustice, inequality, exploitation, discrimination and oppression in society. To fight these wars he needs Shakti (power). Khalsa is a confluence of Bhakti and Shakti. halsa is a perfect

but actually set an example of a perfect man's life. Nowhere in history have we found an example of a perfect man except the

Dr. Sawraj Singh

worldly life of Guru Gobind Singh. He showed us what we can achieve in our life. He was a religious leader, a philosopher, a poet, a saint, a soldier, a historian and he was a king and holy man (Badshah Dervish) at the same time. It is generally believed that you can only write poetry in one language but Guru Gobind Singh wrote poetry in many languages, including Punjabi, Persian, Brij Bhasha and Sanskrit. Again, it is thought that literature can be only created in peaceful times but Guru Gobind Singh created literature while fighting battles. Guru Gobind Singh promoted the concept of constant struggle against oppression. There was no question of surrender. Khalsa engages constantly in both battles, the internal battle against the live messengers of wickedness and the external battle against all discrimination, injustice, inequality, exploitation and oppression. Guru Gobind Singh not only set an example for the perfect life

a new man is the most unique and the highest achievement of the Sikh religion. Guru Gobind Singh used the force of history and the myths understood by the people, to help with the trans-

formation of man. He gave new meanings to the myths. While using the history and the myths, Guru Gobind Singh made absolutely clear that he and his Khalsa only believe in one, the eternal truth, the timeless creator (Akal Purkh). Therefore, Guru Gobind Singh's philosophy is completely compatible with Guru Nanak's philosophy.

Guru Gobind Singh gave a practical shape to Guru Nanak's philosophy.

Khalsa is a concept of a perfect man but at the same time Khalsa Panth is also a concept of universal brotherhood. This brotherhood is based upon the principles of complete equality and is without discrimination of any kind. It is a community of the spiritually enlightened people who have transcended all prejudices, differences and inequalities and have transformed themselves into a harmonious community dedicated to eradicate evil and promote good in the world.

A SIGN OF MORE NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE FUTURE THE HOTTEST YEAR 2023

According to the data of various organizations, the year 2023 has become the hottest year in the world overtaking 2016 as the hottest year ever. The average temperature increase in 2023 is 1.54 degree Celsius above the Pre-Industrial period temperature according to the Berkeley Earth Institute, 1.48 degree Celsius according to Europe's Copernicus Service Climate Change, 1.45 according to the World Meteorological Organization, and according to two the United States organizations National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), 1.37 and 1.34 degree Celsius, respectively.

The year 2023 set new records breaking all the previous records of temperature rise. According to data from the Copernicus Climate Change Service, every single day in 2023 recorded temperature 1 degree Celsius higher than the Pre-Industrial period and nearly half the year (50 per cent days) above 1.5 degree Celsius. In the month of November, two days 17 and 18, a 2 degree Celsius increase in temperature was recorded. In 2023, the average monthly temperature for the months from June to December was also higher than the Pre-Industrial Revolution period. In 2023, ice sheets at the Antarctic and Arctic regions are also recorded to be below normal.

For the past few decades, the El Nino years have seen higher than average temperature, but according to scientists the increase in temperature in 2023 was not due to the El Nino effect because the arrival of the El Nino occurred in the last week of July. Increase in average temperature started from the month of January itself. June was the hottest month worldwide and July 6 was the hottest day ever.

After 2023 some scientists have predicted that the year 2024 may be even hotter than 2023 because the effect of El Niño lasts for 10 to 12 months. The effect of El Nino started from the last week of July 2023 which may extend till May or June 2024. The El Nino's effect on the temperature increase in 2023 is very small, this effect actually is the result of continuous emission of greenhouse gases.

Carbon dioxide is an important greenhouse gas. Its concentration was only 280 parts per million in the Pre-Industrial Revolution period, which increased to 421.86 parts per million in December 2023. This is 71.86 parts per million above NOAA's proposed safe range of 350 and 141.86 parts per million above than the Pre-Industrial Revolution period. After carbon dioxide, if we talk about methane gas, it is also a very important greenhouse gas that has the ability to warm the environment 80-86 times more in the first 20 years than carbon dioxide. Methane gas alone is responsible for 30 per cent of the current increase in temperature.

With the unexpected increase in temperature in 2023, almost all the countries of the world are hit by extreme natural disasters. In the month of July 2023, countries from the

United States of America in the west through European countries to China and Japan in the east were severely scorched by heat waves. Temperature crossed 50 degree Celsius at many places of the world. In Death Valley of California, the temperature reached 53.5 degree Celsius on July 16, and in Sunbao a small town in China, on July 17 the temperature reached 52.5 degree Celsius.

The rise in temperature not only increases the temperature and the frequency of heat waves, but it also increases the frequency and intensity of other natural disasters like drought, wildfires, floods, strong winds, sea



storms, etc.. Every fraction of a degree of temperature rise is very important. A one-degree increase in average temperature increases the frequency of extreme precipitation events by 7 times, heat waves by 5 times, and wildfires by several times.

As a result of increase in temperature, the forest fires in Canada, Maui Island of Hawaii, Greece, and some other countries have caused terrible destruction in 2023. Wildfires in Canada burned 18 million hectares, and in Maui caused \$ 6 billion in property damage and killed more than 100 people.

In 2023, cyclone Daniel severely affected four countries: Greece, Bulgaria, Turkey, and Libya with floods. As a result of the increase in temperature, the Daniel cyclone brought heavy rains in Libya that were 50 per cent above average and 50 times more destructive. As many as 12 hurricanes occurred in the Atlantic and Pacific oceans in 2023.

The rise in temperature has led to increased frequency of heat waves, wildfires, and to increase in the sea surface water temperature. Oceans absorb excess heat from the atmosphere. All the world's oceans were warmer in 2023 than in any other previous year. Warming of ocean water acts as food for energy production, the higher the water temperature, the more energetic ocean storms will occur. The height of ocean waves and sea level are also directly related to temperature rise.

With the rising temperature, the sea level also rises. All the world's oceans have risen 7 to 8 inches over the past century. The rise in sea level

and temperature further increases the height of the sea waves which is increasing the incidence of coastal erosion and flooding. In December of 2023, Pacifica Beach on the California coast had 16 to 20 feet high waves.

Scientists have been cautioning the governments of all countries from time to time about the increase in temperature. In this regard, James Hansen, a meteorologist at NASA, warned the world in the 1980s that the global temperature would become much warmer with the increasing emission of greenhouse gases. Therefore, alerting the United States of America to control the increasing emis-

Rising emissions of greenhouse gases are responsible for the increase of the average temperature of the earth, a fact that neither any country nor any leader of the world is unaware of. All the leaders and countries of the world are aware of this



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truth and the series of conferences to reduce the emission of these gases started from 1992. At a 1992 conference in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, it was agreed that developed countries should start reducing carbon emissions earlier than other countries to control temperature rise and will provide financial assistance and new technologies to developing countries for the damage caused by natural disasters. In 1997, a conference held in the city of Kyoto, Japan, set specific targets for the reduction of carbon emissions for developed countries. In both the conferences, although developed countries made promises to reduce carbon emissions, none of the countries reduced these gases.

This series of conferences has been going on continuously, but the developed countries have not yet given the financial aid to the developing countries as promised nor have they reduced their carbon emissions. At the 2009 Conference of the Parties-15 in Copenhagen, Denmark, developed countries pledged \$100 billion annually to help developing and poor countries to cope with climate change, but these countries have yet to deliver. According to a 2023 report of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development, starting from 38 billion US dollars in the period up to 2013-21, this amount has reached 89.6 billion US dollars by 2021.

In the climate agreement reached in Paris in 2015, all the countries of the world also pledged to control the increase in temperature by rapidly reducing the emission of greenhouse gases, but due to the failure to fulfill this promise, the emission of greenhouse gases has accelerated. The increase in greenhouse gases alone has made the year 2023 the hottest year on record, breaking all the previous records of temperature increases.

Although the Conference of the Parties has been held every year since 1995 to avoid the natural disasters that are increasing with the increase in temperature. A lot of promises are made at this conference every year, but they are often illusory and few are implemented. If we look at the agreements of the last three Conferences of the Parties (26, 27 and 28), then one can easily get an idea of the performance in these conferences and also know which countries would have changed them for their own benefits while making the agreements.

(Contd. on next page)

A SIGN OF MORE NATURAL DISASTERS IN THE FUTURE THE HOTTEST YEAR 2023

(Continue from page 3)

At the Conference of the Parties—26, 90 countries agreed to cut methane gas emissions by 30 per cent by 2030 to combat global warming, but China, the Russian Federation, and India did not sign the agreement. These three countries release 35 per cent of the total methane gases into the environment. The second issue at this conference was to phase out the use of coal for power generation as soon as possible.

Only 45 out of 190 countries signed the agreement to phase out coal. China, the United States of America, and India, which today rank first, second, and third in power generation from coal, respectively, did not sign this agreement either. On the last day of the conference, India and China insisted on using the word phase down coal instead of phase out coal in the final draft, and in this way agreement was also diluted.

There was no serious discussion at the Conference of the Parties-27 to control the rise in temperature, while the United States of America, China, and many countries of Europe and Africa were suffering from severe drought in 2022. The only issue of the damage and loss fund that has been hanging over the past three decades is resolved, that developed countries,

which have historically released large amounts of greenhouse gases into the environment, will provide financial assistance to poor and developing countries to compensate for the loss caused by natural disasters.

The Conference of the Parties—28 was held in 2023 in the city of Dubai, the United Arab Emirates. In the year 2023 itself, the record of temperature increase every day has been broken in some places of the world and most of the countries of the world have suffered from extreme natural disasters. Looking at the increase in temperature in the month of July, the United Nations Secretary General Antonio Guterres said that now the era of global warming is over, the era of earth boiling has started due to the increase in temperature. In view of such conditions, developing countries expected at the Conference of the Parties-28 that tough decisions would be taken to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Instead of imposing restrictions on production of energy from fossil fuels which emit large amounts of greenhouse gas emissions, it was decided only to transition from them to renewable resources, which are deadly to all living organisms. According to a report of the World Economic Forum, the emission of greenhouse gases is continuously increasing by 1.5 per cent

per year due to which the environment is warming rapidly. According to the Paris Climate Agreement, it was supposed to reduce by 7 per cent per year from 2019 to 2030. In this conference, all the countries agreed on the loss and damage fund on the first day of the conference, but unfortunately the fund that has been collected for this work is only 792 million US dollars. This amount can cover only 0.2 per cent of the total loss. The United States of America, which has released the largest amount of greenhouse gases into the environment, has contributed only 17.5 million US dollars to this fund.

Now we have to think that even if the increase in 2023 is temporary, natural calamities can cause so much damage in this one year. Therefore, all the countries of the world should reduce the emission of greenhouse gases quickly according to the suggestions of scientists. Limiting the increase in the earth's average temperature to 1.5 degree Celsius by 2050 requires reductions in greenhouse gas emissions by 45 per cent by 2030 and 60 per cent by 2050 after peaking in 2025.

Given the enormous increase in temperature in 2023, if the earth and all living things (plants, animals, and humans) are to be saved, all world

leaders should address climate change conferences to control temperature increases. The promises and agreements made at these conferences should not be falsified. It is the duty of the developed countries to fulfill the promises made to the developing countries to help them and to compensate them for their losses.

There is also a strong need to implement the recommendations of the third installment of the sixth IPCC report to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. A suggestion has been made in this report that public transport should be preferred instead of private vehicles. Along with the means of transportation, there should be rapid changes in the ways of living and eating. Governments of all countries should increase the area under forests and maintain them instead of depleting natural resources. Renewable resources should be used instead of fossil fuels to generate energy. Along with governments, it is the duty of every individual to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases by changing their living, eating and drinking habits. All the countries and people of the world are facing the crisis of rising temperature, so the governments of different countries as well as each individual should do their part to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.



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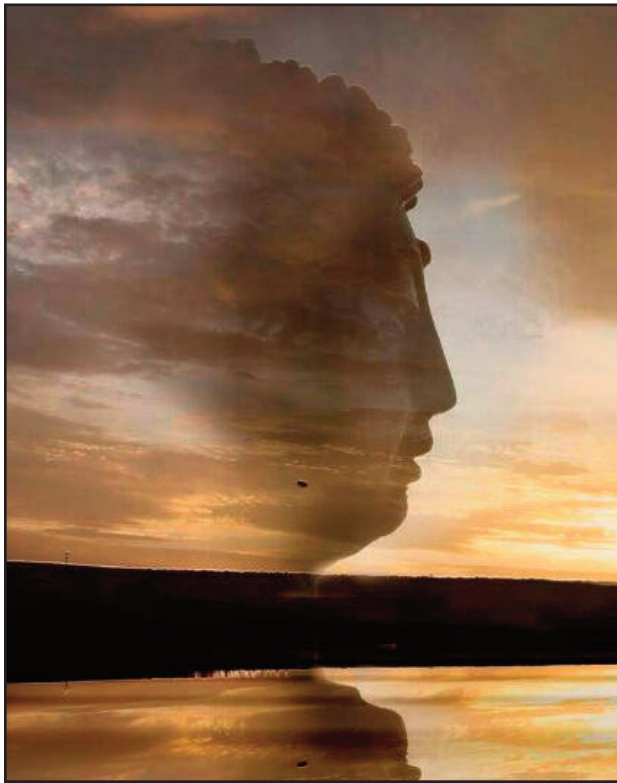
Dr. Ambedkar and Sikhism

Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy, views and messages on various subjects such as Economics, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, Theology, Religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism, Conversion, Constitutional Law, History, Land Reforms, Labour problems and solutions, Water Resource Management, Dams and Irrigation, Power Generation and distribution, Industrialization, Population control, Education, Employment and poverty alleviation, Freedom Struggle et al are contained in seventeen Volumes of his Writings and Speeches in English and three in Marathi; Constituent Assembly, Parliamentary and Bombay Legislative Assembly debates; his biographies and writings of various other authors including those of Nanak Chand Rattu, Babasaheb's personal Secretary. His most authentic biography is that of Dhanajay Keer, which was written during Babasaheb's life time, and was presented to him. As regards his decision to embrace Sikhism, one has to go through whole gamut of his literature on the subject to gather conclusive facts.

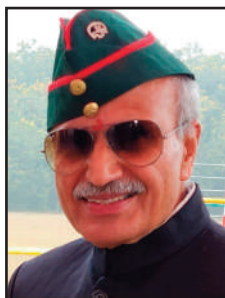
In the Yeola (Nasik District) Conference of the Depressed Classes convened on October 13, 1935 to review the political and social situation in the light of their ten-year old struggle and coming reforms, in a tremendously feeling speech lasting over one and half hour, Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar exhorted his people to sever their connections with Hinduism and seek solace and self-respect in another religion in which equality of status, treatment and opportunities was guaranteed to them unreservedly. Referring to his own personal decision in the matter, he said that unfortunately for him he was born a Hindu Untouchable, it was beyond his power to prevent that, but he declared that it was within his power to refuse to live under ignoble and humiliating conditions. He thundered "I solemnly assure you that I will not die a Hindu." He asked his people to stop the Kalaram Temple Satyagraha as the past five years had demonstrated the futility of such agitation against tyrannical Caste Hindus, who had thwarted their attempts and showed impenitent hearts. He asked them to conduct themselves in such a way in future as would leave no doubt to the outside world of their decision to be and remain a separate community outside the Hindu fold, carving out for themselves a future worthy of free citizens. Accordingly, after full discussion, the Conference passed, in view of the callous and criminal indifference shown by the caste Hindus to their demand for social equality, a resolution instructing the Depressed Classes to stop the

struggle which they had carried on for the past ten years for raising the Untouchables to a status equal with that of the caste Hindus and in the hope of consolidating and strengthening both sections into a great and powerful society. (W/S, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 94-95 and Dhananjay Keer, Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Life and Mission, p. 253)

Dr. Ambedkar's declaration rocked all circles, political parties and social institutions to the bottom. Leaders of all other religions started thinking in terms of conversion of the Depressed Classes into their religions. The Muslims, Christians and the Buddhists sent appeals and offers to Dr. Ambedkar to adopt their religions assuring the Depressed Classes equal



status and rights. Mr. Kanhaiyalal Gauba submitted that the Muslims were willing to concede the untouchables community equal status and equal rights in political, social and economic sphere, and that the Indian Muslims were willing to welcome Dr. Ambedkar. In the same context, Dr. Ambedkar was invited to a meeting of the Muslims representatives to be held at Badaun (U.P) on 20th October 1935. Sardar Dalip Singh Doabia, Vice President of the Golden Temple Managing Committee,



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wired to Dr. Ambedkar, stating that the Sikh religion fulfilled the desired requirements regarding the conversion of the Depressed Classes as it was monotheistic, all-loving and provided for equal treatment to all its adherents. But, on the contrary was an appeal against embracing Sikhism from Baba Sardar Kishan Singh Achhut of Ratangarh (Amritsar). He said in a letter that despite his best efforts to propagate and promote Sikhism, he was still called an Achhut (Untouchable). Even after receiving the 'Amrit' at Akal Takht, the stigma of caste was not removed (Keer, pp. 254, 255 and Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar

Struggle and Message, pp. 274, 275).

The famous Hindu missionary leader, Masurkar Maharaj, who had reclaimed about ten thousand Christians in Goa to Hinduism, had a three hour talk with Dr. Ambedkar. When asked about the way out, Dr. Ambedkar replied that the caste Hindu leaders should pledge their word that they would extirpate the evil of Untouchability within a prescribed period. He would wait for five to ten years for a change of heart; but added sarcastically that in the meantime Maharashtrian Brahmins should install K.K. Sakat, a Depressed Classes leader, who according to the Kesri school of thought, was an exemplary Hindu, into the Gaddi of Shankaracharya for



one year and that a hundred families of Chitpavan Brahmins should fall at the feet of the new Shankracharya as a token of their change of heart and acceptance of equal status. Masurkar had no answer. Shortly after the Yeola Conference, Dr. Ambedkar told a deputation of the Depressed Classes at Nasik that he wanted to absorb his people into some powerful community, and he was thinking of embracing Sikhism. In his speech delivered in the Untouchable Youths' Conference at Poona on 12/13 January 1936, in which few Hindu touchables, Muslims and Sikhs were also present, Babasaheb reiterated that he was bent on conversion whether the Caste Hindus meant help or hindrance. Even if God were produced before him to dissuade him from leaving the Hindu fold, he would not go back on his resolve. He attended the 'Bhajan - Kirtan' program of the Sikhs at night of January 13. He was requested by the Sikh leaders to accept the Sikh religion. The Youths Conference adopted a resolution unanimously supporting Dr. Ambedkar's move at the Yeola Conference (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 94-95, 101, 102 and Keer, pp. 254,

255, 258, 259, 263).

Dr. Ambedkar attended the Sikh Mission's Conference held at Amritsar on 13 and 14 April 1936. It was attended by huge crowds of Sikhs and the Depressed Classes from Punjab, Kerala, U.P and C.P. The Conference was presided over by Sardar Bahadur Hukum Singh, a retired District Judge, and Wasakha Singh was the Chairman of the reception Committee. The need for improving the plight of the Depressed Classes was stressed by the Sikh leaders. Addressing the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though decided to renounce Hinduism. The main feature of the Conference was the conversion of five prominent Depressed Class leaders of the Thiyya community of Kerala and fifty others from the U.P and C.P. Sometime in May 1936, Dr. Ambedkar sent his son Yashvant Rao and nephew Mukund Rao to Golden Temple Amritsar to study Sikhism. They lived there for one and a half months in the warm hospitality of the Sikhs who received them with hope. About this time Gandhi camp was also disturbed by Ambedkar's activities. On the persuasion by Seth Walchand Hirachand, Dr. Ambedkar saw Gandhi at wardha and then at Segaon, but they could not agree on the solution to the problem. Walchand Hirachand and Jamnalal Bajaj, the millionaire supporters of Gandhi were surprised at the crowds of the Depressed Classes that had gathered to receive Dr. Ambedkar, and they remarked that although they had spent money on their cause, the Harijans did not respond to them properly. Ambedkar at once answered that it was the difference between a mother and a nurse. (Keer. pp. 267-269, 276 and Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Struggle and Message, pp. 286, 287).

After consulting his colleagues from different Provinces in the matter of choosing the proper religion for conversion, Dr. Ambedkar decided to embrace Sikhism. His friends and colleagues felt that he should seek the support of the Hindu Sabha leaders; for the Hindu Sabha leaders believed that Sikhism was an offspring of Hinduism and the Sikhs and Hindus inter-married, and the Sikhs were allowed to be members of the Hindu Mahasabha. Accordingly, Dr. Moonje, the President and spokesman of the Hindu Mahasabha, was invited to Bombay. In the presence of two other friends, Dr. Ambedkar had a free talk with Dr. Moonje, on 18th June 1936 at Rajagriha,

(Contd. on next page)

Dr. Ambedkar and Sikhism

(Continue from page 5)

Bombay. The purport of Dr. Ambedkar's views was reduced to a written statement and given to Dr. Moonje, who approved of it personally. Shankaracharya Dr. Kurtakoti and some other Hindu leaders such as Dr. M.R. Jayakar, Seth J.K. Birla, Sir C. Vijayaraghavachariyar and Raja Narendra Nath also approved the statement. Explaining the grounds of his preference for the Sikhism, Dr. Ambedkar said in the statement that although Islam seemed to give the Depressed Classes what they needed politically, socially and economically, although Christianity had boundless resources, and although Sikhism had few attractions and was not so helpful to the Depressed Classes socially, financially and politically as compared with Islam and Christianity, yet he favored Sikhism in the interest of the Hindus and added that it was the duty of the Hindus to help the Sikhs in removing the economic and political difficulties that would lie in the way of the neo-Sikhs. He further explained that looking at these alternative faiths purely from the standpoint of the Hindus, Sikhism was the best. If the Depressed Classes joined Islam or Christianity, they would not only go out of the Hindu religion, but also out of the Hindu culture. If they became Sikhs they would remain within the Hindu culture. In conversion to Islam the danger of Muslim domination was real. Conversion to Christianity would help to strengthen the hold of Britain on India. On the other hand if they embraced Sikhism, they would not harm but help the destiny of the country. They would not be denationalized. On the contrary, they would be a help in the political advancement of the country. Concluding the statement he said that he had gone to the length of considering Sikhism as an alternative religion for the Depressed Classes because he had felt a certain amount of responsibility for the fate of the Hindus (Keer, pp. 277-281, 289).

Dr. Moonje left Bombay on June 22 to secure the approval of Hindu Leaders to the conversion of the untouchable Hindus to Sikhism. He sent a copy of Dr. Ambedkar's statement to different Hindu leaders for their approval. On June 30, Dr. Moonje wrote to M.C. Rajah, the Har-ijan leader, who had made a pact with him in 1932 on the basis of reserved

seats and joint electorates when Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a pitched battle at the Round Table Conference for separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. Rajah had sent the memorandum telegraphically to the British Premier giving details of his Pact with Moonje. This Pact put Dr. Ambedkar in an awkward position. It was Rajah who had earlier cabled to Dr. Ambedkar

supporting his demand for separate electorates saying that Gandhi evidently did not know the woes of the untouchables, and therefore he (Gandhi) had tried to force joint electorates down the unwilling throats of the Depressed Classes. Originally the Rajah Party stood for joint electorates with reserved seats. But he changed sides. Rajah was the only Depressed Class Member in the Central Assembly, and he was not invited to the round Tale Conference. Perhaps grieved at this omission from the Round Table Conference, or greatly perturbed by Gandhi's professed claim to represent the Depressed Classes at the Round Table Conference, he had dropped the idea of joint electorates and insisted on separate electorates. And now he reverted to the original demand (Keer, pp. 195,196). M.C. Rajah took the Moonje - Ambedkar meeting and Dr. Ambedkar's statement as golden opportunity to dislodge Dr. Ambedkar. He wrote to Gandhi, Rajaji, and Malavyia and sought their advice on the statement of Dr. Ambedkar. They declared their opposition to the move of Dr. Ambedkar and Dr. Moonje. Dr. Moonje had written to M.C. rajah in good faith. But Gandhi urged Rajah to disclose the move publically. The object of Gandhi in making Rajah publish the secret correspondence was not fair. Gandhi was using the frustrated mind of Rajah as a tool to arouse Muslims, Christians and the Government against Dr. Ambedkar and to dislodge him. So Rajah issued



all the correspondence to the Press without the permission of Dr. Moonje. Dr. Ambedkar said later on that in fairness to Dr. Moonje, Rajah ought not to have released the correspondence to the Press without the permission of Dr. Moonje. In his proposal Dr. Moonje said that the Hindus Sabha would not object to the conversion of the Depressed Classes to Sikhism and to the inclusion of these

neo-Sikhs in the list of the scheduled castes for the enjoyment of the benefits of the Poona Pact if Dr. Ambedkar promised to prefer Sikhism to Islam and Christianity (Keer, pp. 270-280).

In spite of opposition sponsored by Gandhi and others to the conversion of the Depressed Classes, Dr. Ambedkar deputed a group of his 13 followers to the Sikh Mission at Amritsar to study the Sikh religion. In a letter written to one of them immediately after their arrival at Amritsar, Dr. Ambedkar encouraged and congratulated them on their being the vanguard of the conversion movement, and wished them all the success. But he had not asked them to embrace Sikhism. In an excess of zeal those student-vanguard went over to Sikhism. Dr. Ambedkar was now coming into closer contact with the Sikh Mission and its leaders, and there was some understanding between them to start a college in Bombay in the interest of the Depressed Classes, who were expected to embrace Sikhism. In the meantime Dr. Ambedkar had consulted some German and other European jurists of world fame as to the possibility of their retaining the reserved seats in the Provincial Assemblies if the Depressed Classes went over to Sikhism; for the Sikhs were granted reserved seats only in the Punjab. Later the Sikh Mission authorities and Dr. Ambedkar could not hit it off together; and so they receded from their stand and parted (Keer, pp.284, 289).

Though the final choice of Dr. Ambedkar fell on Buddhism for multiple reasons, he was highly impressed by the philosophy of Guru Nanak and other saints as enshrined in the Guru Granth Saheb. In his undelivered speech at the Lahore Conference of 'Jat Pat Todak Mandal' in May 1936, which was published under the title 'Annihilation of Caste', Dr. Ambedkar said: "...You (Social reformers - the Aryasamajists) must not only discard the Shastras, you must deny their authority, as did Buddha and Nanak. You must take the stand that Buddha and Guru Nanak took. You must have courage to tell the Hindus that what is wrong with them is their religion which has produced in them this notion of the sacredness of caste (BAWS, Vol.1, pp. 68, 69).

The philosophy of humanism, egalitarianism and democracy as enshrined in the Guru Granth Saheb and the Buddhist literature echoes in the Preamble - soul of the Constitution of India drafted by Babasaheb. Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar addressed various Conferences of the Depressed Classes at different places after his declaration regarding conversion at the Yeola Conference. The interested must go through all his speeches particularly the speech at a Conference at Nasik Road, Meeting at Foras road, Bombay in December 1935, Untouchable Youths' Conference dated 12/13 January 1936 at Poona, Conference of Mahar Community on May 30 and 31, 1936 at Dadar Bombay and his undelivered address at the Jat Pat Todak Mandal's Conference at Lahore in May 1936, which was published in the book form titled 'Annihilation of Caste' in order to know and understand both the purpose and purport of Babasaheb behind his conversion decision. Further research on the subject may throw some more and new light.

The interested may also like to go through the article 'The Land of Punjab and Dr. Ambedkar' published in the Ambedkar Times Weekly on 28 December 2022, which covers various facets of social reform movements in Punjab particularly with reference to the Depressed Classes and the role played by Dr. Ambedkar. It also touches the issue of conversion of the Depressed Classes to Sikhism.

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji and the Birth of Dalit Movement in Punjab

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkartimes.com

Punjab has the distinction of being the only state in India where caste based social exclusion was diluted because of the long spell of Muslim rule on the one hand and the most appealing egalitarian philosophy of Sikh faith and its grassroots impact on transformation of the life of downtrodden, on the other. However, caste and its resultant social negativities never ceased to torment the major section of the society. Caste discriminations in Punjab were/are more material in nature than social as in other parts of India. Prejudice takes precedence over pollution in Punjab. However, absence of pollution does not mean that Brahminism Social Order (BSO) is alien to it. On the contrary, it thrives under new structures of social subordination entrenched in material deprivation of Dalits in the state. Material deprivations of

the downtrodden in the state was reinforced by the customary laws of Razat-Namaas and the Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900. Along with many other nonagricultural castes, Scheduled Castes people were historically deprived the right to own land. This restriction made them absolutely landless. It was because of this legal restriction that when Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji after his return to Punjab from the United States of America (USA) asked his father to buy some land to evade social oppressions at the hands of landlords that he came to know that social subordination of the Scheduled Castes people was also rooted in the law of the land. This has led him to organize his fellow beings to form a movement for the emancipation and empowerment of downtrodden what eventually termed as Ad Dharm Movement. This movement was the first of its kind that became suddenly popular because of its grassroots ap-

peals. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji devoted his entire life for the cause of total transformation of his country and the socio-economic and political uplift of his people who were relegated to the periphery since centuries. He exhorted his people to come over a common platform to challenge the forces that subjugated the Dalits. He waged a long battle and finally able to unite many communities among the Scheduled Castes to work for their upward social mobility. Scheduled Castes of Punjab, particularly of the Doaba region, consider him the pioneer of Dalit movement in the state that played a leading role in strengthening the mission of Dr B. R. Ambedkar not only in Punjab but in the whole of the country.

Ambedkar Times congratulates all its contributors, readers, and well-wishers on this auspicious occasion on the birth anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji.

British Ravidassia Heritage Foundation (BRHF)

British Ravidassia Heritage Foundation (BRHF) is a registered Charitable NGO in the UK floated by the Ravidassia community for the purpose as stated in the website of the organization

"TO ADVANCE THE EDUCATION OF THE PUBLIC IN THE SUBJECT OF THE LIFE, TIME AND PHILOSOPHY OF SATGURU RAVIDASS." I have had an opportunity to interact with the Trustees of BRHF at an International Seminar organized by them in Delhi in collaboration of Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU) in October, 2023 to which I was also invited as a presenter on the subject "Life, Time and Philosophy Satguru Ravidass". My blog on the subject may be accessed at: <https://diplomaticitbits.blogspot.com/2023/10/international-seminar-on-life-time-and.html>

One fine morning of a cold day, Chairperson of the BRHF Trust, Om Parkash Bagha, belonging to his native place Bolina Doaba – a prominent village in the periphery of Jalandhar, called me to come and discuss with me an important matter with regard to the activities of the BRHF. Accordingly, Bagha Sahib along with one of my friends in the literary and intellectual circle, Roop Lal Roop came and made a proposal to join them in a missionary work to translate into English lan-

guagea treatise, written in Gurmukhi script, of Roop Lal Roop – Guru Ravidass Pargas Di Khoj (Research and Study of the Life, Philosophy and

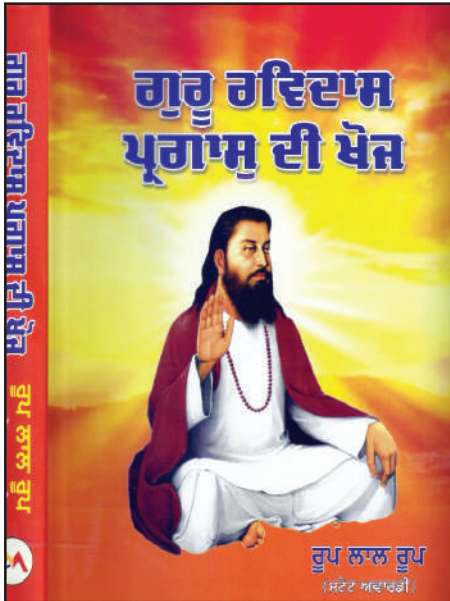
with whatever humility I have in my persona. In fact, I had already seen and glanced through the book kindly presented to me by the author, Roop Lal

Roop Lal at the JNU. Subsequent to that I found that BRHF was fully engaged in their mission to research, study and carry forward the lofty ideals of Guru Ravidass to establish a free and fair society as enshrined in the Vani "Begumpur Sehar Ka Naon; Dukh Ando Nahin Jis Ke Thaon" as stated in their website "WORKING WITH GLOBAL COMMUNITY, RELIGIOUS AND EDUCATIONAL ORGANISATIONS DELIVER A PROGRAMME OF WORKSHOPS, SEMINARS, PUBLISH LITERATURE, ESTABLISH ONLINE LIBRARY ON THE LIFE, TIME AND PHILOSOPHY OF SATGURU RAVIDASS TO VALUE TRADITIONALLY HELD VIEWS AND ANALYSE FROM A CONTEMPORARY AND SCIENTIFIC ANGLE TO PROMOTE THE IMPORTANCE AND RELEVANCE FOR PRESENT DAY LIFE AND TO INFER A DEEPER, WIDER INSIGHT."

I will earnestly undertake the job of translation of the Granth "Guru Ravidass Pargas Di Khoj" in a month or so after completion of my current project – my forthcoming book "Bootan-Mandi: Nerve Centre of Dalit Chetna" Meanwhile I again thank BRHF and my friend, Roop Lal Roop for showing faith and confidence in me, a humble follower of the great Guru Ravidass.



Ramesh Chander
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Thought of Guru Ravidass). It was a pleasant surprise to me. Considering the enormity of the project to translate a huge volume (Granth of 432 pages that too both in prose and verse), I was a bit reluctant to undertake the job. Both Bagha Sahib and Roop Lal Sahib were insisted and said that they had come to me after considering all factors including my ability to do this difficult job. I told them frankly that I had not done any translation work so far though I write regularly in my blog or otherwise only in English. They said that they will be happy to associate me with this work. I could not say know and accepted the responsibility

Sahib. I guess, perhaps, the author wished me to write some sort of review of his great work which I myself would have loved to do. But due other occupations and sheer size of the book deterred me from doing so. It seems now that it was destined like this and the honours fell on me to translate the book for wider circulation and benefit the society at large from the life, time and philosophy of the great Guru. I only pray Guru Ravidass gives me the where with all to do the job entrusted to me by BRHF and the author, Roop Lal Roop in the stipulated time frame of a year or so.

As I said that I met the BRHF

A new Book Ambedkar in London

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba Weeklies

An exciting new book 'Ambedkar in London' (Hurst Publishers, London) has come out on 15 December, 2022. It is edited by Dr William Gould, Professor of Indian History at the University of Leeds, Ms Santosh Dass MBE, a former civil servant, human rights and equality campaigner and Christophe Jaffrelot, Avantha Chair and Professor of Indian Politics and Sociology at the Kings India Institute, Kings College London. It explores the great Indian social and economic reformer Dr Bhimrao R. Ambedkar's (1891-1956) time in London; and the UK Ambedkarite and anti-caste discrimination movements influenced by his social/ human rights, women's equality, economic, and labour reforms.

Dr Bhimrao R. Ambedkar was one of India's greatest intellectuals and social reformers; his political ideas continue to inspire and mobilise some of the world's poorest and most socially disadvantaged, in India and the global Indian diaspora. Ambedkar's thought on labour, legal rights, women's rights, education, caste, political representation and the economy are international in importance. This book explores his lesser-known period of London-based study and publication during the early 1920s, presenting that experience as a lens for thinking about Ambedkar's global intellectual significance. Some of his later canon on caste, and Dalit rights and representation, was rooted in and shaped by his earlier work around the economy, governance, labour and representation during his time as a law student and as a doctoral candidate at the London School of Economics. The Indian diaspora in the UK is the country's single largest national minority. This volume connects Ambedkar's influence during

his lifetime and his legacy today, to this early phase of his career and intellectual life in London, and its immediate aftermath. It contains new material on the establishment of the city's Ambedkar Museum, explores Britain's Ambedkarite movement, and charts the campaign to outlaw caste discrimination in the UK.

Links:

- * https://www.amazon.co.uk/Ambedkar-Comparative-Politics-International-Studies/dp/1787388093/ref=asc_df_1787388093/?tag=googshopuk-21&linkCode=df0&hvadid=606445295421&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrand=14350871096513631918&hvpone=&hvtwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=m&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9045936&hvtargid=pla-1674847639340&psc=1&th=1&psc=1
- * <https://www.hurstpublishers.com/book/ambedkar-in-london/>
- * <https://www.bookdepository.com/Ambedkar-in-London-William-Gould-Santosh-Dass-Christophe-Jaffrelot/9781787388093>
- * <https://imusic.co/books/9781787388093/2022-ambedkar-in-london-comparative-politics-and-international-studies-series-hardcover-book>
- * https://www.whsmith.co.uk/products/ambedkar-in-london/william-gould/santosh-dass/hardback/9781787388093.html?gclid=Cj0KCQiA4aacBhCUARIsAI55maGxrtLIDOFI_QebF-NS7uRfkh8e_mN9RaS8_tEfqtONGS9MB_3aMFIaSh1EALw_wcB&gclid=aw.ds

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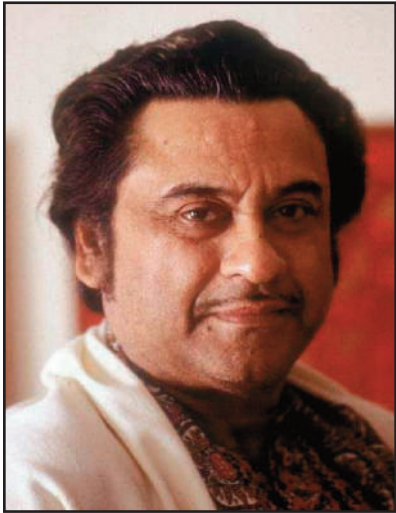


Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Interesting facts about Kishore Kumar



1. Kishore Kumar was born as Abhas Kumar Ganguly in a Bengali family.

2. The multifaceted singer had never received any vocal training.

3. He sang in a number of Indian languages- Bengali, Hindi, Marathi, Gujarati, Assamese, Malayalam, Oriya, and Kannada.

4. His first film as an actor was Shikari which was released in 1946. His first song to be featured in a film was Marne Ki Duayein Kyun Maangu.

5. He sang both the male and female parts for the song Aake Seedhi Lagi Dil Pe which was supposed to be sung by Lata Mangeshkar.

6. Once in an interview the Living Legend - Lata Didi said, we are nothing in front of Kishore Da meaning he is the best ever singer in India.

7. Kishore Kumar's yodelling was inspired by Jimmie Rodgers and Tex Morton.

8. The singer, who was immensely popular among the youth, holds the record for winning 8 Filmfare Awards. No one men else have won more than Kishore Kumar.

9. Kishore Kumar has an award named after him which is called 'Kishore Kumar Award'. It's awarded to people for contributions to Hindi Cinema.

10. Composer and artist Bappi Lahiri is

Kishore Kumar's nephew.

11. There used to be a signboard outside his bungalow that read 'Beware of Kishore'.

Kishore Kumar sang most number of songs for Rajesh Khanna (245), followed by those of Jeetendra, Dev Anand and Amitabh Bachchan respectively.

12) For the film Half Ticket, Kishore sang both in male and female voices in the song, Aake Seedhi Lagi Dil Pe.

13) During Emergency, he was asked to sing for an Indian National Congress rally in Mumbai, which he refused. As a result, there was ban on playing his songs by national broadcasters, All India Radio and Doordarshan from 1976 till the end of Emergency.

14) Kishore Kumar married four times – his first wife was Ruma Guha Thakurta (1950-1958). His second wife was Madhubala (1960-1969). He later married actor Yogeeta Bali in 1976, only to get divorced in 1978. He married actor Leena Chandravarkar in 1980 and they were together till his death 1987. Reports suggest that he

converted to Islam to married Madhubala. He reportedly stopped singing for Mithun Chakraborty when Yogeeta married him, after leaving Kishore.

15) Kishore's eccentricities were legendary – he had put a sign board outside his flat which read 'Beware of Kishore'. When director Rahul Rawail's father HS Rawail, also a well-known producer-director, visited his home to pay Kishore the money he owed the singer, Kishore took the money and when the latter wanted to shake hands, the singer promptly put Rawail's hand in his mouth. On being

asked by surprised Rawail what he was doing, he replied: "Didn't you see the sign?"

16) Talking of his eccentricities, Kishore was known to be a loner; he had no friends and often spoke to trees. Once when a reporter remarked how lovely he must be, Kishore took the reporter to his garden and introduced her to his trees!

17) Hrishikesh Mukherjee had planned Anand with Kishore and Mehmood initially. Once, when veteran director went to Kishore's home to discuss the

story with the actor-singer, he was driven away by the guard due to a misunderstanding. Why? Kishore had not been paid for a stage show, organized by a Bengali. Consequently, he had instructed his guard to drive away "this Bengali" if he ever showed up at the singer's place. Hrishikesh later made the film with Rajesh Khanna and Amitabh Bachchan.

18) Kishore was paranoid about payment and strictly followed the policy of 'no pay, no work'. Once while working on a film, he reported turned up at the sets with make-up done on half of his face. He had learnt that the producer hadn't paid fully. When asked by the director, he replied: "Aadha paisa to aadha make-up."

19) The famous song Paanch Rupaiyya Barah Ana was inspired by his debt to an Indore college canteen. He owed Rs 5.75 to the canteen.

20) Always all the governments previously Congress & now running government not given attention to Kishore Da - there are 1000s of singers got padma award but Kishore Da never got any such award ,But one thing to remember Kishore Da are much much bigger than those padma awards, they are are residing in millions of Indian hearts as Bharatratna.



V.B. Soni
Ambassador (Retd.)