



# Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

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 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 depravation 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 non-agricultural 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 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 appeals. 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. <http://www.deshdoaba.com/> & <http://www.ambedkartimes.com/> congratulate all its contributors, readers, and well-wishers on this auspicious occasion on the 139th Birth Anniversary of Great Freedom Fighter Baba Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Ji.

## Babu Mangu Ram and Emancipation of the Dalits

Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, a renewed revolutionary and founder of the Ad Dharm movement in Punjab whose birth anniversary falls on 14th January 1886, sets a clear agenda for the emancipation and uplift of the Dalits. The agenda was: to restore the lost indigenous religion of the sons of the soils in order to provide them with a sense of self-respect and dignity. The method to achieve this agenda was: cultural transformation and spiritual regeneration. Mangu Ram was not in favour of embracing any other existing religion including Buddhism. He was in favour of strengthening the Ad Dharm (the original) religion of the indigenous, pre Aryan people of India. His views on Hindu religion were very clear. He was of the opinion that since Dalits were not born Hindu where is the need to leave that religion and to embrace some other one. Mangu Ram Mugowalia was of the opinion that the pre Aryan people/the sons of the soil/Achhuts had their own independent religion that was forced into oblivion under the cruel and oppressive rule of the alien Aryan. He thought it appropriate to empower Dalits by carving out a separate Dalit identity on the basis of their original indigenous religious strength (Ad Dharm).

In the poster announcing the first annual meeting of Ad Dharm Movement, Mangu Ram devoted the entire space to the hardships faced by the untouchables at the hands of the caste Hindus. He also made an appeal to the Achhuts to come together to chalk out a program for their liberation and upliftment while addressing the Chamars, Chuhars, Sansis, Bhanjhras, Bhils etc. as brothers, he said, We are the real inhabitants of this country and our religion is Ad Dharm. Hindu Qaum came from outside to deprive us of our country and enslave us. At one time we reigned over 'Hind'. We are the progeny of kings; Hindus came down from Iran to Hind and destroyed our Qaum. They deprived us of our property and rendered us nomadic. They razed down our forts and houses, and destroyed our history. We are seven Crores in numbers and are registered as Hindus in this country. Liberate the Adi race by separating these seven crores. They (Hindus) became lord and call us 'others'. Our seven crore number enjoy no share at all. We reposed faith in Hindus and thus suffered a lot. Hindus turned out to be callous. Centuries ago Hindus suppressed us sever all ties with them. What

justice we expect from those who are the butchers of Adi race. Time has come, be cautious, now the Government listens to appeals. With the support of sympathetic Government, come together to save the race. Send members to the Councils so that our Qaum is strengthened again. British rule should remain forever. Make prayer before God. Except for this Government, no one is sympathetic towards us. Never consider us Hindus at all, re-



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member that our religion is Ad Dharm.

The way, the leaders of Ad Dharm chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables was to completely detach them from Hinduism and to consolidate them into their own ancient religion - Ad Dharm - of which they had become oblivious during the age-old domination by the 'alien Hindus'. In fact, the task of the revival of their ancient religion was not an easy one by virtue of the fact that during a long period of persecution at the hands of the Savarnas, the untouchables had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols. In fact they were never allowed to nurture an aspiration to have their own inde-

pendent religion. They were condemned as profane and were declared unfit to have their own theology. Thus to revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing an altogether a new religion for the Achhuts. Mangoo Ram's appeal that the Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on the untouchables who were treated as, even inferior to animals in Indian society. The appeal inspired them to come out of their slumber and fight for their freedom and liberty. The Ad Dharm provided a theological podium to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity. For centuries, they were bereft of any identity and remained in the appendage of the hierarchically graded Hindu society.

Ad Dharm movement was instrumental not only in helping the lower castes to get registered as a distinct religion in the 1931 census and providing them the platform to enter into the State

(Contd. on next page)





# Babu Mangu Ram and Emancipation of the Dalits

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Legislature, it also went a long way in bringing a cultural transformation in their life. In fact, Ad Dharm movement, as has been mentioned above, aimed at facilitating a cultural transformation in the life of lower castes that, under the impact of the centuries old system of degradation, had actually internalised a sense of being low and polluted. Mangu Ram wanted to liberate them from such a state of mind and also to inculcate in them the feeling of dignity and self respect whereby they could start thinking about them as equal to the so-called twice-born people. Report of the Ad Dharm Mandal, 1926-1931 lists a number of moral principles and duties, which the followers of the Ad Dharm are required to adhere to for creating spiritual regeneration and cultural transformation in their lives. Among the most important moral principles and the duties mentioned in the report are:

The basic principles listed in the Report are: (1) The essential teachings of the Ad Dharm will always be the same: no one can change them. They can stay alive and persist only through the help of a guru. (2) Every man and woman belongs to the faith, but they may not know it. To live without a guru is a sin. (3) A guru should be someone who truly and rightly knows the teachings of the previous masters. He should be able to distinguish between falsehood and truth. He should be able to bring peace and love within the community. (4) Everyone should be instructed by the lives of previous masters; progress comes from following the masters' examples. The practices of previous masters should not be abandoned. This leads to progress. (5) There should not be any discrimination in regard to eating with other castes. (6) Ad Dharmis should abstain from theft, fraud, lies, dishonesty, looking at someone else's wife with bad intentions, using anything which brings intoxication, gambling, and usurping other persons' property or belongings. All of these things are against the law of nature and therefore the law of Ad Dharm. (7) Every Ad Dharmi has the duty to teach his children current knowledge and also to teach them to be obedient to the present king. (8) Every Ad Dharmi should read the Ad Prakash and act upon it. This is a foremost duty. (9) Ad Dharm does not believe in the caste system or any inferiority or superiority of this sort. (10) To learn and seek knowledge, and to learn and seek progress is compulsory for every man and woman.

The twelve duties mentioned in the Report are as follows: (1) To

publicize and propagate Ad Dharm. (2) To take pride in Ad Dharm. (3) To promote the use of name of the community and to use the red mark, which is its sign (4) Ad Dharmis should try to retrieve any property of fellow Ad Dharmi that has been usurped. (5) We should distinguish among Hindus, Ad Dharmis, and other communities of India. (6) Those books, which have created the problem of untouchability and led to discrimination - books such as the Laws of Manu and other Shastras - should be completely boycotted and abandoned. (7) We should celebrate the festivals of our gurus and follow our faith to the utmost. (8) Abandon idolatry. (9) Receive education for ourselves and others in the brotherhood. (10) Boycott those who curse us as "untouchables" or discriminate against us. (11) Bring all demands of Ad Dharmis before the government. (12) Abandon expensive marriage and practice of child marriage.

The fifty-six commandments included in the Report are: (1) Each Ad Dharmi should know everything about the faith. (2) For the betterment and salvation of one's body - physical and spiritual - one should recite the word soham. (3) Each Ad Dharmi should remember Guru Dev for half an hour each morning or evening. (4) When Ad Dharmis meet, their greeting should be "jai Guru Dev." (5) We should be true followers of the founders, Rishi Valmiki, Guru Ravi Das, Maharaj Kabir, and Bhagwan Sat Guru Nam Dev. (6) a guru is necessary, one who knows about previous gurus and has all the capabilities of being a guru. (7) The wife of a guru should be regarded as one's mother, the guru's daughter as one's sister. (8) Devotion to one's wife should be a part of one's faith, for therein lies salvation. (9) Every Ad Dharmi should abstain from theft, fraud, lies, dishonesty, and usurping the property of others. (10) One should not cause someone else heartache. There is no worse sin than this. (11) Every Ad Dharmi should enthusiastically participate in Ad Dharmi festivals and rituals. (12) There should be equally great happiness at the birth of both boys and girls. (13) After the age of five, every boy and girl should be given proper religious teaching. (14) Extravagant expenses at weddings are useless. Every marriage should be conducted according to rituals of our tradition. (15) Ad Dharmis should marry only Ad Dharmis. To marry someone outside Ad Dharm is not legal, but if someone does marry an outsider, he or she should be brought into the faith. (16) All Ad Dharmis, both men and women, should be obedient to their

parents. (17) After the death of both parents it is the duty of each Ad Dharmi to cook food and distribute it among the poor. (18) The dead should be cremated, except for those under the age of five, who should be buried. (19) Ad Dharmis do not follow any other law except their own. (20) In the Ad Dharm faith only one marriage is allowed, but a husband may marry after the death of his wife. Also, if the first wife does not bear children, the husband may take another wife, provided he has the consent of the first wife. If this happens, the first wife remains a legal wife, with all the rights she had before. (21) Ad Dharmis should marry their children to the Ad Dharmis of the surrounding areas. (22) A girl should be more than twelve years old at the time of the marriage. The boy should be four years older than the girl. (23) It is illegal to receive money for a bride; on the other hand, there should not be a dowry. Those who sell their daughters commit a very great sin. (24) Offerings and sacrifices for prayers should be given only to those holy men who are Ad Dharmi and who have shown themselves to follow Ad Dharmi principles religiously. (25) It is necessary for each Ad Dharmi to provide primary education to both boys and girls. (26) The girls should be educated especially in household work such as sewing and needlework. (27) Young girls and boys should not be sent out to cut grass and gather wood. (28) It is the duty of parents not to allow young widowed daughters to remain in their household, because a young widowed daughter is a cause of disgrace. (29) If an Ad Dharmi widow with children wants to hold a commemoration of her deceased husband, but cannot afford it, then the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur and its members will help her. (30) It is not good to cry and beat oneself at a death or funeral. To do so is to anger Guru Dev. (31) Among the Ad Dharmis sons and daughters should receive an equal inheritance. (32) To eat the meat of a dead animal or bird is against the law of Ad Dharm. (33) To use wine or any other intoxicants is a sin, except in the case of sickness. (34) It is legal to eat food offered at noon - Ad Dharm marriages, but the food should be decent, and not leftovers. (35) Cleanliness is important. It guaranteed good health. (36) It is forbidden to practice idolatry and worship statues, and one should not believe in magic, ghosts, or anything of the sort. (37) All Ad Dharmis should forget notions of caste and untouchability and work toward the unity of all people in the world. (38) Each Ad Dharmi should help a fellow

Ad Dharmi in need. (39) One Ad Dharmi must not work at a place where another Ad Dharmi works until the first Ad Dharmi has been paid his wages. (40) If Ad Dharmis enter into a dispute with one another, they should attempt to come to some agreement by themselves or within the community. If no agreement is accomplished, they should refer the case to the Ad Dharm Mandal, Jullundur, and the Executive Committee will take action. (41) Ad Dharmis should open shops and business in every village. (42) Every Ad Dharmi should be a missionary for the faith. (43) Ad Dharmis should call themselves such and register in the census as "Ad Dharmi". (44) A Red turban on the head is mandatory, for it is the color of our ancestors. (45) Every Ad Dharmi should work hard for the progress and peace of the community. (46) Ad Dharmis should organize themselves into cadres called martyrdom cells.

They should work hard on the Ad Dharm's projects. (47) Each Ad Dharmi should separate himself from Hindus, Sikhs, and members of other religions. (48) Each Ad Dharmi should be a good citizen, a patriot loyal to the present government, and should follow the law of the land. (49) Ad Dharmis have the obligation to consider the Ad Dharm Mandal of Punjab, city of Jullundur, as their rightful representative, and to recognize that the programs of the AD Dharm are for their benefit. (50) It is the duty of every Ad Dharmi to trust the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur, and to share its work. (51) All local branches of the Ad Dharm should be certified by the Ad Dharm Mandal of Jullundur, and those, which are not certified, should not be considered genuine. (52) All Ad Dharmis should save their fellow Ad Dharmis from fraud and selfishness on the part of other communities. If such a situation arises, the Mandal should be informed. (53) Each Ad Dharmi should report any difficulty concerning the community to the Mandal in Jullundur. (54) Ad Dharmis should subscribe to the qaum's newspaper, Adi Danka. They should receive it regularly, read it regularly, and help support it regularly. (55) Anyone violating the laws of the Ad Dharm or of the guru, or who insults these laws in one way or another, will be liable to punishment, even the greatest punishment - being banished from the community. The main emphasis of these commandments, principles and duties, in the opinion of Babu Mangu Ram, was to strengthen the social, cultural and religious life of the Dalits so that it could help them build Dalit Solidarity and empowerment.



## Paying floral tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on his Birth Anniversary

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

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.

## Babu Mangu Ram's unforgettable legacy

On the occasion of 139th Birth Anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia on 14th January, 2025 we, on be-

representative of the down trodden to participate in the delib-

erations of the conference for award of separate electorates for the scheduled castes. He even started a counter fast unto death against Mahatma Gandhi's which ended in the signing of Poona-Pact in 1932.

Role as a freedom fighter: - Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia while in USA in the early part of the 20th century became an active member of the Gadar movement fighting for India's freedom from the British rule for which he even risked his life while coming back to India with a shipment of weapons to be used by Ghadarites in India. He was honored and recognized with a Tamar-Patra for his role as a freedom fighter by the former Prime Minister of India Shrimati Indira Gandhi. Unfortunately the name of such a revolutionary figure in the Gadar



half of Supreme Council, Sri Guru Ravidass Sabhas, USA, congratulate the entire community for whom he played a pivotal role as the founder of Ad-Dharm movement in 1920s. He created a new wave of awakening and social consciousness among the neglected segments of society in India. The movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia aimed at carving out a distinct identity for the followers of Guru Ravidass Ji, independent of the Hindus, Sikhs and Muslims. Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia who was a house-hold name in undivided Punjab among the untouchables, has not gained the serious scholarly attention, he deserved. Mark Juergensmeyer, a renowned Professor in Santa Barbara University and an eminent scholar of International fame was the first one who met Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia personally in India made an extensive study on him as revealed in his book "RELIGIOUS REBELS IN PUNJAB" "The Ad Dharm challenge to caste". Lot of efforts are under way by many of the modern scholars in India to revive the invigorating legacy of this forgotten hero. It was Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia who left no stone unturned to prove that we were the actual aborigines (Moolnivasi) of India but were forced to live a life of slaves in our own land.

Staunch Supporter of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar: - Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia stood like a solid rock with Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his crusade in Round Table conferences in London, supporting him with telegrams that Dr. Ambedkar is the real rep-

movement and one of the founder members of the historic Sikh Temple in Stockton (California) has not been even included in the official lists displayed in Gadar Memorial hall, San Francisco and Gurdwara Sahib Stockton. This omission, being a matter of great concern to all, was also confirmed by Mr. Prem Kumar Chumber Chief Editor Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times and by other visitors to these locations.

Desh Doaba and Ambedkar Times, the two U.S weekly publications in circulation among the Indian Diaspora all over the world are also very instrumental and embedded to the cause of reviving the exemplary role and the legacy of this patriotic hero for restoration of human rights to the deprived and the original inhabitants of India.

Desh Doaba has made it a regular feature in its periodical Editorials to write about his gigantic contributions in the establishment of a distinct and a separate identity of Ad-Dharmi Community. Let the youth of the modern era learn more and more about the life of such a valiant and a patriotic fighter in the freedom struggle as well as a crusader for restoration of human rights denied to the down trodden for centuries.

In the pages of history he deserves the honor and the veneration as a great leader and a champion of human rights.

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# MEMORIES OF BABU MANGU RAM MUGOWALIA

**D**uring the younger days of my life, whenever there was a talk in the family about the life struggles of Guru Ravidass Ji or Babasaheb, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the name of Babu Mangu Ram Muggowalia also used to be at the lips of our ancestors, with an exciting tone, saying that persons like Mangu Ram Mugowalia are unique and rare and are born once in a blue moon. He was incomparable. Ever since my childhood days the pictures of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia's Struggle for the liberation of the enslaved and the down trodden people of Punjab, were engraved on the screen of my delicate mind with great aspirations to have this great person in our lives. With the lapse of time this longing slipped into oblivion (Forgetfulness).

In 1970 the weekly Newspaper "RAVIDASS PATRIKA" published from Jalandhar, revealed the fact that Mangu Ram, lovingly and popularly known as Mangu Ram Muggowalia, was still alive. It was very hard to believe and no one in the family believed either. Anyway, after a while this hearsay turned into reality when this great man was seen hale and hearty in person in the office of Ravidass Patrika. He was a man with a small stature (height) but very fair in facial complexion, looking quite healthy in physical appearance, in spite his advanced age. He was wearing a woolen Kashmiri cap and a round-necked Jacket with a charming personality. Babu Mangu Ram was really sitting in a chair right in front of me, but still I could not believe that the person sitting face to face with me, was the same person, Babu Mangu Ram who was a king without crown of my childhood memories. I was so gratified to see and meet him which can hardly be put into words. Sometimes this first time meeting looked so dreamlike and imaginative, as if a movie was playing on a screen. But, in fact, it was Babu Mangu Ram Ji sitting in front of me and gently answering my questions. Even at the age of about 85 years, I could see a glare of hope in his eyes regarding a bright future of the Dalit community.

After that I had many more opportunities to meet and exchange views with Babu Ji. His life history and his struggles still inspire me to continue my struggle in life. I still feel very anxious to expose the selfish and Fox-walk style people who forced Babu Ji to be helpless into leading a life of anonymity. But our goal was not to expose the futility and hollowness of these selfish leaders driven by hunger and lust for personal power.

In 1925, after return from USA, he undertook the herculean task of consolidating the Dalit community to launch their struggle under the banner of Ad Dharam Mandal.

Babu Ji, with untiring efforts and help of the civilized, self-conscious and farsighted people, ignited a new spark (Flame) in the minds of the untouchables of Punjab to secure their rights, and in a span of few years it assumed the form of a social and a political conflagration.

While the leaders of Ad Dharam Mandal were engaged in transforming the political, social and religious conditions of Punjab, they were also extending their full help and cooperation in the struggle carried on by their Messiah (prophet), Dr. B.R. Ambedkar.

To determine the magnitude and success of their leading ideology in the contemporary Punjab, the Punjab Ad Dharam Mandal issued its first report in 1931 and some of its salient features are mentioned below.

1. This public organization unanimously makes an appeal to the Gov-



This article Punjabi to English was translated by Mr. O. P. Balley.  
Courtesy: Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia Souvenir 1985  
published by Mr. C. L. Chumber

ernment that untouchables should be counted neither as a part of Hindus nor as a part of Hindu religion but, instead, should be treated as a part of Ad Dharam religion. We are neither Hindus nor Hindus are part of us.

2. This public organization makes an appeal to the Government that the Shastras (Vedic scriptures) and Manusmirities of Hinduism which define Untouchables as slaves, prohibited from making any progress and social uplift, should be legally banned.

3. As provided in Ad Dharam Mandal the sons and daughters should have equal rights to claim their ancestral properties.

4. Without any caste discrimination the entire Ad Dharmi Community should cooperate and intensify their mutual love and trust for each other.

5. We should shun idol worship, stop witchcrafts, black Arts and refrain from superstitious beliefs.

A review of the above said proposals shows that our society was

still gripped with these social ills and to think and talk about ending these evils about 60 years ago, was a very significant and a farsighted move for uplifting the society.

Under the dynamic leadership of our great leader, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the Government under the British rule was made to agree to the ideals of Ad Dharam Mandal, admitting that we, who have been suppressed, enslaved and tortured for centuries, were neither Hindus nor Aryans who came from another country, but we are native inhabitants of this land and Ad Dharam is our religion. In 1931 it

was with the efforts of Babu Mangu Ram Ji that we had our separate identity in Punjab. This was not a small achievement on his part. In accordance with the provisions of the Poona Pact agreed to between Dr. Ambedkar and Mr. Gandhi there were eight seats reserved for Scheduled Castes for Punjab state Assembly elections,

out of which seven seats were won by Ad Dharam Mandal candidates for Vidhan Sabha Lahore in 1936-37. It was a very marvelous victory for the founder of Ad Dharam Mandal with the help, guidance and cooperation of Babasaheb, Dr. Ambedkar.

Babu Ji made the city of Jalandhar as the center of his activities, where, in spite of financial hardships but, with the help and cooperation of Seth Kishan Dass of Bootan Mandi Jalandhar, he managed to buy a piece of land in Bootan Mandi and set up the office of his organization but some cunning, greedy and selfish politicians who exploited and built up their political muscle through Ad Dharam Mandal, wanted to perpetuate their personal but fallacious leadership thus played fraud and betrayal of trust with the Dalits of Punjab who were loyal to Ad Dharam Mandal, by stabbing them in the back which forcing Babu Mangu Ram to lead a life of anonymity. They even indulged in spreading the fake news of Babu

Mangu Ram's death, to keep the new generation deprived and away from the accomplishments of Ad Dharam Mandal. To sum up, the sacrifices of this brave soldier started to fade into oblivion.

How - ever, in 1970

with the publication of Ravidass Patrika (Weekly) from Jalandhar, Babu Ji once again came out of his death-like life of anonymity. Being the Editor of Ravidass Patrika I had many opportunities for exchange of views with him.

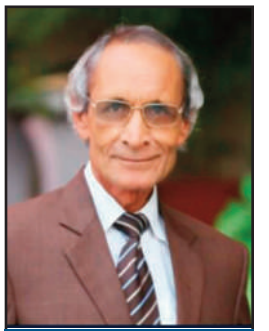
Now when I recall my old memories of my meetings with him I could perceive how much dedicated and loyal he remained till the last moment, with a deep yearning and excitement inside, to stay united under one flag of Ad Dharam.

I remember when on April 14th, 1974, I, accompanied by Mr. Mangu Ram Jaspal (Chief Editor, Ravidass Patrika), went see Babu Ji in Garhshankar to enquire about his health and well-being, he just finished talking about his health in a few minutes but kept talking with me about the regeneration and revival of Ad Dharam Scheduled Caste federation and again on April 23rd, 1974, his statement under the title "APPEAL AND ANNOUNCEMENT" was published in Ravidass Patrika wherein he initiated to reconstitute this organization under an Ad-Hoc Committee at Punjab level.

In 1975, at the time of publishing a Souvenir to commemorate 50th Anniversary of Ad Dharam Mandal, many messages were received from various political leaders in which an attempt was again made to spread the fake news of Babu Ji's death, in spite of the fact that Babu Mangu Ram Ji Mugowalia was physically present at the venue of the function where the Souvenir was being released. Particularly it hurts me to know that in 1980 at the time of performing the ceremony of Babu Ji's last rites, none of these arrogant and self-styled leaders who had exploited various benefits as members of Ad Dharam Mandal, had even the courtesy of showing up to pay their tributes to the departed leader at his residence, though they were specially requested to attend.

But with the release of this Souvenir I feel a sense of satisfaction and a ray of hope that attempts are underway to restore the accomplishments of Babu Ji. In June 1984 during my visit to United Kingdom, I was pleased to note while attending some special gatherings of Ad Dharam brotherhood and Shri Guru Ravidass Ji's functions in Wolverhampton, indicating that Babu Ji was still alive in their hearts.

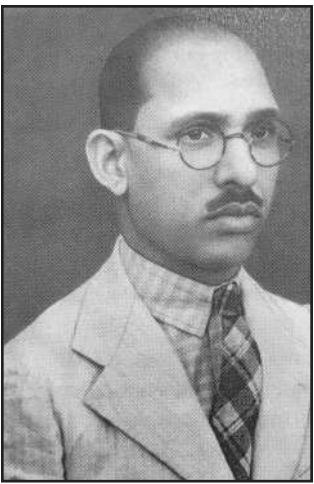
**"I salute that our great savior."**



Prof. G.C. Kaul  
Former Editor Ravidass Patrika



# Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia And Ad-Dharma Movement



While recalling the significance of the role of the Ad-Dharma movement launched by Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowalia in the year 1926, for

espousing the cause of the Untouchables of the pre-partition Punjab, we must remind ourselves of the circumstances prevailing in those times. For, since then tremendous changes have taken place in the social, political and administrative fields, and not many of the present times may have a precise idea of the harrowing conditions and environments in which our people found themselves.

Till about the mid-twenties there was no social and political awakening among the untouchables. People had been fed on the deceptive and demoralising Brahmanical philosophy that the Untouchables were born as such not by any coincidence but because of their accumulated bad deeds committed in the past lives. As a consequence, they were disintitiled to get education, to own and possess property, to take to professions and avocations of their own liking and choice, and to a place of equality, honour and dignity in society. This was the divine dispensation. It was dinned

into their ears day in and day out that this was not due either to their own fault in this life or to the fault of society that they were born in the lowest and wretched castes, and, therefore, they were made to suffer untold hardships and punishments under the edict of the Almighty for their past sins. Out of sheer ignorance these misguided and gullible people tacitly accepted their cursed fate foisted on them by the clever sort. For their woeful sufferings they would beat their foreheads in utter helplessness and say pathetically that it was due to their inevitable fate and destiny. It never occurred to them, and there was none to tell them, that they were being duped and cheated by the uppermost strata of society who were interested in keeping them under their feet. They could not understand why others who were leading most sinful lives before their very eyes were enjoying all comforts of life both good and bad. The good deeds of the ignorant and unsophisticated people of this life were of no consequence for them in this life; they were being stored and preserved for consideration in the life to come. It was a very cunning ruse played on the ignorant and deprived people.

There was none among the Untouchables to raise the banner of revolt against this aggression, oppression, tyranny, deception and exploitation of the poor and the ignorant committed behind the facade of religious philosophy. There, however, appeared on the scene an inspired soul in the person of Babu Mangu Ram of Mugowalia, who came back from

America after a decade's sojourn there. There he was a member of the Ghadar Party formed by the Indians living there to supplement the struggle of freedom launched by the nationalists here.

On reaching home Babu Mangu Ram founded an organisation under the name Ad-Dharma Mandal. Soon a band of enthusiastic and devoted workers gathered around him. The message brought by Babu Mangu Ram was new inspiring. It was aimed at awakening the Untouchable. The message called upon them to know and realise themselves as they had forgotten their true selves due to the hostile influences in which they had been living for thousands of years. It caught the imagination and hearts of the oppressed and down-trodden people and soon Babu Mangu Ram's name became a household word. He succeeded remarkably well in creating awareness and awakening the people. His path was beset with difficulties and he had to work against odds and trying circumstances. Financial difficulties apart, he and his co-workers were chased everywhere and hounded out of bound out of bounds of towns and villages by the Hindus, and quite often they had to hold their meeting and conferences in open fields. One such incident also took place at Una. A weekly "Adi-Danka" in Punjabi was also started to carry the message to every nook and corner of the province. This was the beginning of the struggle for getting back the human rights of which they had been deprived of for centuries. Wherever Babu Mangu Ram went,

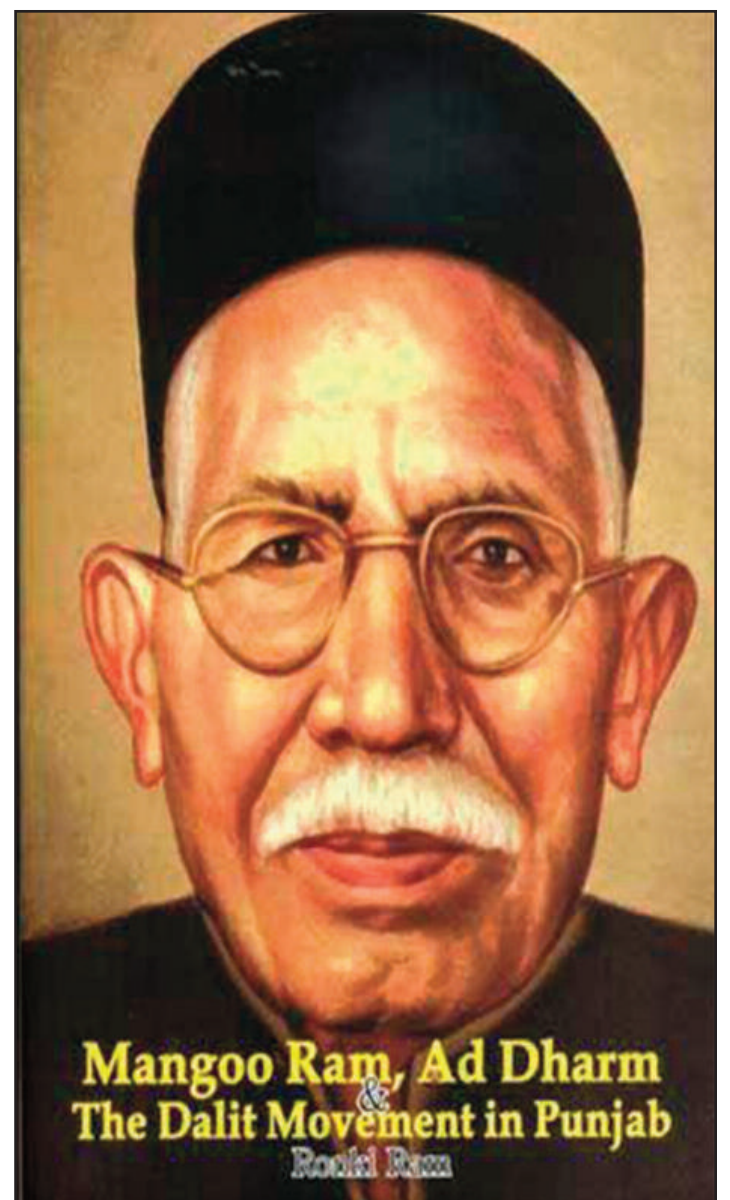
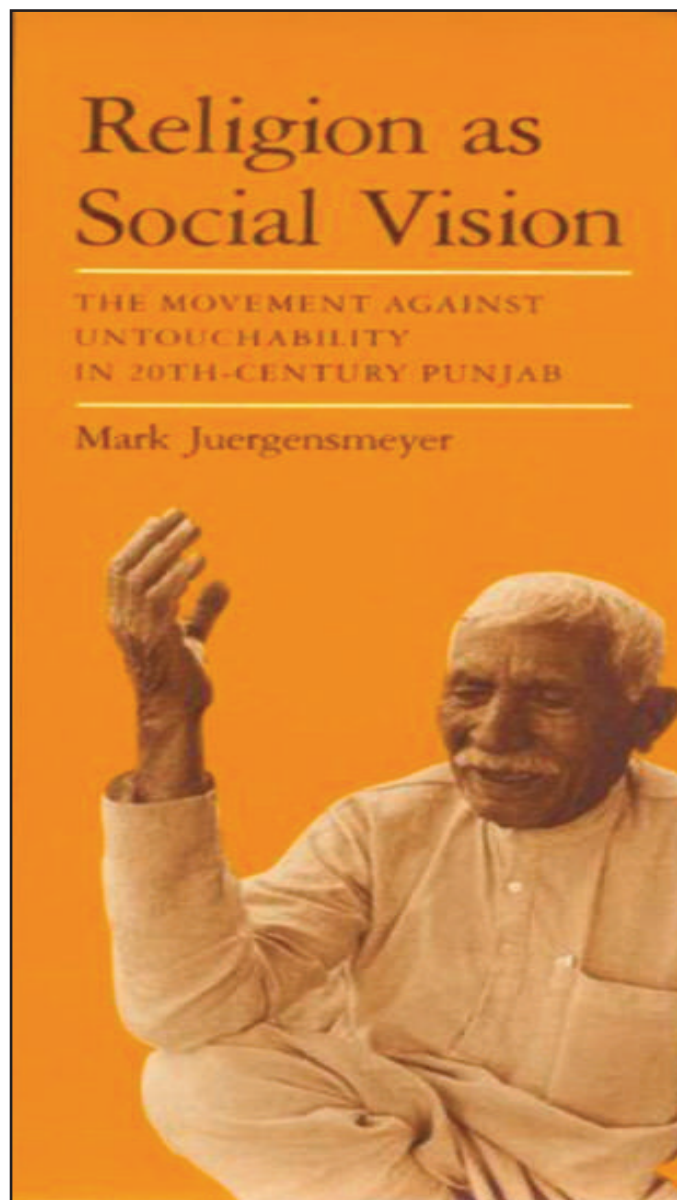
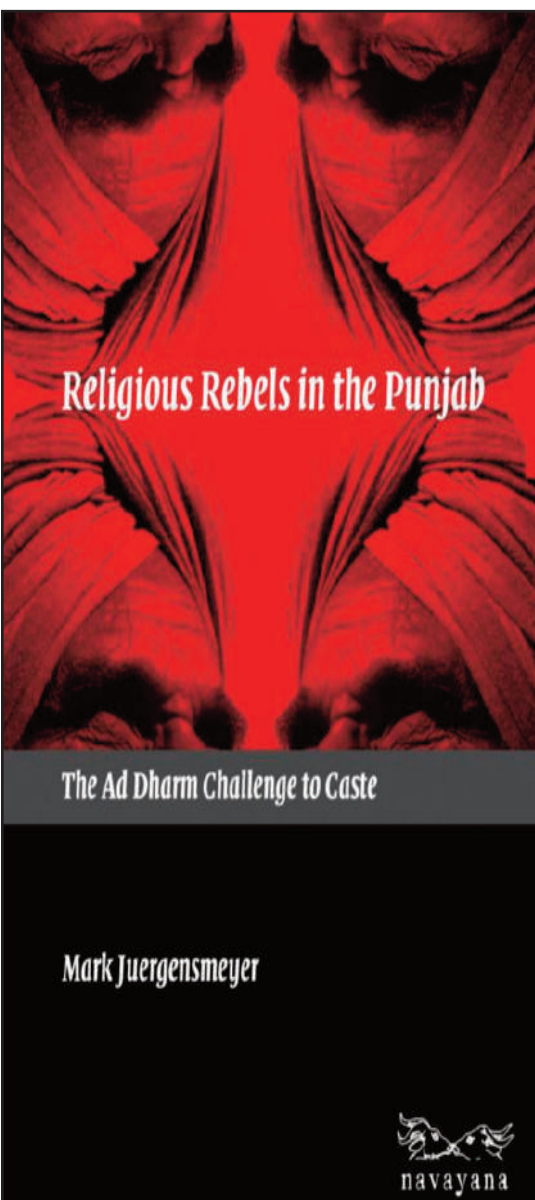
the people were eager to have a glimpse of their beloved leader and benefactor. He did the pioneering work to awaken the people. My own relations with him had been very close and cordial. From my college days I had been attending meetings of the Ad-Dharma Mandal and also occasionally contributing small articles to the Adi-Danka.

In the crucial days of the Round Table Conference held in London in the early thirties for the purpose of hammering out a new political set up for our country, Babu Mangu Ram worked enthusiastically shoulder with the greatest leader of the underdog, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, who was representing the Untouchables of the County at the Conference, to strengthen his hands in his historic struggle for securing political rights for his people on the basis of their being a separate and distinct political entity.

Babu Mangu Ram will be long remembered as the devoted pioneer in the crusade against social and political injustice. He fought relentlessly even in the face of crippling heavy odds for the achievements of the goal. Whatever rights we have been able to snatch so far is entirely due to these great men.

There is needed to look back lest we should forget our benefactors-the brave soldiers who fought our battles.

**Source Courtesy: Souvenir, 1985  
Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia  
99th Birth Anniversary,  
By Mr. C. L. Chumber**





# Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia – A Tribute

The birth anniversary of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia (January 14, 1886 – April 22, 1980) falls on January 14. I have been writing off and own in the Ambedkar Times and my Blog: diplomaticitbits.blogspot.in on the life and mission of Babu Mangu Ram "Prophet of dalit struggle in Punjab" as termed by Prof Ronki Ram of the Punjab University, Chandigarh. I thought of remembering the great dalit icon Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia again as a humble tribute to him for his pioneering contribution for the emancipation of the marginalized sections of the society in the early years of the 20th century under the banner of Ad-dharam Movement which was founded by him in 1925-26 on his return from the democratic world abroad and his sterling role in the Gadar Movement in the USA for the independence of India.

Initially, the ad-dharam movement was initiated by Vasant Rai, Achutanand among others as a 'reform movement' of Hindus under of Arya Samaj to counter Christians, Muslims and Sikhs who were targeting dalits to join them under the arrangements of communal divide initiated by the British rulers in 1909 and further strengthened in 1919 which ultimately resulted in the 'Communal Award' of PM Ramsey MacDonald in 1932 after the Round Table Conferences.

It goes without saying that the Communal Award was the outcome of untiring efforts set in motion of the Memorandum of Ad-dharam Mandal submitted to the Governor of Punjab in 1929 which was rightly called "Magna Carta of dalits" and aptly pleaded and registered by Babasaheb Ambedkar in the Round Table Conferences against a stiff opposition by Mahatma Gandhi and the Hindu leadership at large who wanted to keep dalits under the subjugation of upper caste Hindus. The Ad-dharam Mandal under the stewardship of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia stood by Dr. B.R. Ambedkar when he was struggling for registering his

view point for the emancipation of the depressed classes from the tyranny of caste Hindus. The rest is history.

With Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia's expose to the liberal ideas of the USA and his work and interaction with the Gadari Babas made him revolt against the social discrimina-



tion of the caste Hindus against the depressed people under the caste system. He founded Ad-dharam Mandal, in cooperation and coordination with his likeminded colleagues and declared the following as their motive and agenda, as written by Prof. Ronki Ram in one of his articles on the subject,

"The leaders of Ad Dharm thus chose to restore dignity and freedom to the untouchables by detaching them completely from Hinduism and consolidating them into their own ancient religion – Ad Dharm— of which they had become

oblivious during the long domination by the 'alien Hindus'. In fact, the task of reviving their ancient religion was not an easy one, for the untouchables had forgotten their Gurus and other religious symbols during long period of persecution at the hands of the Savarnas. They had been condemned as impure and declared unfit to have their own theology. Thus, to revive Ad Dharm was tantamount to developing a new religion for the Achhuts. Mangu Ram's claim that the Dalits were the real inhabitants of this land made an enormous psychological impact on the untouchables, providing a theological podium to sustain and reinforce the new Dalit identity." Manyawar Kanshi Ram, a dalit icon who brought the marginalized sections of the society to the political map of the country in recent times to carry forward the mission of Babu Mangu Ram, explained the agenda and rationale of Ad-dharam Movement in one of his public speeches in Hoshiarpur and said,

"What is Ad-dharm? To tell people about this, I have called this meeting at this place. The Ad-dharm movement was the movement of rebellion against the Hindu religion. It was the movement against the Manuwad. A religion that mistreated and exploited Chamars for years and years, Ad-dharm movement was the movement against that oppression. It was the rebellion against all those atrocities. Ad-Dharm movement was the revolt against the Hinduism."

The agenda and mission of Ad-dharam Movement and Babu Mangu Ram was clear and candid in

establishing the dalit identity separate from the Hindus and Sikhs as Moolnivasis of the land. The contribution of Babu Mangu Ram and Ad-dharam Movement in this regard was immense and appreciable.

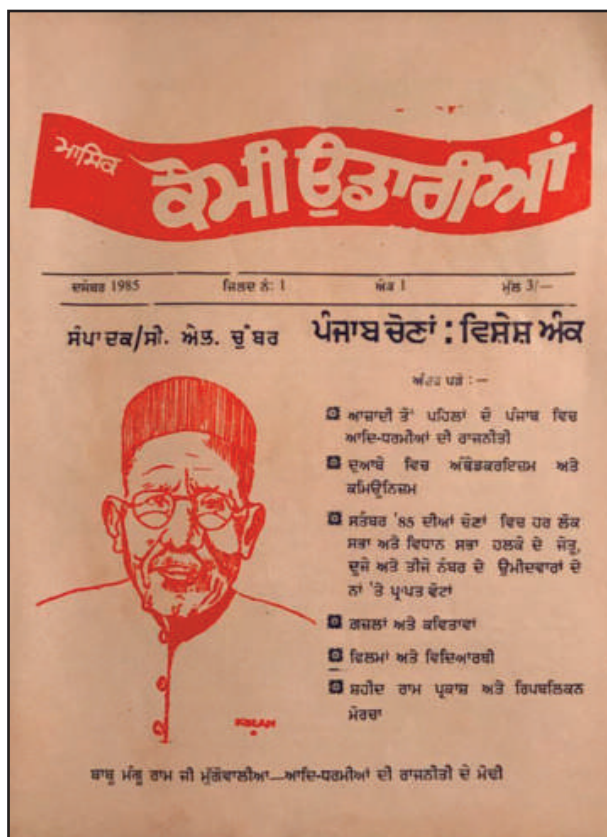
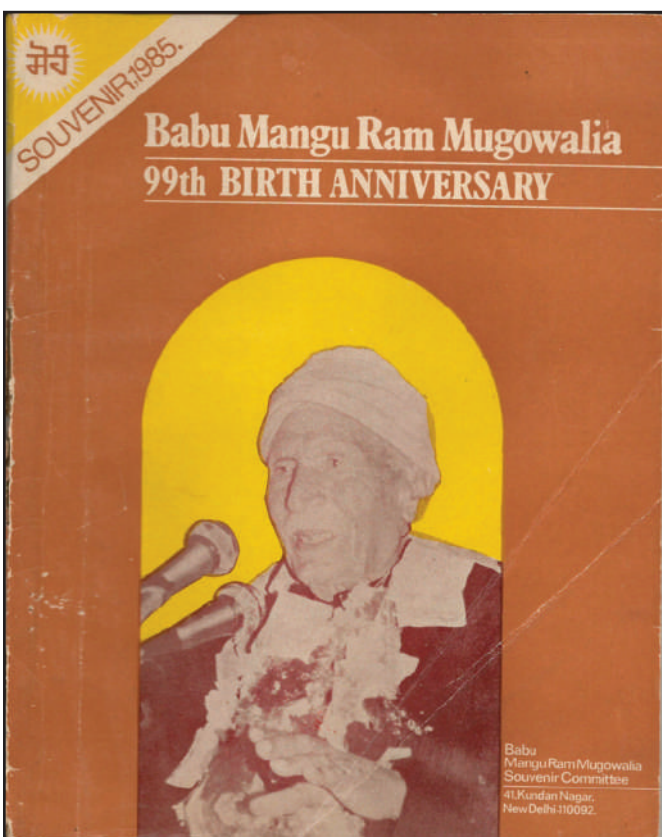
It must be recorded in history in its right perspective. The subsequent developments like the Poona Pact of 1932 signed between Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. B.R. Ambedkar in the wake of the Communal Award, independence of India in 1947 and the new constitution of India and also Babasaheb Ambedkar's embracing of Buddhism in 1956 changed the political and social scenario which resulted in diminished relevance of Ad-dharam Movement. But the impact and contribution of the Movement, nevertheless, will remain in the dalit consciousness for long years to come.

It is a matter of satisfaction that the mission of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia with appropriate changes to cater to the needs of changing scenario is being followed and promoted by All India Ad-dharam Mission under the leadership of Sant Satwinder Singh Hira of Khuralgarh Sahib, historic site pertaining to Guru Ravidass ji, in Hoshiarpur district of Punjab and many other outfits. I take this opportunity to wish them all the best in realizing the lofty ideal of establishing a casteless and equitable society as visualized by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia.

With this I close here with Naman to Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia on his birth anniversary as my humble tribute to the great leader. ਹਜ਼ਾਰੇ ਸਾਲ ਨਰਗਸਿ ਆਪਣੀ ਬੇਨੂਰੀ ਪੈ ਰੋੜੀ ਹੈ, ਬੜੀ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਲਿ ਸੇ ਹੋੜਾ ਹੈ ਚਮਨ ਮੈਂ ਦੀਦਾਵਰ ਪੈਦਾ !



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

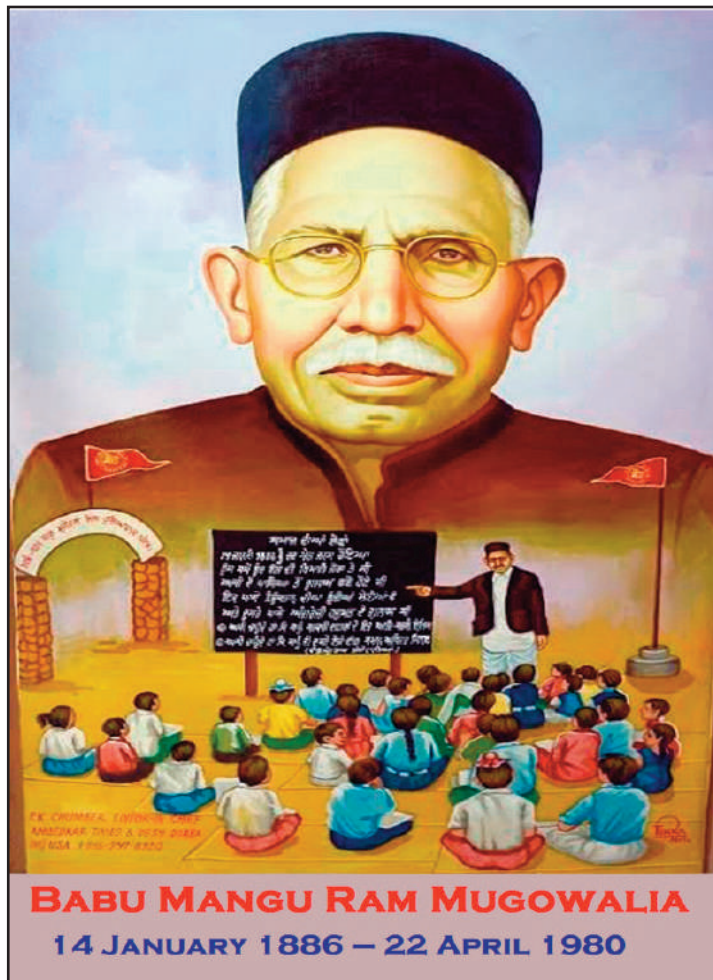




# Article about birth anniversary of Freedom Fighter, Ghadar Movement and Adi-Dharm Leader Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia

Due to the social structure and the caste system Indian society has been divided into different classes and some classes especially the fourth class Shudras was suffering from slavery. To end this system and give equal status to all people many social reformers have launched movements from time to time one of which is the name of Freedom Fighter, leader of Ghadar Movement and Adi-Dharm leader Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia who worked for the development of the untouchables. Babu Mangu Ram was born on 14 January 1886 in village Mugowal of Hoshiarpur District to father Harnam Das and mother Atri. Babu Mangu Ram's mother died when he was only three years old. His father Harnam Das was in leather profession. Babu Mangu Ram who was initially taught by a village sadhu was admitted to a school when he was seven years old. He faced a lot of discrimination in school because he was from a lower untouchable caste. He also attended school in a village near Dehra Dun where his older brother has settled. In most of the schools he was the only one dalit student. He dropped out of school in 1905 due to this humiliation and worked with his father. He got married in the year 1905 and in 1909 he went to USA. Here he worked in the fields with the village landlords for a few years but here too he had to face caste-based discrimination. During this time he came in contact with the leaders of the Ghadar Movement Lala Hardial and Sohan Singh Bhakna fighting for freedom of India and started working for the Ghadar Movement. A very dangerous mission was planned by the Ghadar Movement in which a ship of weapons for the freedom struggle was to be taken to India by sea. The main responsibility of this mission was given to him but the British Government had already got the news of it. This mission which took place in 1915 and which was being brought by five leaders of the Ghadar Movement was blown up by the British Government in the sea. Babuji somehow escaped and after that he finally reached India in 1925 after sixteen years via the Philippines and Sri Lanka. During this time due to not receiving any news the family considered Babuji dead and married his wife to another brother. He saw that a fight was being fought to free the Country from the British but no anyone was doing anything for the development and freedom of the untouchables who had been slaves for centuries. At the end of the year 1925 Babu Ji opened the first Adi-Dharm Primary School in the village to educate dalit children and started teaching. Under his leadership on 11-12 June 1926 thousands of people from 36 castes which were considered untouchables from different parts of the country like Punjab, Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Delhi, Calcutta etc. gathered in the village Mugowal and it was announced that people belonging to these castes

would adopt AdiDharm. Its first president was unanimously elected BabuMangu Ram. He succeeded remarkably well in creating awareness and awakening among the people. His path was beset with difficulties and he had to work against the odds and trying circumstances. The message brought by Babu Mangu Ram was new and inspiring. It was aimed at awakening the untouchables. In November 1926 the first office of Adi-Dharm was opened in Jalandhar and Babu Ji started living in Jalandhar where he remained till 1940 and worked for the



welfare of Adi-Dharm and the Untouchables. In 1927 a weekly newspaper called Adi Danka was started and in 1928 it was also launched in Urdu. The British Government appointed a commission headed by Sir John Simon which is called the Simon Commission to assess the condition of the Untouchables in India. Many leaders led by Congress leader Lala Lajpat Rai opposed this commission but Babu Mangu Ram along with his colleagues presented his case before the Simon Commission and said that they are neither Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs nor Christians. He explained with evidence that they are Adi-Dharmis who had once been the rulers of this country. Due to the struggle of Adi-Dharm leaders the untouchables were given the facilities of reading and writing, the right to vote, the begar system was abolished, recruitment in the army and police started, the rajtnama was abolished and people were made owners of houses. The Punjab Land Alienation Act of 1900 was abolished and gave the right to non-marusi people to buy property. The Adi-Dharm Mandal openly opposed the use of the word Harijan. In the year 1930 the Governor

of Punjab issued orders that special classes should be started for AdiDharm boys and girls who were tenth pass to trained as teachers. Chaudhary Sadruddin Khan organized these classes in the Adi-Dharm Mandal building and 80 persons were made teachers by doing the JBT course. On 26 February 1930 Adi-Dharm was registered and in the 1931 census AdiDharm was included for the first time and at that time approximately 418789 people in Punjab which was approximately 1.5 percent of the total population had registered their religion as

Adi-Dharm. During this census, there were clashes at many places in which Rala Ram Ravidasia and Jhagaru Ram Valmiki were killed and many others were injured due to which it is also called the bloody census. In many places the untouchables were forcibly registered as Hindus and Sikhs. It is worth mentioning that the population of untouchables which was approximately 28 lakhs at the time of the 1911 census was reduced to approximately 13 lakhs in 1931. In the Round Table Conference held in London in the years 1930,31,32, to prove that the real leader of Indian Dalits is Dr. Ambedkar Dalit leaders from Punjab and other states sent about 57 telegrams to London due to which Dr. Ambedkar got the right to represent the untouchables. British Government sent the Lothian Committee to India in which Dr. Ambedkar came as a representative of the untouchables. When this committee came to Lahore the leaders of the Adi-Dharm Mandal reached with about 10 thousand people and placed their demands before the committee. On this occasion some Arya Samaj leaders opposed the demands of the Adi-Dharm Mandal but when thousands of people sitting outside the meeting hall raised slogans these Arya Samaj leaders had to face humiliation. The Adi-Dharm Mandal leaders demanded that separate reservations be made according to our population. After Lothian's report the British Government approved a separate electoral system for the untouchables which was called the Communal Award. According to this decision the untouchables were considered separate and reservation was given to the untouchables, the right to double vote was given, 73 seats in the Council of India

were given to the untouchables separately from the Hindus. In protest against this communal award Congress leader Gandhi went on a fast strike in Yerwada Jail Pune on 20th September, 1932 and in protest against Gandhi the leaders of Adi-Dharm also went on a fast. On 24th September 1932 an compromise was done between Dr. Ambedkar and Gandhi which is called the Poona Pact and the untouchables were considered a part of the Hindus. After the law was passed in this regard on 26th September Gandhi ended his fast but Babu Mangu Ram with his team continued his fast and on the 12th day he ended his fast by drinking juice from the hands of Sant Sarwan Das Dera Ballanwale and Seth Kishan Das. According to the Poona Pact 08 seats were reserved in Punjab. In the elections held in Punjab in the year 1937 the leaders of Adi-Dharm Mandal led by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia won 7 seats out of the 8 reserved seats and Moola Singh Balachauria who won the 8th seat which was lost by only 07 votes also joined the Adi-Dharm Mandal later. In the year 1946 Babu Mangu Ram was also elected to the Punjab Assembly along with 04 other companions. He advocated increasing educational and employment opportunities for the untouchables. In June 1928 Shahid Bhagat Singh published an article titled "The Problem of the Untouchables" in the Kirti Newspaper in which he praised the efforts of the Adi-Dharm Mandal to organize the untouchables independently. In the year 1947 before the partition of India Mr. Muhammad Ali Jinnah's secretary along with Chaudhry Sundar Das, Master Gurbanta Singh and several officers reached the village of Mugowal and demanded that if they agreed to the Muslim League and joined Pakistan, they would give 50 Murabas of land and 50 Thousand Rupees which they rejected. After independence the Adi-Dharm section was eliminated in the census held in 1951. In independent India Babu Mangu Ram continuously struggled to run the AdiDharm movement. In 1972 he was honored by the Central Government and given a pension. The government gave him some land near Garhsankar. On 22 April 1980 this leader of the Ghadar movement and the Adi-Dharm movement left us forever. Congress leader and former Rajya Sabha member Shamsheer Singh Dulon has established a statue of Babu Ji in his village Mugowal. Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia will always be remembered for his struggle for freedom and the steps taken for the welfare of the Untouchables.



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# Historicity of Chamar Women's Contribution in the Ambedkarite Movement: Part -11

## Urmila Rayamane

The post-A m b e d k a r movement encompasses many developments such as the Republican Movement, Dalit Panther movement, Namantar Movement, Dalit Youth Front, and the formation of Dalit literature, among others. At various points in time, women have contributed in diverse ways—by taking to the streets, providing essential support to the movement, or shouldering the entire responsibility of the household while the men actively participated in the movement outside the home.

The battles women fought on the streets and their ideological contributions were as significant as the support they provided while staying at home. While studying Ambedkar's movement, it is crucial to examine how women supported the movement and how their invaluable contributions complemented the efforts of the men involved. Women's hard work behind the scenes and their pivotal roles have yet to be adequately reflected in historical writing or feminist critiques. Many women stood firmly behind capable men, making invisible but vital contributions to social change.

Principal L. B. Rayamane, one of the leading architects of Dalit literature, was a key figure in sustaining the evolution of Dalit literature. During the post-Ambedkar movement, particularly during the Namantar movement, his initiatives included the handwritten fortnightly Milind, the shaping of Dalit literature, the rise of identity politics, and the establishment of the Dalit Youth Front. Many students mentored by Rayamane went on to become influential contributors to the movement.

In Aurangabad, Principal Rayamane's house became a hub for meetings, discussions, and cultural exchanges related to the movement. The documents he collected were invaluable for studying the Ambedkarite



movement and the Chambhar community. Mrs. Urmila Rayamane played a significant role in preserving these references and ensuring they remained accessible for social and cultural studies. The office of the Dalit Youth Front and the magazine Astitva operated from Verma Building, Khadkeshwar, Aurangabad, where the Rayamane family lived.

"Rayamane's house was a place where countless activists, poets, and writers of the movement for change gathered to discuss ideas," recalled many students. He once invited thirty to forty-five people, including Baburao Bagul, to his home for dinner. Despite the overwhelming task, Mrs. Urmila Rayamane prepared food for everyone with a smile. This instance highlights her quiet yet indispensable contributions to the movement.

In addition to managing a household often filled with students and activists, Mrs. Urmila endured significant financial hardships. Principal S. R. Hanumante noted that Rayamane often took loans from the Provident

firsthand.

In 2012, a celebrated book titled Aadharstambh: Pracharya L.B. Rayamane, edited by Prof. Avinash Dolas and Ram Dotonde, documented Rayamane's contributions. Several students expressed gratitude for Mrs. Urmila Rayamane's extraordinary efforts. Principal Rayamane dedicated his life to shaping a learned generation after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. He supported many relatives and students financially, often raising them as his own. In all of this, Mrs. Urmila played a critical role, complementing her husband's leadership with unwavering support.

Principal Madhuri Nikumbh recounted that Rayamane's household was not only welcoming but nurturing. Students far from home were cared for with meals prepared by Mrs. Urmila, whose affection left a lasting impression. Ram Dotonde, another of Rayamane's students, credited Urmila Rayamane for her significant role in sustaining the movement and shaping the cultural uniqueness of Chambhar society.

Mrs. Urmila Rayamane did not confine herself to household duties. She actively participated in seminars and discussions, including a World Women's Liberation Day seminar at Milind College in April 1975, where she shared her thoughts alongside notable leaders.

Today, Principal L.B. Rayamane is no longer alive, and many verbal accounts of the movement have been lost. However, Mrs. Urmila Rayamane remains a silent witness to these historic events. Her testimony is essential for documenting the history of the Ambedkarite movement in Aurangabad.

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