

Ambedkar Times

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AN OBITUARY Lahori Ram Balley A Reputed Ambedkarite and Social Activist

ahori Ram Balley (L. R. Balley), a veteran Ambedkarite and social activist, who died on July 6, 2023, was a household name among the Scheduled Castes (SC) of Punjab, a state known for its largest concentration of SC population in India. He was equally known in many other states in the country and among the SC diaspora as well. Born on July 20, 1930, in the house of mother Premi Devi and father Bhagwan Dass at Nawanshahr, Mr. Balley inherited political activism from his grandfather, Chaudhary Inder Ram, who was associated with Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, the founder of historic Ad Dharm movement, in generating social and political consciousness among the so-called lower castes in Puniab in the late 1920s, L. R. Ballev traced the Ad Dharm Mandal report, a rare primary document, from the scattered papers of his grandfather and gave it to Mark Juergensmeyer, a reputed American academic and pioneer of Punjab Dalit studies, who visited him in the early 1970s during his doctoral research on the formation of Dalit consciousness in Punjab. Eventually, the Ad Dharm Mandal report became the forte of Mark's classic entitled "Religion as Social Vision: The Movement against Untouchability in 20th Century Punjab," published by the University of California Press, Berkeley, CA, in 1982. However, L. R. Balley's interest in Ambedkar mission was ignited by his paternal uncle, Hakim Gurcharan Dass, an adept admirer of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who was also closely associated with Seth Kishan Dass, the main financer of the Ad Dharm Mandal and the founder president of the Punjab Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) in 1942 - the maiden Ambedkarite political party in Punjab.

L. R. Balley shifted to Delhi in 1947 in search of a job after qualifying his matriculation examination. On December 8, 1948, he got a job of 'copy holder' in the government office of state press at Delhi. It was here in Delhi that he got the opportunity to meet Dr. Ambedkar at his residence, Bungalow No.1, Harding Road (currently called Tilak Road). He used to frequent this road during his routine daily visits to his office. He was also present during the occasion of the stone laying ceremony of the Ambedkar Bhawan at Rani Jhansi Road, New Delhi in 1951, by Dr. Ambedkar himself. In the words of L. R. Balley, "Though I got the opportunity to meet Dr. Ambedkar only thrice, and to saw and listen him

many times, but September 30, 1951 proved to be an historic day of my life". It was on this very day that Mr. Balley promised Dr. Ambedkar: "I will dedicate my entire life for the fulfillment of his mission". In fact, it was the time when Ambedkari mission had almost come to a standstill in Punjab. Many leaders of SCF deserted the mission and joined the Indian National Congress. Seth Kishan Dass, the founder of the Ambedkari Mission in Punjab distanced himself from active politics and got settled in Calcutta (Kolkata). Another veteran Ambedkarite, K.C. Sulekh, General Secretary, SCF, who also has had the

kar delivered his historic address on women were the evening of October 27, 1951, founded Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab wing of All India Samata Sainik Dal, Buddhist Society of India among others and led them all from the front till his last breath. He took Jaswant Rao Ambedkar, son of Dr. Ambedkar, on a whirlwind tour of Punjab during the second general election in 1957, and persuaded him to contest in the 1962 parliamentary election from Hoshiarpur constituency. L. R. Balley himself contested in the parliamentary election of 1957 against Swaran Singh, the then cabinet minister in

> the Congress government. To spread Dhamma further streamline the Ambedkari mission in Punjab, embraced Buddhism in 1963. In the next year, L. R. Balorganised two major agitations for the acquisition distribution of evacuee land among the landless SC communities in Punjab. The agitations

> > were launchedunder the banner of the Republican Party of India on June 15 and December 1964in collaboration with Cha-Nidharak. Dur-

honour to conduct the stage at Raming this struggle, Mr Bihari Lal Khaar, daspura (Boota Mandi, Jalandhar) the elder brother of L. R. Balley, provided free cycle repair service to a group of 101 cycle-borne activists who began their cycle march to Delhi from Chak Hakim Ravidass Mandir near Phagwara on June 15, 1964. Before the second round of this agitation that took place on December 6, 1964, Mr. Balley and many more male leaders of the Republican Political Party were arrested. To keep the agitation alive, women leaders of the RPI took over the command. On December 26, 1964, they protested vehemently against the then Chief Minister of Punjab who was visiting Jalandhar. Subsequently,

arrested. Among them was also Bibi Ajit Balley, wife of L. R. Balley, who was also sent to jail along with her two small children: son Rahul (son) and Sujata (daughter).





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made by L. R. Balley, the establishment of Bheem Patrika in 1958, a monthly Urdu and Punjabi publication, is the most significant. Its first issue was published in May 1959. Since 1965, it has been published in Hindi and also carried articles in English. Apart from the monthly journal, Bheem Patrika publication also began publishing writings and speeches of Dr. Ambedkar much before the arrival of his collective works published by the government of Maharashtra. It also published numerous booklets on Ambedkarite literature including books authored by L. R. Balley. Ambedkar Bhawan and Bheem Patrika publication office, meticulously nurturedby Balley sahib over the years, have become the most sought-after academic space in Jalandhar where scholars, political activists, researchers, leaders of varied pursuits and journalists from within the country and abroad have been visiting regularly.

Mr. Balley was a prolific writer and an eloquent orator with an equal command on Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and English. He minced no words and was blunt in his speech and writing. Several cases were registered against him for his radical writings and some of his booklets were also bannedincluding 'Rangeela Gandhi'. I have had the honour and privilege to interact with him many a times and at one occasion to spend a week with him during our participation in an international conference on the birth celebration of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar held in Lahore in June 2008. I found in him a cordial and at the same time a never-to-compromise-personality, and a thoroughly dedicated activist towards the mission of Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He was a true Karamyogi, who lived a dedicated and meaningful life of mature 93 years.



during Dr. Ambedkar's visit to Jalandhar on 27 October 1951, joined a job

in 1952, which prevented him from

devoting quality time to the mission. L. R. Balley kept his promise. After the Parinirvan of Dr. Ambedkar on December 6, 1956, he resigned from his job. Since then he never looked back. He got SCF reorganised with the support of Charan Singh Nidharak, another veteran Ambedkarite, and soon after established the Punjab unit of Republican Party of India as envisioned by Dr. Ambedkar. He got Ambedkar Bhawan constructed at a place where Dr. Ambed-

Preserving the Legacy of Ad Dharm Movement

Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkar Times & Desh Doaba

Ad Dharm movement brought Dalit consciousness in the undivided vast province of Punjab at a time when varied political organisations (Singh Sabhas, Arya Samajis, Muslim League, Ahmadiyya's, Christian missionary societies) representing mainstream communities, in the regions were making concerted efforts to strengthen their numerical strength for gaining some political space in the promised devolution of political power in the form of limited electoral provisions. Though Scheduled Castes, then addressed as Depressed classes, constituted a significant part of the total population of the Punjab province, they did not have their own exclusive political organisation like that of the other mainstream communities in the province. It was for this reason that all other community based organisations were making best of their efforts to win maximum number of Scheduled Castes towards their fold. All of them were asserting their claimson Scheduled Castes them to include them in the religions of their respective communities. In fact, it was for the first time in 1920s that the leaders of different communities realised to consolidate the numerical strength of their respective communities as a potent factor for the acquisition of some share in the British system of governance. It was precisely during this very time that the historic Ad Dharm movement took roots in Punjab.

The Ad Dharm movement was founded by Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia after his return from abroad in 1925. He along with the efforts of Vasant Rai, Thakur Chand and Swami Shudranand called a mega conference at his native village of Mugowal and laid the foundation of the Ad Dharm movement amidst various sub-communities of the Scheduled Castes. Within a short period of five years, Ad Dharm movement became a household organization of the majority of the lower castes in the province. It had its own Newspaper (Adi Danka), well-organized headquater (Ad Dharm Mandal) at Jalandhar, separate religion (Ad Dharm) duly recognised by the British government, supported Babasaheb Dr. B.R. Ambedkar during his tie with Mr. M.K. Gandhi on the issue of separate electoral communal award at the London Round Table Conferences, won seven out of eight reserved assembly seats in the Punjab Pradesh Provincial Assembly elections in 1937, and all seats in 1946 Punjab Assembly elections. In 1946, Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia got elected from the reserved assembly seat of Hoshiarpur. The Ad Dharm movement, under the stewardship of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, made many petitions to the British government from time to time for the upliftment of the lower castes. Despite stiff opposition from the mainstream communities, the Ad Dharm movement was able a carve a niche for itself and acquired a significant political space for the hitherto for neglected segment of the lower castes.

Though after India's independence, the Ad Dharm movement got confined to socio-spiritual domain of the lower castes, its legacy became a rich heritage of the Schedules Castes in the state. Mangu Ram Jaspal, namesake of Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia, Prof. Mark Juergensmeyer, C. L. Chumber, Prof. Ronki Ram among others played a significant role in documenting the history of Ad Dharm movement and preserving its legacy. It is matter of great pride for us to put on records that Ambedkar Times (English) and Desh Doaba (Punjabi) Weeklies have been making earnest efforts since their inception in 2006 and 2012 respectively for the wider dissemination of the information about the rich heritage of this historic Scheduled Caste movement across the world.

A Renowned Ambedkarite, Lahori Ram Balley – An Obituary

Lahori Ram Balley (1930-2023), a staunch and renowned Ambedkarite was a legendary personality of Jalandhar, Punjab, India and beyond who was fully involved in and dedicated to the mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar for about 7 decades not only as a social and community activist but also as a politician of standing by his own right. He proved himself during his life time not only as a worthy follower of Dr. Ambedkar but also as a devout and conscious Buddhist to carry the 'caravan' forward as he said to have promised to Babasaheb before his Prinirvan in 1956. It was saddening to get the news that Balley Sahib passed away on July 6 all of a sudden around mid-day. It was difficult to believe as I usually followed him (he himself was not active on social media) by reading, with interest, posts pertaining to him and his activities at the ripe age of 93. It is said that the proof of pudding lies in its eating - Balley Sahib was a living legend. Even without any announcement of his sudden demise made by his family till late in the evening of

ical and social events as a fire-brand orator and an apt communicator in and around Jalandhar in those days.

Balley Sahib resigned his job in Delhi and decided to join the mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar from Jalandhar as his base. Quickly and by his sheer hard work and dedication, climbed through the ladder – rose from an ordinary activist to positions of high responsibility in the All India Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican



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Party of India, excelled himself in journalism, in editing and running the important mouth-pieces of the marginalized sections of the society, the Bheem Patrika and the Kirti, wrote and compiled many books on Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and his thought and also on

Buddhism. He attained a position of one of the acclaimed writers, and distributors of Dalit literature in India and beyond affordable price. It was not a small feat. Balley Sahib was source of inspiration to many like me a 'guide and philosopher'. vividly recall that back in 1970-71; I had gone to Delhi for bread and butter. One day, I read an article of one of the famous and



July 6 (due to logistical reasons), the news of the Parinirvan of the son of the soil got viral on the social media like a wild fire in afternoon itself. It only speaks of the popular standing of Balley Sahib in the socio-political circles. I wrote about Lahori Ram Balley Sahib earlier too in my blogs; one of these may be accessed at: https://diplomaticitibits.blogspot.com/2017/07/lahori-ram-balley-happy-birthday.html

Balley Sahib was a self-made man, a 'Karamyogi' - as a community activist, politician and above all a man of letters - Editor of Bheem Patrika (started in late 1960s), author of books on subjects of interest and concern to the weaker sections of the society and to disseminate and propagate the mission and legacy of his 'icon', Babasaheb Ambedkar, by writing and publishing books as a missionary and a visionary writer. He was an orator par-excellence who could make his audiences spell bound - Zaduvian-Mukarar. I was much impressed by his oratorical skills even as a young lad living in his vicinity during my formative years before I left Jalandhar for my diplomatic career in early 1970s. His stock went much high in my mind and eves when I listened him simultaneously interpreting the speeches, delivered in English by Joginder Nath Mandal and later that of the then High Commissioner of Sri Lanka at the Ambedkar Bhawan in Bootan Mandi. Balley Sahib had a good command on many languages like; Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian and English.

Frankly, Balley Sahib was the hero of many young students like me back in 1960s because of his forceful oratory and a hero like mannerism. I admired his Lenin cap and waist coat and Iso his sling bag. He was a much sought after speaker in polit-

established journalist-editor, M. Chalapati Rau, in one of the national dailies and found it derogatory of Babasaheb Ambedkar. I wrote a short letter in my broken English to Balley Sahib in Jalandhar and urged him to look into this and respond appropriately. As expected, prompt came the reply assuring me, "Not to worry. He will not be spared", it was the exact expression of Balley Sahib in his kind letter

On reviving my connection with Balley Sahib on my return to Jalandhar after retirement in 2011, I found him hale and hearty as always and even kicking as in his younger times. He was one of the founding fathers of organizations like; Ambedkar Bhawan Trust, Ambedkar Mission Society, Punjab Chapter of All India Samata Dal, Buddhist Society of India among others and remained at the helm of affairs of these organizations housed at Ambedkar Bhawan - the epic-centre of Ambedkarite and Buddhist activities in Punjab and beyond. His contribution to establish and raise these outfits to maturity was immense and should be publically recognized. He was a leader of men by his own right. In totality, he was a great man who lived a king-size life with pride and élan, as a 'Sacha Ambedkari'. He titled his auto-biography as 'Ambedkari Hone Ka Arth' - he exactly knew it as he was an encyclopedia of Ambedkar's life, mission, thought and legacy. Hats off to Balley Sahib.

With this, I pay my respect and regard to Lahori Ram Balley Sahib whose demise has left a wide void in the Mission of Babasaheb Ambedkar. Allama Iqbal rightly said:-

Badi Mushkil se Hota Hai Chaman Mein Deedawar Paida.

THE GREAT CENSUS 1931 THE AD-DHARM RELIGION

Source Courtesy: Census of India, 1931, Volume XVII, Punjab
By Khan Ahmad Hasan Khan
Superintendent of Census Operations
Punjab & Delhi

Printed by: Civil & Military Gazette Press, Lahore (1933)



NEERAJ PAUL Email: neerajpaul@hotmail.com

Page No.289 A "New" Religion

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The most notable feature of the present census from the standpoint of return of religion has been the adoption of the term "Ad-Dharmi" by numerous Chamar and Chuhras and other untouchables. At previous censuses Chuhras, unless they returned some recognized religion, were always included among Hindus. In this respect the instructions for the return of religion at the present census were the same as in 1921, viz. "All Chuhras, who are not Muslims or Christians, and who do not return any other religion, should be returned as Hindus. The same rule applies to members of other depressed classes who have no tribal religion." Thus under the instructions if a Chuhra refused to be recorded as a Hindu he was to be so recorded in case he failed to return any other religion. An addition was, however, made to the instructions by the insertion of the clause: "Persons returning themselves as Ad-Dharmis should be recorded as such." The Punjab Ad-Dharm Mandal had petitioned the Punjab Government before the census operations started in 1930, representing that the depressed classes should be permitted to return Ad-Dharm as their religion at the time of the census as they were the aborig-

Page No.291:
Proportion of Numerical Strength by Religion:

Religion	British Territory	Punjab States	
Muslim	56.54	32.53	
Hindu	26.83	46.26	
Sikh	12.99	20.56	
Christian	1.74	.09	
Ad-Dharmi	1.69	.4	
Jain	.15	.16	

Page No.311:

Figures since 1881 for some of the most numerous depressed classes, who have been returned as belonging to more than one religion:

Caste ar	nd Religion	1931	1921	1911	1901	1891	1881
Bawaria	Hindu	16,045	25,517	26,847	27,633	24,401	20,163
	Sikh	15,858	9,005	6,002	1,275	1,635	1,478
	Ad-Dharmi	56					
Chamar	Hindu	684,963	968,298	909,499	1,089,003	1,029,335	931,915
	Sikh	155,717	161,862	164,110	75,753	106,328	100,014
	Ad-Dharmi	256,349					
Chuhra	Hindu	368,224	693,393	777,821	934,553	859,571	613,434
	Sikh	157,341	40,345	49,937	21,673	90,321	40,501
	Ad-Dharmi	86,548					
Ramdasi	Hindu	12,235					
	Sikh	67,080					
	Ad-Dharmi	47,169					
Sansi	Hindu	26,665	17,090	22,022	23,658	18,246	17,990
	Sikh	1,238	77				
	Ad-Dharmi	384					

Chapter XII Race, Tribe and Caste Page No.333:

The distribution of Chamars and Mochis between the Hindu and Sikh religions in 1921 and among Hindus, Sikhs, Ad-Dharmis in 1931 is given in the margin:

Locality	1921		1931		
	Hindu (1)	Sikh (2)	Hindu (3)	Sikh (4)	Ad- <u>Dharmi</u> (5)
Punjab	980,293	163,290	705,189	225,833	256,349
British Territory	766,424	85,020	479,162	126,410	248,431
Punjab States	213,869	78,270	226,027	99,423	7,918

ines of India and while the Hindus kept them at a respectable distance they did not believe in the Hindu religion. The President of the Punjab Ad-Dharm Mandal was informed that a clause was being provided in the Census Code requiring that persons returning their religion as Ad-Dharm would be recorded as such. Ad-Dharm literally means original or ancient religion.

Page No.294 Revolt of Untouchables

There has been in the last few years a movement among the untouchable classes to organize themselves as a separate community in order to consolidate their position, and many of them have returned themselves, particularly in the central districts, Jullundur and Hoshiarpur, as Ad-Dharmi or the followers of Ad-Dharm, meaning the ancient or original religion of Hindustan. The figures of Ad-Dharmis are given in the margin for the districts returning more than 100 of them.

The following tabular statistical information are from Chapter XI - Religion and XII – Race, Tribe and Caste from the above-mentioned source, which highlights the Ad-Dharm Religion in Census 1931:

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Page No.334 Proportion of literacy among Chamars under different religious denominations, is illustrated by the marginal table, which also gives the figures for Chuhras.

CASTE AND RELIGION		Total Population	Literates per mille aged 7 and over	
Chamar	Hindu	684,963	5	
	Ad-Dharmi	256,349	13	
	Sikh	158,753	14	
Chuhra	Hindu	368,224	8	
	Ad-Dharmi	86,548	5	
	Sikh	169,247	9	

Page No.334:

The figures for the last two censuses are given in the margin with detail by religion. Hindu Chuhras have decreased by 47 per cent, while Chuhras among other religions show a varying degree of increase. The Ad-Dharm religion has been returned for the first time...

CHUHRA	Hindu	Sikh	Ad-Dharmi	Muslim (including Mussalli)	Christian
Strength in 1921	693,425	42,476		374,884	
Strength in 1931	368,224	169,247	86,548	434,644	34,996
Actual Variation	- 325,201	+ 126,771		+59,760	
Percentage Variation	- 46.9	+ 298.5		+15.9	

Ambedkar Times

THE IMPORTANCE OF LIGHTING FIRES AND THE SILENCE OF THE FIRE FIGHTERS

way to consolidate power. Nero did it by blaming the Christians for the burning of Rome and persecuting them to to tighten his hold on the Roman empire. Hitler did it by arresting all Communists, Jews and "enemies of the state" after the fire in the Reichstag. The BJP government in Delhi follows this beaten track by its proven incompetence, if not worse, in the fires burning in Manipur, now in their sixth week. Of course, there is no proof that those who benefitted by these fires lit them, or at the least failed to douse them. But this is where the "smell test" comes into play, and my flared nostrils tell me that something here just does not smell right. And your olfactory sensory neurons, dear reader, should be telling you the same thing if Covid or "bhakti" has not destroyed your sense of smell completely.

The BJP, as a party, suffers from pyro-mania on a psychopathic scale: it loves nothing better than to constantly light "big and small fires" (a phrase used by the RJD MP Manoj Jha in a recent open letter to the Prime Minister), and then dance around them like a dervish counting its votes. Currently, there are four big fires burning in this country, in Jammu and Kashmir, Kolhapur, Uttarakhand and of course Manipur. There are also innumerable small fires lighting up our darkening democratic twilight- the protests by the wrestlers in Delhi, the renaming of the Jawaharlal Nehru Museum and Library, the award of the Gandhi Peace Prize to an organisation which reportedly did not see eye to eye with Gandhi, the largesse shown to willful defaulters of public funds, a resurgent demand for a Uniform Civil Code, the rewriting of history text books These are as yet fires in a metaphorical sense only, but they can, and will, be fanned into flames at any moment by our elected pyromaniacs.

Pyrotechnics I can understand; what I can't wrap my ears around is the deafening silence of those who should be speaking out, if not shouting from the rooftops, about the attempted ethnic cleansing in Manipur. Every constitutional authority

Lighting or fanning a fire is a good who should have spoken out has way to consolidate power. Nero did it by blaming the Christians for the burning of Rome and persecuting them to to tighten his hold on the who should have spoken out has been silent. The Prime Minister's silence is understandable, for he finds his (forked) tongue only at election rallies and Man ki Baat recordings.

the Constitution prevents her from playing a more active role. Being congenitally stupid, I'm confused by this argument.

She has sworn to protect the

Avay Shukla, I.A.S. (Retired)

But should the Supreme Court of India not have said something, even though it is on vacation? Will the court speak only when Mohammad comes to the mountain, when a petitioner approaches it on a specific plaint, and not otherwise, even

Constitution of India, right? She needs no advice from anyone to do so, right? So when she sees the same Constitution being torn to shreds, the "union of states" being put in danger, an elected state government appearing to be involved in



though every law in the book is being splintered in Manipur? But wait a moment- there was a petition filed in the Supreme Court to send in the army to that ravaged state; that was the moment for our judges to have given the Deadly Duo a nudge, if not a shove. Not only did the court fail to do so, it also refused to order the army in, showing touching faith in the police which, by many press accounts, handed over 4000 automatic guns to the Meitis.

And our revered President, should she not have spoken, not publicly of course, but in private to the Prime Minister or the Home Minister, or sent a note on that embossed letterhead? There are no reports that she did either. Did she not owe this to the people of Manipur, at least to the 150 odd killed and the 50000 displaced? Her conservative apologists will argue that she can only act on the advice of the Council of Ministers (read Prime Minister), and that

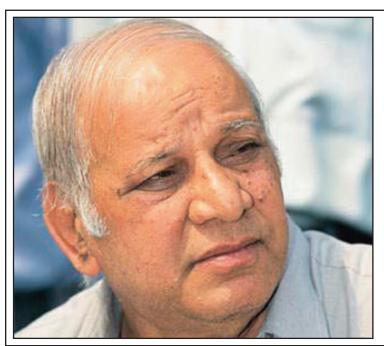
the violence, a complete failure of the rule of law, the Centre standing by as a mute spectator- is she not obliged to give some advice to the union government in turn? I find farcical the suggestion that a constitutional authority can be constrained by that same constitution in performing her constitutional duty! Now, that is a non-sequitur, if ever there was one. It is also a paraprosdokian that should not take too much time to figure out.

Finally, of course, there is the silence of our Prime Minister, currently performing yogaasnas in Washington while a near civil war has broken out in one of his border states. I personally never expected him to say anything: a person who said nothing when millions died in a pandemic is not likely to be impressed with the small change of a mere 150 deaths. But it does make me wonderis he always silent as a matter of strategy, or is it because he is completely lacking in compassion? What

kind of heartless strategy is it anyway if it prevents a leader from reaching out to his people, the same poor sods who voted for him?

Manipur has once again exhibited the two intrinsic characteristics of this govt.- administrative incompetence and inhumanity bordering on cruelty. This unusual twinning of traits has been very well explained by the Illinois Governor, JB Pritzker, in a speech he delivered at a convocation of North-Western university in the context of the Trump presidency. According to his theory, our humanoid ancestors were naturally suspicious of people who did not act, sound, live or look like them. This reaction was something rooted in fear or judgment, and was a natural survival response in an unsafe world. They survived as a species by being suspicious of things they were not familiar with. That was part of evolution. But evolution did not stop there. Man evolved further, learnt to shut down that animal instinct in order to be kind, tolerant of others, accommodative of differences. Empathy and compassion are evolved states of being, where the primeval urges are suppressed by an improved mental capacity. But some sections of society appear not to have followed this evolution pathway and have "weaponised cruelty" as a means to rule; they consider empathy and kindness as a weakness. They have not progressed beyond the primal animal instincts, and therefore lack imagination and creativity in problem solvingin effect, they have failed "the first test of an advanced society." Governor Pritzker's conclusion? Look for the kindest person in the room-he is usually the smartest too.

I find this a fascinating thesis. It explains a lot about our present government, its leaders and their blind acolytes. It explains the regressive nature of the BJP's ideology, its constant fixation with the past, the distrust of scientific and rational thought, its hostility to progressive liberalism, the tribal instinct for cronyism, and the utter lack of compassion for the most vulnerable. It's a party which is not evolving but is retrogressing. Sadly, it is taking the nation down the same slope.



BAHUJAN SAMAJ PARTY AND THE IDEOLOGY OF AD-DHARM

"The real objective of the Ad Dharm movement was to create an egalitarian social structure where Ad Dharmis would be proud of their community and feel free to aspire for equal opportunities. With an aim of achieving the same objective, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) has become active in Punjab since 1985. Of late the Party has claimed that "the ideology of Ad Dharm has become the spine, heart, brain, eyes, feet, and arms of the struggle of the BSP" (Bahujan Samaj Bulletin 12 January 1997:8). In 1996, it won three of the thirteen parliamentary seats and recorded leads in as many as seventeen assembly constituencies in Punjab (Verma 1999). Kanshi Ram, founder of the BSP, was elected to Lok Sabha (1996) from the Hoshiarpur constituency, wherefrom 50 years ago Babu Mangu Ram, founder of the Ad Dharm movement, got elected to the Punjab Assembly in 1946. More interestingly, it was again in Hoshiarpur that the BSP celebrated 75th year of the AD Dharm movement on 28 February 2001. On this occasion, Kanshi Ram in his address exhorted the "Bahujan Samaj" to follow the principles of the Ad Dharm movement of which the BSP has, now, become the torch-bearer."

REF: AD-DHARM MOVEMENT AND DALIT CONSCIOUSNESS IN PUNJAB
- DR. RONKI RAM

Dr. B.R Ambedkar's Thought In The Era of Globalization

B harat Ratna Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar is without a doubt the most significant figure in India's galaxy of thinkers and philosophers. He "has established a distinctive position for himself in society; whatever label he dons in the future, Dr. Ambedkar is not the man to permit himself to be forgotten."1

Ambedkar Times

Dr. Ambedkar was a complex personality with many facets, and he made a big and meaningful contribution to modern India. He was a well-known political and social thinker who offered fresh perspectives on issues like the caste system, the evil practise of untouchability, the emancipation of the oppressed by political action, etc.

The political outlook of Dr. Ambedkar was not merely hypothetical and utopian. Despite not being a philosopher in the traditional sense like Plato or Aristotle, he nevertheless created his own social and political ideals as a result of conflicts between idealism and realism, empiricism and rationalism, naturalism and humanism, individualism and socialism, nationalism and internationalism.2 Political philosophy is not entirely based on the plane of speculative and ethical ideas. According to him it has to be essentially related to real human problems and issues, because social environment and political philosophy are complimentary. His political philosophy is an expression of important human issues and an honest endeavour to straddle materialism and spiritualism. A philosophy that ignored real human concerns had little appeal to him. His reasoning was sparked by the cruel treatment caste Hindus had meted out to his community. The untouchables and Shudras, who made up the servile class, were destined for a life of abject poverty, ignorance, humiliation, hatred, and disdain. His principal preoccupation was the complete liberation of the servile class from the control of the Hindu caste elite.

Dr. Ambedkar's social and political philosophy was greatly influenced by the works of English economists like J.M. Keynes, R.A. Selghman, and the great English parliamentarian Edmund Burke, as well as by Mahatma Jotibha Phule, who he referred to as the "greatest Shudra of modern India." The Buddha, the enlightened, however, had the greatest and longest-lasting impact on him. His political thought heavily draws from the Buddhist precepts. It is a fact that he borrowed more liberal principles from Buddhism than from the French Revolution. His thought has undoubtedly been influenced by Western liberalism. In terms of his political and philosophical views, he has already been labelled a liberal democrat. These influences on him helped him develop a philosophy that combined rationalism and empiricism, idealism and realism, naturalism and humanism, materialism and spiritualism, individualism and socialism, and nationalism and internationalism. The social dynamic that drove his worldwas how to address the social and political maladies that plague humanity. His beliefs in peace and non-violence, secularism, constitutional morality, social justice, and the welfare of man through social and political action are some of the most important and enduring aspects of his political and social philosophy that should direct us in establishing a just and prosperous society. We should recommit ourselves to these values of his philosophy during the year of his birth centenary, which is rightfully dubbed the "YEAR OF SOCIAL JUS-TICE." His ideas and philosophical exhortations should be the beacon light and guiding lights for humanity.



His political philosophy is based on moral precepts. To be achieved, it serves as an ideal. He had an extremely harsh opinion of Hindu society. Hinduism, he claimed, is ineligible to constitute a community. Buddhism was portrayed as the ideal, with its emphasis on the importance of a morally grounded community. He believed that Buddhism sought to establish morality and reason as the cornerstones of society.3

Relevance of Ambedkar's Philosophy

Ambedkar exposed the hollowness of the Hindu social system, which is based on three principles: graded inequality, the fixity of vocations for each class due to hereditary factors, and the fixation of individuals within their own classes. His philosophy launched a crushing assault on the Vedas' infallibility. All of the ancient scriptures and fanaticism were untrue according to his rationalistic viewpoint. The Vedas were rife with inequality; liberty was reserved for Hindus of certain castes; and fraternity was a myth. Justice was an illusion in the Varna system.

In contrast to abstract ideas, Ambedkar's philosophy has been presented in specific words. He rejected metaphysical, speculative, and utopian theories. His ideology lacked any romantic pretensions. His philosophy of critical reason was an outright rejection of the inadequate metaphysics and theological concepts. For Ambedkar, metaphysics "is like a blindman in a dark room looking for a black cat that was not there." And according to him, theology "is like a blind man in a dark room looking for a black cat that was not there but the theologian declared to have found there."

The important role that man and reason play in Ambedkar's theory makes it relevant today. His philosophy is centred on the wellbeing of Man. The standard or criterion by

which everything is to be evaluated is rationality. His ideology was fundamentally based on using critical reasoning, critical analysis, and a scientific mindset to analyse religion, politics, and society.

Ambedkar's philosophy reflected his goals and deeds. The Indian Constitution contained both. His philosophy was a reaffirmation of constitutionalism in the context of India. His constitutional philosophy was founded on democratic principles, upholding an individual's rights and outlining the procedures for upholding those rights. His ideis characology terised by judicial independence. The

judiciary serves as the Constitution's watchdog thanks to its ability to conduct judicial reviews. The purpose of its judicial activism is to restrain the executive's irrational behaviour. Therefore, it is safe to conclude that his worldview is pertinent for creating a new, lively social order that is replete with the dignity of the individual and frees him from the chains of ignorance, shame, and humiliation. A healthy social order full of life and energy-truly a very bright and robust one—can be established by resolving the conflicts and injustices that currently exist. Ambedkar's ideology has importance in light of this. Ambedkar could legitimately be referred to as one of India's modern history's great prophets of enlightenment and modernity.4

The ideas of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar regarding democracy, social and economic justice, gender equality, national harmony, and religious belief serve as significant contributions in the search for answers to some of the difficult problems of the present. The importance of Ambedkar will endure because the democratic system is functioning, institutions are strengthening, the caste system is being surely overturned, dalits are increasingly exercising their right to voice their opinions, and social integration is progressing. The excellent foundation Dr. Ambedkar provided is what allowed



for all these positive characteristics in the Indian system and structure.

The CAG and other watchdog organisations are focusing on and investigating the 2G scam as well as any wrongdoing on the part of the system. Speaking before the Constituent Assembly, Dr. Ambedkar praised the CAG's position. The legal system is proactive and engaged. The executive is frightened of the legislature. It is effective to have checks and balances in place. Long before the relations with China and Pakistan befollowing came tense independence, Dr. Ambedkar had envisioned India beginning to assert itself. In regards to our China policy, Dr. Ambedkar advocated making clear our position on the Tibet issue and engaging in negotiations with Pakistan based on the actual situation on the border. These crucial facets of our foreign policy need to be reevaluated. It is encouraging to see that elections are regularly held, even though they are not yet completely error-free.

Relevance of Ambedkar's Philosophy in the Era of Globalisation

The New Economic Policy of 1991, which signalled the beginning of the country's Liberalization, Privatization, and Globalization, marked the beginning of a new era for the Indian economy. The policy led to widespread acceptance of the idea that globalisation will significantly improve the Indian economy by accelerating economic growth and resolving the country's protracted political, social, and economic problems. It was hoped that issues like poverty, the caste system, inequality, exploitation, financial instability, etc. would have ready remedies. Nevertheless, more than 20 years later, not only do the current concerns still plague us, but new ones have also emerged. There have been many beneficial effects of globalization, including the development of communications, a rise in international trade, the creation of jobs, and an expansion of medical, health, and educational services. As the economy is being opened up and constraints are being loosened, there has been a clear march towards free trade. In a nutshell, the Indian economy has experienced strong development during the past 20 years. But there is a sinister parallel between modern globalisation and nineteenth-century colonialism.

(Contd. on next page)

Ambedkar Times

Dr. B.R Ambedkar's Thought In The Era of Globalization

(Continue from page 5)

Dr. Ambedkar's opinions are just as pertinent today as they were then, given the situation. Since one-third of Indians still live in poverty, uncertainties are increasing and growth is not inclusive. In addition, the government's continued reservation policy has led to a strengthening of caste consciousness rather than its disappearance. Huge economic disparities exist on the one hand, while socialism and the mixed economy are being abandoned in favour of privatisation.

the privatisation of the banking and insurance industries. But financial inclusion isn't that strong. Farmers' conditions are appalling, and the once-green revolutionary agriculture sector is now experiencing stagnation. However, monopoly capital and the concentration of economic power are expanding notwithstanding the slowdown in industrial expansion. Because our currency's value fluctuates greatly, financial volatility is on the greater side. The availability of social services has increased, but their cost has skyrocketed, making them unattainable to the poor. Although there are more employment options in the service sector, adhocism is on the rise, as are the number of hours worked. These are all effects of globalisation and privatisation. Even while globalisation has become deeply ingrained in our social and economic system, some of its unfavourable effects are still avoidable. The main economic sectors and indicators must be regulated by the government to achieve this. Additionally, the government should design its fiscal and monetary policies so that our fundamental social and economic goals (as envisioned by Ambedkar) are not disregarded and we may achieve inclusive growth. The current administration is working admirably in that direction. Under the banner of Make in India, Prime Minister Narendra Modi has started a large-scale initiative. The initiative aims to change India by turning it into a manufacturing hub while also getting rid of pointless rules, streamlining bureaucratic procedures, and improving government accountability, responsiveness, and transparency.5

Our government anticipates that with this scheme, MNCs will come to India to manufacture items rather than only advertise those made overseas. The programme's main goal is to undermine China's hegemony in the manufacturing sector. The project is expected to create jobs so that we can utilise our demographic dividend.6 A number of activities have been launched in addition to the Make in India Initiative to make growth more equitable and purposeful.

Conclusion

Ambedkar's political philosophy is still highly important to South Asian politics in general as well as Indian politics specifically. Even if some faultlines have appeared in Indian society, there are still issues within the community. India is moving forward and the constitution is on track. organisations like CAG and commissions. Institutions of the state are becoming more robust. His philosophy bridges the theoretical and practical gaps while fusing materialism with spiritualism. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar deserves all the credit. Our constitution's contents are not at fault; rather, its implementation process has flaws. Additionally, it relies on our political class, executive branch, and state. The Indian Constitution and its articles are directing us in trying times and strengthening the spirit of our country. We might state as a conclusion that a mentality shift is required.

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DR. BIRBAL DAS

1st, the social media Facebook Page of Jagjivan Ram Foundation had shared information about the inspirational life of Babu Jagjivan Ram's father-in-law, Dr. Birbal Das. He was a brilliant student and he got admission in Prince of Wales Medical College, Patna in 1874. After receiving his doctor's degree, he joined the Indian Medical Services in the British Army. He was awarded the

On National Doctors Day on July Victoria Medal for distinguished services in the Burmese and Chin Lushai Wars. In 1912, co-founded the Kanpur Branch of the Indian Medical Association. He was a social reformer and was passionate about education. He worked for the upliftment of Dalits and also participated in the freedom movement.

Ref: https://www.facebook.com/ Jagjivanramfoundation/



Assemblyman Hoover's Representative Report

Teen Dating Violence Prevention Bill Sent to Governor's Desk

Last week, AB 1071, my bill that would authorize and encourage schools to provide teen dating violence prevention education, passed unanimously in the Senate, and now



heads to the Governor's desk. If he signs it, it will be my first bill to become law, and will go in place January 1st, 2024.

According to the CDC, 1 in 12 high school students experience teen dating violence. In the world of social media and advancing technology the signs and risks of teen dating violence are ever present.

I believe that working with local school districts and stakeholders to develop early intervention education is critical to ensure they are best addressing the needs for each unique community, and I look forward to doing everything I can to get this bill signed into law later this year.

Senate Committee Approves Bill to Increase Access to Property Tax Ex-

emption for Veterans
Last week AB 1361 passed



the Senate Governance and Finance Committee, which is a bill I authored to allow 100% permanent and disabled California veterans access to a property tax exemption prior to taking ownership of a home. This bill has received zero no votes, and looks set to speed through the Senate in the near future.

Our state's disabled veterans have sacrificed so much for our country and freedoms, the least we can do is give them greater access to a tax exemption that they already qualify for. Fixing this loophole in the law will provide financial relief to veterans and enhance their buying power when purchasing a home.

The veteran property tax exemption already exists in the State Constitution, but veterans cannot qualify for it until after they own the home. During the underwriting process, taxes that veterans do not owe are collected and counted against them when qualifying for a mortgage. This means that thousands of dollars are collected at closing that will simply be refunded back to them

at a later date. This places unnecessary burdens on veterans and decreases their buying power. AB 1361 would streamline this process by allowing them access to the credit prior to closing on the home.

Rancho Cordova Fourth of July Parade

I had a wonderful time with my family this week at the Rancho Cordova Fourth of July Parade. I was



joined by my two youngest kids, and it was great to see the enormous amount of effort and hometown flavor that was put into by so many of the parade participants.

New Podcast Episode
This week I was joined by Fol-



som City C o u n cilmember S a r a h A q u i n o , where we discussed

a number of topics including what's going on in the City of Folsom, our



state's recent gas tax hike, the state of education in California, two major Supreme Court rulings, homelessness, and Councilmember Aquino's side hustle during the pandemic. You can watch, listen, and follow the podcast here.

Visit to Kaiser's Folsom Ambulatory Surgery Center

This past week, it was a pleasure to meet with Kaiser Permanente leadership, as well as the team at Folsom. I met with the Senior Vice President, Physician-in-Chief, and the Vice President of California Government Affairs. It was exciting to hear about their plans for growth in the community.

Major Funding for Folsom's "Johnny Cash Trail Art Experience" Approved in California Budget

SACRAMENTO (July 11, 2023) - Today Assemblyman Josh Hoover (R-Folsom) announced the passage of a California budget bill that secured \$425,000 to the City of Folsom Parks & Recreation Department for the Johnny Cash Trail Art Experience - Cash's Pick No. 2.

Folsom's Johnny Cash Trail, a bike and pedestrian trail that borders Folsom State Prison, was completed in 2017. Folsom Parks & Recreation is currently fundraising to install a world-class linear public art experience that will celebrate and honor the legendary Johnny Cash, his music, and his strong connection to the City of Folsom. As part of the public art

project, installments at the beginning and end of the trail will feature "Cash's Pick", 7 foot tall bronze guitar picks. The funding secured by Assemblyman Hoover will be used for the design and fabrication of Cash's Pick No. 2. The first pick is currently slated to be installed by early 2024.

"I am excited to announce significant state funding for the Johnny Cash Trail Art Experience in Folsom," said Assemblyman Hoover. "These investments will be an amazing benefit for the residents in our community and will bring this amazing city landmark one step closer to fruition for visitors to enjoy."

"The City of Folsom extends

its heartfelt gratitude to Assemblyman Josh Hoover for securing substantial state funding to bolster the Johnny Cash Trail Art Experience", said City of Folsom Mayor Rosario Rodriguez.

"This remarkable contribution will financially support Cash's Pick No. 2, marking a significant milestone in the city's efforts to install a world-class public art experience to celebrate and honor the legendary Johnny Cash, his music, and his connection to the City of Folsom.

Just as Cash's iconic career started with a humble guitar pick, soon, every walk, run, and ride on the Johnny Cash trail will begin with Cash's iconic Pick. Each month, thousands enjoy the trail and its surrounding natural beauty, while enjoying the benefits of exercise. Thanks to this generous support, we can now integrate additional public art into the fabric of the Johnny Cash Trail, further enriching the experience for all who traverse it."

Josh Hoover represents Assembly District 7, which includes the cities of Citrus Heights, Folsom, and Rancho Cordova and the unincorporated communities of Carmichael, Fair Oaks, Foothill Farms, Gold River, Mather, McClellan Park, North Highlands, Orangevale, and Rosemont.

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Goodie Takhar, PhD

Namo Buddhaye! Jai Bhim!!

Few days back I went to attend a seminar where a gentleman greeted me by saying 'Om Mani Padmaya' which surprised me. Some followers of Baba Sahib in Maharashtra greet each other in this way but it was the first time that I was greeted in this way in Punjab. My quest regarding 'Om Mani Padmaya' led me to Dr. Mulkraj Anand and Bhikkhu R.P. Anururuddha.

Dr. Mulkraj Anand was a famous English writer of India who was also associated with its progressive stream. When he published a new edition of Dr. Ambedkar's book Annihilation of Caste from New Delhi, he, alongwith his introduction also included an interview with Dr. Ambedkar conducted in Bombay in May 1950, which has also been published in the Chandigarh English daily "The Tribune" issue dated 10.6.90.

Dr. Anand writes that when he said 'Namaskar' to Dr. Ambedkar, he replied that he preferred the Buddhist way of greeting 'Om Mani Padmaye' (May the lotuses awake). From this it is inferred that the followers of Dr. Ambedkar and Buddhism should be greeted by saying 'Om Mani Padmaya'. But it is worth noting that Dr. Ambedkar has neither mentioned 'Om Mani Padmaye' anywhere in his famous book of 1956, "The Buddha and His Dhamma", nor has he mentioned it in any of his other works. There is also no mention of it any-

where in the scheme of initiation ceremony as prescribed by him.

'Om Mani Padmaye' is a mantra of the Tibetan Lamas which in its correct form is 'Om Mani Padme Hum Hoong'. Lamaism is a distorted form of Buddhism blended with Hinduism, Mahayana and Tantricism, as presses gratitude to the Buddha for the incarnations he (is said to have) taken before becoming the Buddha. This avatar is the Avalokiteshvara bodhisattva who is depicted in sculptures in the posture of salutation while riding a white lotus.

In his book "An Introduction



well as ancient superstitions, due to which they worship the idols of Bodhisattvas made of stone and metal in the same way as Hindus worship their gods and goddesses.

'Om Mani Padme Hum Hoong' holds the similar place among Lamas as the 'Gayatri-Mantra' holds among the Hindus. This is the reason why the mantras of worship in Lamas begin with 'Om' in the same way as in the mantras of Hindus. The 'Gayatri Mantra' is a prayer saluting the Sun while the Om Mani Mantra ex-

to Lamaism", Bhikkhu R.P.Anuruddha writes that it is Avalokiteshvara who incarnates from time to time as the Dalai Lama, the main protector of the lamas. This belief is exactly the same as the belief of Hindus that Vishnu incarnates from time to time. He further writes that in Hindu and Tibetan Tantricism, however, Om and Hum besides the higher significance of Absolute, retain the old meaning for mystical and sacrificial practices.... All philosophical and religious sects of India from the earliest time of the

Vedic-Age a dapted this mystical syllable as the quintessence of the highest, inexpressable Reality, the attribute-



Dr Amritpal Kaur (Dental Surgeon) Wirter on Ambedkarism, Buddhism and Feminism Founding Member National Council of Women Leaders

less Absolute, which in Mahayana-Buddhism is Dharmakaya (The Law Body). Mahayana-Buddhism with all its branches adapted it likewise, and therefore Om is the unbroken link between Mahayana - Buddhism and Hinduism.

A rationalist like Dr. Ambedkar can never advise adopting such a mantra as a form of greeting. If he was in favor of this greeting, he would have at least written the mantra in its correct form, used it with his followers and there would have been many witnesses to it. He scornfully rejected the idea of Bodhisattvas assuming incarnations, saying that it is similar to the incarnational concept of the Hindus, which is the exact opposite of the No Soul or No Self Doctrine of the Buddhists.

This cannot be called his considered opinion. 'Namo Buddhaye Jai Bheem' is the proper greeting and should be followed.

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