



Ambedkar Times

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Remembering Chhatrapati Shahuji Maharaj on 120th year of 50 % Reservation for the Dalits and Backward Classes

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com

Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj was one of the earliest pioneer-saviours of the Scheduled Castes and Backward Classes who, for the first time in the history of the country, implemented 50 percent of reservation for the Dalits and Backward Classes in government jobs



and education institutions. He also facilitated the entry of the lower castes in the temples. He was of the firm view that a handful of the upper-castes of his state had monopolized all the offices of profit. All the shrines in the temples within his state, as elsewhere in rest of the country, were also monopolized by Brahmin priests. He saw to it that at least fifty percent of the shrines were to be looked after by the priests belonging to lower castes. He wanted that the lower castes should get best of the education, so that they could compete with their counterparts from the upper castes effectively. To make this a reality, he made the primary education compulsory for the lower castes in his Kingdom of the Kolhapur state.

The seminal contribution made by Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj was not limited to education and government jobs. He made concerted efforts to liberate the lower castes from the all pervasive hegemony of the Brahminical priestly class structures of socio-economic dominations by empowering them to stand on their own sources of livelihood so that they need not to depend on the evil and oppressive systems of Balutdari and Vatandari.

He paved the way for the inclusion of reservation in the constitution of Independent India drafted under the Chairmanship of Babasaheb Dr. B. R. Ambedkar to whom Shahu Ji Maharaj encouraged and supported to come forward to cut the shackles of the centuries old slavery of the lower castes. "Desh Doaba" & "Ambedkar Times" weekly newspapers fondly remember and pay its deepest regards to Revered Chhatrapati Shahu Ji Maharaj on his great cause to the Dalits and Backward Classes.

Shaheed Udham Singh-A Symbol of Revolution, Bravery and Patriotism

Today, JULY 31st, 2023 marks the 83rd Anniversary of the Martyrdom day of Shaheed Udham Singh, a passionate patriot who sacrificed his life for his country and wreaked vengeance by killing General Michael O'Dwyer who was responsible for killing thousands of innocent and peaceful Indians gathered to celebrate Baisakhi Festival on April 13th, 1919 in JallianwalaBagh, Amritsar.

Shaheed Udham Singh who was born in 1899 in Sunam, lost his parents at a young age, was raised in an orphanage. He was imbued with an inborn spirit of national patriotism which urged him to become an active member of Gadar movement which initially started its fervor in USA and Canada and eventually had a large following in India and other countries too.

He had planned for 21 years to seek revenge and finally got the opportunity to shoot General Dwyer to instant death, at the podium when he was ready to address a meeting in London in 1940. He was able to gain entry into the meeting by concealing his pistol inside a book. He was arrested and hanged after a trial. During his trial arguments he did not hide his mental anguish in denouncing the British imperialism saying-- "DOWN WITH BRITISH IMPERIALISM -DOWN WITH BRITISH DIRTY DOGS".

During his trial he stated his name as "Ram Mohammad Singh Azad which represented three

main religions of India for India's independence. I have accomplished my aim for which I have been trying for 21 years. Shaheed Udham Singh was a great admirer of Shaheed Bhagat Singh also

and had a close union with him of national patriotism against British imperialism.

REPATRIATION OF HIS REMAINS: - In 1974 Shaheed Udham Singh's mortal remains were finally exhumed and repatriated to India at the request and sustained efforts of MLA Sadhu Singh Thind who accompanied the remains back to India. The casket with seven urns was received by Mrs. Indira Gandhi, Shankar Dayal Sharma and Giani Zail Singh and were sent to Haridwar, Kartar Pur Sahib, Jallianwala Bagh Museum and Rauza Sharif.

IMMORTAL LEGACY: - The patriotic spirit of national patriotism of Shaheed Udham Singh will keep shedding its luster and radiance to the pages of history with his supreme sacrifice which acted like a beacon light in our national path for freedom from British rule. I salute to the great patriotic spirit of Shaheed Udham Singh with his love for his country.

General Secretary

Supreme Council, Shri Guru Ravidass Sabhas USA



O. P. Balley



A FLORAL TRIBUTE TO MELODIOUS LEGEND MOHAMMED RAFI

On the occasion of 43rd death anniversary of Mohammed Rafi, falling on July 31st 2023, the doyen of music is remembered all over the world for his God gifted talents. During his musical career spanning over 35 years Mohammed Rafi left an indelible mark on the Indian Film Industry as well as on the minds of millions of his fans all over the world.

Born in 1924 in Kotla Sultan Singh (Amritsar) India, Mohammed Rafi's remarkable journey from humble beginnings to becoming a musical sensation is attributed to the essence of his perseverance and talents.

INITIAL JOURNEY: - Mohammed Rafi started his initial career imitating the chants of a Faqir in his native village. Later he learnt classical music from Ustad Abdul Waheed Khan, Pundit Jeevan Lal Mattoo and Firoze Nizami.

On January 30th 1948, at the time of Mahatma Gandhi's assassination, lyricist Rajinder Krishan wrote Mahatma's life history overnight which was composed by Music Directors Husn Lal Bhagat Ram and sung by Mohd. Rafi- (Suno Suno Ai Dunya walo Bapu Ki yeh Amar Kahani) made Mohammed Rafi famous all over the world. Even Pundit Jawahar Lal Nehru invited him to his residence and wanted him to sing that immortal song again and awarded him with a silver medal.

ESTABLISHED MANY HEROES IN FILM INDUSTRY: - He lent his sparkling and scintillating voice for the most glamorous heroes of Indian film Industry and thus contributed to their successful careers.

A MULTILINGUAL SINGER:- During his professional career Mohammed Rafi sang about 25000 songs in multiple languages and impacted the music lovers worldwide.

LISTENED HIM IN PERSON:- In 1979 while on a world tour Mohammed Rafi performed in a concert in Berkeley and our whole family had an opportunity to listen his vibrating songs live which has become an unforgettable event of our life.

EMBODIMENT OF GENEROSITY:- There are many heart-warming stories of his extremely humble, mild mannered, soft spoken and religious life. He helped the needy all the time without even letting anybody know about it -including his own family. For his remarkable

contributions to music Industry he was awarded with "PADAM Shri" though he had all the talents deserving to be awarded with the highest honor of BHARAT RATNA". Gems of music like Mohammed Rafi seldomly appear in this world and adorn the pages of history like a luminous star to brighten up the hearts of the people.

- O. P. Balley

Founder Member

Shri Guru Ravidass Sabha, Pittsburg (CA)



Education and Training – Appreciable Initiatives of Punjab

There is no point in reiterating that education and training of youth is an important ingredient not only in the development of personality of the individual but also in the progress and prosperity of the country and the society at large. PM Narendra Modi commented on the NEP, 2020 (new education policy) and said National Education Policy (NEP) 2020 would play an important role in creating a generation free from the mentality of slavery; eager for innovations; ready to bring laurels in fields from science to sports; and willing to skill themselves as per the needs of the 21st century. Let us hope we succeed in attaining the lofty goals in this regard with a view to make India

Vishav Guru.

Over the decades, since independence in 1947, the respective governments have been doing their bit to impart education and training to the young generations of Punjab and as a result we have come a long way in this regard. But, it is also a fact that we are still to go a long way to meet the challenges of the fast changing scenario to catch up with the future. Punjab was doing well in the field of education and training as such was one of the leading states in human-resource development but, of late, it has lagged behind and is increasingly becoming a matter of concern and worry. Governments are required to address the issue head-on. I think the first and foremost need to do that is to create an edifice of good education and training. It is a matter of gratification to note that the Punjab Government under the stewardship of CM Bhagwant Mann has taken some appropriate and appreciable initiatives and actions to reform, and strengthens the education and training facilities to meet the needs of the younger generation in the years to come. Speaking in the Punjab Legislative Assembly, CM Bhagwant Mann announced multi-pronged improvements in the education sector, which he termed the bedrock for building a new society. He said government schools in the state will be transformed into 'schools of

eminence'. He added to ensure that students get quality and affordable education, the government was committed not only to building state-of-the-art government schools but also regulating fees in private schools. Underscoring the need for revamping teacher training practices, the chief minister said best practices will be considered from across the country and the world. Some of the salient points of the new



bility skills.

- Revival of posts of PT instructors in the schools for instilling discipline and physical fitness.
- Kheda Watan Punjab Dian - to give major fillip to sports.
- Training and knowledge on Agriculture to the young students as vocational inputs

These are some of new steps and initiatives to make Punjab a 'Hub

coaching centers for the examinations conducted by the UPSC not only for the civil services but also of the central police forces and also the



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



armed forces is also a much needed step to arrest the decline and get a due and increased share in the elite civil, police and military services. It is a matter of satisfaction that Punjab constitutes of 8% of the

initiatives are:-

- State government's collaboration with regional English language office of the US Embassy in New Delhi to train around 50 mentors who will to further train the teachers.
- Setting up 19 new industrial training institutes to provide quality technical education. Several new courses are under consideration to be introduced in various Industrial Training Institutes.
- Open 10 centers for providing training to youngsters free of cost for competitive exams of the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC)
- Training and orientation courses to the teachers at IIMs, IITs and other institutes of high learning.
- Training and orientation course to teachers in foreign universities and institutions
- MOU with British Council of Education India Private Limited for opening of new avenues of employment for youth – English for employa-



of Quality Education' as termed by CM Bhagwant Singh Mann. These are appreciable activities which would tend to yield handsome dividends in due course. The western developed countries impart basic knowledge of carpentry, plumbing, and gardening etc. at the school level. The decision to educate and train our young students in the basic agriculture is a welcome step. The English language is a recognized vehicle of embarking on the journey to a dignified destination of wholesome bread and butter. Punjab government's institutional arrangements with the USA and the UK to enhance English language knowledge will go a long way in creating good avenues of employment of youth.

Over the years, it has been observed that Punjab's share in Indian Civil Services like IFS, IAS, IPS and Allied Services is dwindling. It is a matter of concern. The decision to establish

Indian army even though Punjab accounts for just 2.5% of India's population. We not only need to maintain this but also increase our share in the years to come. I take this opportunity to appreciate and congratulate the Government of Punjab under the leadership of CM Bhagwant Singh Mann for the policy initiatives to reform and strengthen Education and Training Facilities, the very basis of development and progress.

My immediate motivation to write about the education and training facilities of Punjab came from my recent, off the cuff, discussion with my brother Paramjit Mahey an ardent AAPIAN, a rank-holder volunteer and fan of CM Bhagwant Singh with regard to these appreciable steps. One related issue also came up – the issue of training an employment of Scheduled Caste youth of Punjab for the civil services and also of defense and police services. SCs constitute more that 35% of the population of Punjab. Punjab's progress and prosperity is definitely related to this huge mass of population. I would only be happy that if SC youth of Punjab avail of the facilities created by the government and benefit themselves.

"Tell me and I forget, teach me and I may remember, involve me and I learn."

– Benjamin Franklin

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Supervisor Frost, District 4, August Newsletter



Sue Frost

Climate Change Is Real, But It's Not What You Think

The Board of Supervisors voted to amend the "Climate Emergency Resolution," introducing a proposed extension of the original target year for carbon neutrality from 2030 to 2045 to meet state standards. I support moving the deadline; however, I have deep concerns about the "Climate Emergency" itself.

Climate Alarmism has replaced science, rational debate, and the pursuit of prudent policies that will actually reduce emissions and pollution without crippling our economy or the family budget.

There is no doubt that humans have added to the production of CO2.

But the biggest source of atmospheric CO2 is wildfires: the latest wildfires wiped out all CO2 reductions for the past two decades. Wildfires existed way before civilization, but recent fires are larger and more

damaging; exacerbated by bad forest management. The biggest contributor to modern wildfires is high-voltage transmission lines that cross vast distances of dense forests. Because of California's draconian regulations and reliance on unreliable solar and wind power, we have created a vulnerable electric grid that imports electricity from other states – transported by those same high-voltage lines that occasionally spark wildfires.

California's failure to invest in water storage and conveyance has resulted in a cycle of floods and droughts. Every flood results in an enormous output of CO2 and other greenhouse gases from decaying vegetation. In the past, the entire Central Valley from Redding to Bakersfield used to flood into a great inland sea. In fact, it's all that decaying matter and sediment that makes the valley one of the most fertile agricultural regions in the world. Yet our failure to provide adequate water storage has meant thousands of acres of orchards and crops that once captured CO2, are plowed under and instead are pushing millions of pounds of carbon into the atmosphere.

While I fully understand and share the concerns expressed by residents regarding the detrimental impact pollution has on the environment, I have consistently opposed the activist-driven climate emergency declaration. Instead of positive outcomes, these policies ultimately have a detrimental effect on citizens, businesses, and the environment as a whole. For instance, many California residents experienced blackouts due to the heat wave last summer. What made this issue worse was when Governor Newsom informed EV owners that they were limited to the hours that they could charge their

EVs. The temporary solution to use less electricity underscores the vulnerability of the state's infrastructure.

The rush to enact climate emergency policies by state and local governments fails to adequately address the significant economic impacts, particularly on the working class. One striking example of this is the impact these mandates have on the construction industry, which has led to a surge in housing costs and rendered homeownership unattainable for thousands of families.

Climate change policies hold significant sway over the day-to-day operations and long-term plans of local governments. This is especially true for the Board of Supervisors, whose roles

are directly influenced by state policies like transportation limits, Cap-and-Trade, and renewable energy mandates. These policies not only affect the state's environmental agenda but also deeply influence the Board's decision-making process and limit our ability to improve roads and approve affordable housing.

Unsecured Property Taxes Due Aug. 31

Annual bills for the Sacramento County unsecured personal property taxes for fiscal year 2023-2024 will be mailed July 25, 2023, and are due no later than August 31, 2023 to avoid penalties for delinquency.

If you owned a watercraft or an aircraft, owned a business with assessable fixtures and/or equipment, or leased equipment on January 1 of this year and you do not receive a tax bill by August 10, 2023, please contact

decisions, help shape policy, and work closely with other dedicated citizens towards the

betterment of our region. Whether your background is in health services, arts and culture, or beyond, there are numerous opportunities for you to contribute your unique skills.

Click on the button below for more information.

You're Invited - Upcoming Community Meetings

Unsecured Property Taxes Due By

AUGUST 31



I am thrilled to invite you to join me at my upcoming community meetings across the district. This is your chance to share your ideas, voice your concerns, as well as connecting with your neighbors and commu-

nity members.

Here are the details of the upcoming meetings:

Antelope Community Meeting
Date: Thursday, August 3rd
Time: 6pm
Location: North Highlands – Antelope Library
Address: 4235 Antelope Rd – Antelope, CA

Orangevale Community Meeting
Date: Monday, August 7th
Time: 6pm
Location: Orangevale Community Center
Address: 6826 Hazel Ave – Orangevale, CA

Rio Linda/Elverta Community Meeting
Date: Wednesday, August 9th
Time: 6pm
Location: Rio Linda Recreation and Parks District
Address: 810 Oak Ln – Rio Linda, CA

North Highlands Community Meeting
Date: Tuesday, August 15th
Time: 6pm
Location: North Highlands Recreation and Park District
Address: 6040 Watt Ave – North Highlands, CA

Folsom Community Meeting
Date: Wednesday, August 16th
Time: 6pm
Location: Georgia Murray Library Community Room
Address: 411 Stafford St – Folsom, CA

Citrus Heights Community Meeting
Date: Wednesday, August 30th
Time: 6pm
Location: Citrus Heights City Hall
Address: 6360 Fountain Square Drive – Citrus Heights, CA

are directly influenced by state policies like transportation limits, Cap-and-Trade, and renewable energy mandates. These policies not only affect the state's environmental agenda but also deeply influence the Board's decision-making process and limit our ability to improve roads and approve affordable housing.

California's "Solar Mandate," introduced in 2020, said every new residential building project must include solar panels. The trick here is to ensure this rule is followed while also maintaining affordable and accessible housing for everyone. It's a balancing act between reaching for a cleaner future and ensuring everyone can afford a roof over their head.

The Board of Supervisors will be revisiting the Climate Emergency Resolution soon. As we confront the realities of climate change, it is essential to engage in rigorous debate and explore solutions that address multiple aspects of the issue.

This includes reducing energy costs and enhancing safety and reliability, as well as actively pursuing efforts to cut emission and minimize plastic waste without imposing undue burdens on working people.

Additionally, we must prioritize the creation of better, more affordable housing and transportation options for all Californians. The Emergency Declaration, the headlong push for "all-electric" by 2030, and hyperbolic environmental alarmism will not accomplish any of that.

Thank you for reading – and as always, if you want to contact me, call me at 916-874-5491, or e-mail me at SupervisorFrost@saccounty.gov. Sacramento County Supervisor Sue Frost represents the 4th District, which includes the communities of Cit-

rus Heights, Folsom, Orangevale, Antelope, North Highlands, Rio Linda, Elverta, and Rancho Murieta.

the Unsecured Property Tax Unit at 916-874-7833; available between the hours of 9 a.m. and 4 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

FAILURE TO RECEIVE A TAX BILL DOES NOT EXCUSE DELINQUENCY NOR ALLOW THE TAX COLLECTOR TO CANCEL PENALTIES OR COLLECTION COSTS.
Payments may be made by mail or in person at the County Tax Collector's Office located at 700 H Street, Room 1710, Sacramento, CA 95814; open between the hours of 8 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays.

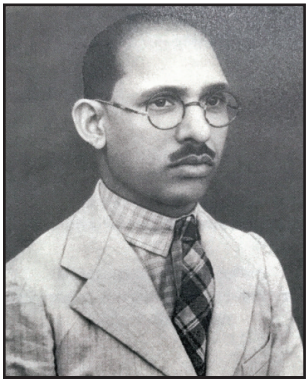
Property taxes may also be paid online by e-check or credit card with the Sacramento County Property Tax Bill Information System website.

Unsecured tax bills issued in July of a given year are due by August 31 of that year. Payments remitted by mail must be postmarked by the due date to avoid penalty. Any payment submitted after the due date is considered delinquent and subject to additional fees.

Upon delinquency, a 10% penalty and collection cost will be added. DMV registration may be withheld on watercraft when delinquent unsecured property taxes are reported. If a tax bill remains unpaid after October 31, 2023, additional collection costs and monthly penalties at the rate of 1.5% will be added to the base tax.

Board and Commission Vacancies
Are you passionate about public service and looking for a way to make a real difference in your community? The County of Sacramento is seeking committed individuals like you to serve on our various boards and commissions!

By participating, you'll have the chance to influence important de-



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

My Struggle in Life

The Passport Affair

I took over as under secretary in the middle of October 1952 and was given the charge of the Departments of Partition and Commerce and Industry. Later the work of the Passport Department was also entrusted to me.

Meetings of the Partition Implementation Committee between India and Pakistan used to be held every three months, alternately at Simla and Lahore at the chief secretaries' level and sometimes at the ministers' level as the need was. Besides the official business, these meetings afforded me an opportunity to see the places and houses in Lahore where we had lived happily only a short while ago. Such visits were naturally emotive. During our stay at Lahore, we were not quite free to move about and see people who had been our friends or coworkers. The CID people kept a vigilant watch over our movements.

These restrictions notwithstanding, I was able, with the cooperation of the nice driver of the car placed at our disposal by the Pakistan government, to visit places in Krishnanagar where I, along with my family, had resided for quite long. These places brought to my mind the happy and, at the same time, sad memories of the past. People there did not seem to be very happy with the changed state of affairs but would talk only in a subdued voice. Some of them, who were critical of their own people, requested me to convey their deep affection and great respects to India and her people. They had not forgotten the times they had spent here as their beloved home. As regards commerce and industry, the work was of a routine nature and nothing of much importance was to be done. But in this connection, I have to make a mention of one instance. The government had set up industrial estates at various focal points including Jalandhar city, and a number of persons interested in setting up industries were allotted plots for various trades. No plot was, however, allotted to a scheduled caste person, possibly for the reason that nobody came forward to make a demand. One day, Anant Ram Badhan, a promising young man of Jalandhar, saw me in my office and requested for a plot in the industrial area at Jalandhar. It was good that at least one person had come forward in this field. I told him he could have a plot out of the unallotted ones. He had a particular plot in mind and put his finger on that plot as shown in the map. Accordingly, I put up a proposal to the secretary of industries, recommending that the specific plot be allotted to Badhan. Thus the young man got the plot of his choice. He was happy. He set up an iron industry there and has been doing very well in the trade.

The passport work was the important job. As I was absolutely new to the job and the grant of passport, especially for UK, carried with it a lot of responsibility, I started cautiously. Some scheduled caste MLAs and other leaders approached me in connection with the passport case of a young matriculate Harijan (person from low caste) boy of Ambala named Harbans Lal, whose family was carrying on the business of kikar (acacia) bark used in leather tanning. He wanted to go to UK to study the meth-

ods of tanning and finding out the scope for the business. His application for the grant of a passport had been turned down after obtaining the concurrence of the Government of India. He made two applications for the review of the orders, but these were also rejected after obtaining the concurrence of the Government of India, as had been done on the previous occasion. I thought it must have been done on the previous occasion.

I thought it must have been a very bad case. I felt diffident whether it would at all be possible to help the boy. But in view of the fact that so many important persons had spoken to me about the case, I asked them to tell the boy to make another review application, which he did in due course.

I asked the office to put up the case to me with facts and their comments. The case came to me with a lengthy office note, justifying the orders of rejection. I went through it and the office note carefully but was not convinced of the correctness and justification of the orders. Then I sent for the office superintendent in order to find out if he could throw more light on the case. He vehemently defended the previous orders mainly on the ground that all the three orders had the concurrence of the Government of India. Confronted with the facts of the case, he had to admit that a passport could be issued then but not now. It became clear to me that it was a case of a wrong decision. Why a special procedure was adopted in this case for obtaining the concurrence of the central government while the case could have easily been decided at the state level as was the rule?

I had already learnt that there was a lot of corruption in the passport office. Therefore, one of the probable reasons for not granting passport to the scheduled caste people could be that they were too poor to grease the palms of the concerned officials. It was evidently a case of injustice.

Accordingly, I put up a note to the secretary, stating the facts of the case and proposing that in view of the fact that the previous orders were wrong and the concurrence of the Government of India was obtained by wrongly representing the facts of the case, we might review our previous orders, grant a passport to the applicant, and then inform the central government. On seeing my note, the officials got perturbed. They told me that the orders could not be reviewed without first getting the Government of India revise their own orders. I told them not to get excited as it was my responsibility. The Home Secretary agreed with me, and the case came back. I directed the office to prepare a passport and dispatch it to the person concerned the same day and then to send the case back to me for further action. This was done, and I then informed the minister also accordingly. I knew that accepting the advice of the office would inevitably mean tying the case in red tape, as it was likely to get bogged down at one stage or the other for months together. This delay would have robbed the decision and its purpose of much of its grace. Delay was and is a routine phenomenon in government offices. But I wanted to cut the red tape, and I did it successfully and very rightly too. Then I wrote a demi-official letter to the passport officer at Delhi detailing the

reasons for the review of the previous orders and the grant of a passport to the boy. I specifically told the passport officer, Broughton, that the central government's concurrence was obtained by us by wrongly representing the facts of the case. There was a whisper in the office that a nasty stinker from the central government was in the offing. A few days later, I received a demi-official letter from Broughton in reply to my letter. It was on unexpected lines. I feel tempted to reproduce below Broughton's letter, which is both revealing and refreshing: Ministry of External Affairs New Delhi.

No.F. 8(48)-PU. 11/52 6th April, 1953.

My dear Pawar,
Your official letter No. 2744-PE-53/6310, dated

21st March, 1953 has come as a breath of cool and refreshing air. Hitherto the sequence has been that you receive and reject an application for a passport, we then receive an appeal and, in several cases, overrule your objections. In the present case the reverse has taken place and, in spite of our agreement with your first reactions that a passport should not be granted to the applicant, the Punjab Government have reconsidered the position and quite correctly, issued him with a passport. As it is our policy to be as liberal as possible in the grant of passports consistent with the security and honour of the country, it should always be the object of State Governments to grant passport facilities as freely as they can and only to refuse them when the evidence is really strong that the issue of a passport in a particular case would be detrimental to our interest. We receive frequent complaints about the arbitrary severity with which the passport rules are administered by the passport authorities, particularly in the Punjab, and we are inclined to feel from our experience that, by and large, there is some degree of justification for these complaints.

Yours Sincerely,

I. J. Broughton

Shri Ishwar Das Pawar,

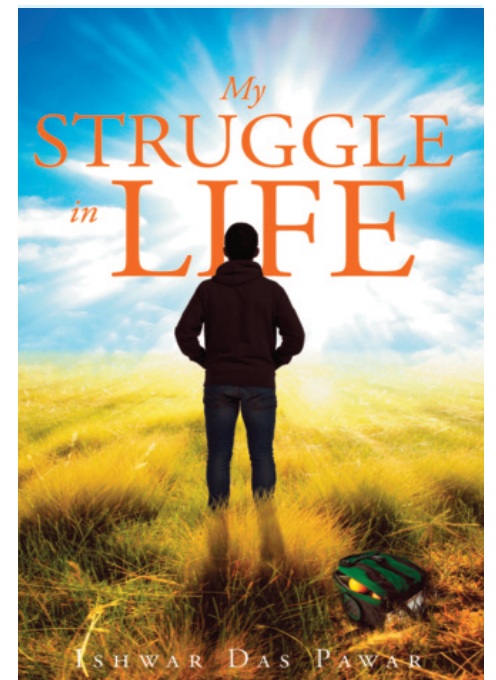
B.A.LL.B., P.C.S.,

Under-Secretary to Government, Punjab, Partition Department, Simla

This letter strengthened my hands, and much of the mist surrounding the working of the office was cleared. I had started well. Red tapism and rigmarole were no favorites of the higher authorities. The Government of India appreciated bold and generous decisions. I sent up Broughton's letter for the information of the secretary and the chief minister, who was also the minister-in-charge. I found myself on the right path.

Scheduled caste people would come to me grumbling that they were denied passport for UK while others got them quite freely. They also made a similar complaint to the Harijan minister Chaudhari Sunder Singh. I too realized that their grouse was quite well-founded, as they were not getting justice in this regard. Therefore, I discussed this problem with the minister. On the basis of this discussion, he put up a note to the chief minister, setting out the grievances of the scheduled castes and requesting him to look into the matter personally.

The note travelled down to my table as it had to. The point raised was to be examined first by me as the pass-



port officer. The office appended a note in routine and hackneyed lines. It was merely a reiteration of the procedure in force. They had no worthwhile suggestion to make. On the other hand, I had a clear idea of the problem and enough perception of the real difficulties being faced by Harijans. I began my note with the admission, rather confession, that the complaint and the grouse of these people were perfectly genuine and justified but at the same time noted that they could not be helped in the face of the prevalent rules, which were too rigid and cumbersome to be complied with by them. The other difficulty, which was even more important, was that the police and the CID reports about them were mostly unfavorable and rather adverse. The department was helpless in this matter. I however made certain suggestions which, if accepted, in my view, would go a long way in mitigating the hardships faced by them. The following were two of them: (a) the amount of cash of Rs 10,000 required to be shown deposited in a bank should be reduced by at least half the sum; and (b) the concerned officers and departments, the CID, the police, and the DCs, in particular, should be directed to deal with the cases of Harijan applicants with care and sympathy.

This much was a must, according to me, if the complaints of the Harijans were to be substantially removed. With this note, I sent the case file to the Home Secretary who was in charge of the department. I had some hope that the suggestions made by me had a sporting chance of being accepted. In this matter, I had the full support of our minister Chaudhari Sunder Singh. Anyway, I had spoken out my mind and made the proposals in good faith.

The secretary sent for me. He looked a bit unhappy. He asked me as to how it was possible to make the proposed changes in the rules. I simply said that that was the only way if we wanted to help the Harijans. Then I left. I got apprehensive. The case file came back after a short while, and it was a pleasant surprise to find that the secretary had agreed with my proposals in their entirety. The battle was half won.

In terms of this decision, a suitably drafted circular letter was issued to all the departments and officers concerned. They were required by the instructions to deal with the passport applications of the Harijans with due care and sympathy. Their attention was also drawn to their complaints and grievances. The problem got wings. I informed the minister about the fruitful results of his note. He evidently happy and gratified. These instructions had the desired effect. The difficulty regarding financial position was softened

(Contd. on next page)

Remembering Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet

Prem Kumar Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: www.ambedkartimes.com

Comrade Harkishan Singh Surjeet, who always stood in the forefront of radical struggle against imperialism and for the empowerment of the have notes and the down-trodden of the society, took his last breath on Friday at Metro Hospital at Noida (Delhi). He was 92. Born on March 23, 1916 in a Bassi Jat family of Bundala village (Jalandhar district) of Doaba Punjab, Com. Surjeet became an integral part of the national liberation movement at the very young age of 16. He took his life long inspiration from Shaheed-E-Azam S. Bhagat Singh. He joined the Communist Party in 1934 and elected to its Polit Bureau in 1954. He was also one of the founders of the Communist Party of India (Marxist) in October-November 1964. Between January 1992 and April 2005, Com. Surjeet served the party as the General Secretary of the CPI (M). His deteriorating health forced him to relinquish the post to be followed by Com. Prakash Karat.

Comrade Surjeet was very brave revolutionary who played a dare devil in hoisting the Indian tricolor at the court in Hoshiarpur amidst pointed shooting at him. Later on he was punished by the colonial rulers for one year which he got extended to four years by chiding away with the Justice in charge. During the court proceedings he stated his name as London Tor Singh (one who dismantles London).

He was a co-founder of the Kisan Sabha in Punjab and also became its president at the national level.

He is household name among the peasants of Punjab who love him deeply for his sincere struggle for them. He provided a critical voice to the exploited peasants in his DukhiDuniya and Chingari vernacular

the fundamental importance of critically examining the party's ideology and political positions on the basis of Marxism". "He worked tirelessly for the defense of democratic and secular values and to see that India maintained

decades and was successful in initiating many international solidarity campaigns. He was a great master of political arrangements, who would not mind approaching even his worst foe if the issue was of the welfare of the

have notes and poor masses, national unity and question of the secularism of the country. He was instrumental in the formation of a series of non-congress, non-BJP alliances. He was also the 'king-maker' of the United Progressive Alliance government supported from outside by the Left parties until very recently. He would be remembered for ever for his astute coalition builder role in the parliamentary democracy in India.

The CPI (M) in its condolence resolution recognized Com Surjeet's "important role in making the CPI (M) the largest contingent of the Left movement in

the country. Surjeet absorbed Marxism-Leninism by sheer dent of self-study and learning from experience. He always stressed the fundamental importance of the critically examining the party's ideological and political position on the basis of Marxism". The resolution reads further, "His was a life-long fight against communalism. He was one of the first leaders who recognized the threat posed by the rise of the communal forces to the secular principle of the Indian state. He played a crucial role in 1989, 1996 and 2004 in creating the political formations and the setting up of governments which excluded the communal forces".
*Courtesy: www.ambedkartimes.com
Posted on August 06, 2008*



Photo caption:
Prem Kumar Chumber
Editor-in-Chief:
www.ambedkartimes.com
interviewing
Com. Harkishan Singh Surjeet
during his last visit to Sacramento

publications. Though he had to discontinue his studies at the school level itself, his real-life-based rich experience made him an erudite commentator who could write well both in his mother tongue (Punjabi) and English. He was always up-to-date in his public an oration of which was a perfect master. He authored the books on "Land Reforms in India", "Happenings in Punjab" and the "Outline History of the Communist Party". The CPI (M) in its condolence resolution recognized his (Com. Surjeet) "important role in making the CPI (M) the largest contingent of the Left movement in the country. Surjeet absorbed Marxism-Leninism by sheer dent of self-study and learning from experience. He always stressed

its non-aligned and independent foreign policy. His views were sought and his advice heard with great respect in political circles". Is evident from the glowing tributes paid by Hon'ble Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh to Com Surjeet on July 31 for his extraordinary skills at weaving and sustaining broad, secular-progressive anti-BJP coalition: "If we are here after a tenure of four years, the credit for all this should go to the wise and visionary leadership of JyotiBasu and Harkishan Singh Surjeet. They were all architects of our coalition government.

His political space was not only confined to territorial boundaries of India. He was able to build a strong network of international contacts over

My Struggle in Life

(Continue from page 4)

considerably, and the police and the CID reports became generally favorable.

My path lay smooth.

In view of the changed conditions, it became possible for me to grant passports to quite a number of Harijans more easily and justly. Whenever they needed any guidance and help here and there, I did the needful with a sense of satisfaction to do so. Nothing was done which was unusual or out of the way much less against the rules.

In those days, there was no visa system as far as UK was concerned. It was introduced later. This way, quite a number of Harijans were able to get passports for UK and other countries. Many of those families are now in that country, and some of them had acquired citizenship of that land. It gives me a great pleasure and unbounded satisfaction to know that they are living there happily and are much better off. I was just an instrument in the hands of nature that was bent in the service of the poor and the needy who had been unjustly ignored by others. Being in a position from where I could help them, it became my legal and

moral duty to do justice to them.

Our people living in UK remember me with great love and affection. It is so nice of them. I wholeheartedly reciprocate their sentiments. They send me message after message to visit the country of their adoption, but for reasons of health, I have not been able to comply with their request. They have a grouse about me; I am not quite in touch with them. But on my part, I love them in equal measure and can possibly have no grievance whatsoever against them.

They are flesh of our flesh and blood of our blood. My mind often goes out to them for their loving remembrance. In view of my erratic and unsatisfactory state of health, I am not much optimistic whether I would ever be able to go there and meet them though it would have been a unique privilege for me if I could satisfy my strong desire to go there. Incidentally, my daughter Kamlesh is also in London.

My son-in-law, Vidya Bhushan Soni, is a counsellor in the Indian High Commission there. They too are pressing me to pay a visit to Howsoever I might wish, my health does not permit me, at

least for the present, to undertake the journey to that country of my dreams.

My only regret has been that I did not remain in the job relating to the grant of passport for a longer time to render a bit more service to the helpless people. Within less than a year, I was shifted from this post and appointed as a member of the newly constituted Punjab Subordinate Services Selection Board. There too, duty was awaiting me to render in a different form and sphere of service to the neglected people. In that post I remained for full eight years.

Shortly after leaving the passport post, I saw Chaudhri Sunder Singh at the secretariat at Chandigarh. It was only a courtesy call. During our talk, he told me that there was a whispering campaign in official circles that an enquiry be held against me. "Any corruption charge against me?" I enquired. "No such charge is possible," came a prompt reply. The allegation made against me was that I granted so many passports to the Harijans, which was uncalled for and unwarranted. I told the minister that it was correct that I grant passports to quite a number of Harijans but strictly on merits.

There was not a single case where the order was either not justified on merits or was against the rules. My only fault was that I treated Harijan applicants on a par with other applicants. This was not being done before. Therefore, this irked non-Harijans. Consequently, there was nothing to fear if an inquiry was held. As a matter of fact, such an inquiry was welcome as others could be exposed for their discriminatory treatment of the Harijans. I did nothing wrong.

What I did was by way of faithful and honest discharge of my duties and trying to undo the grave injustice that had previously been done to them. I further told the minister that actually, as the boot was on the other leg, an inquiry should be held against those responsible for illegally and unjustly denying passports to the Harijans and thus were guilty of dereliction of their official duty by treating all not on the basis of equality. On hearing me speak thus, the face of the minister bore a broad smile, and he said, "Nothing to worry."

Ultimately, better sense prevailed, and the whispering talk of an inquiry proved empty and futile.

Dr. Ambedkar and Sikhism

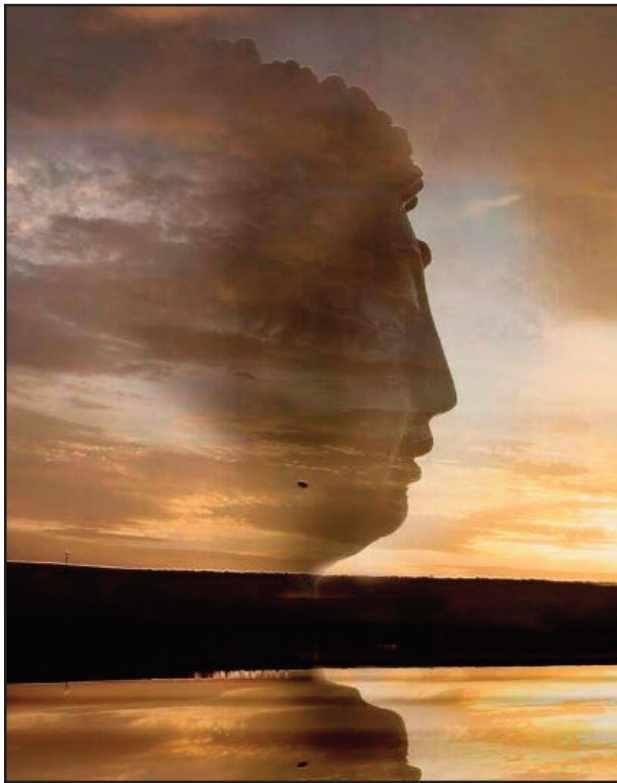
Babasaheb Dr. Ambedkar's philosophy, views and messages on various subjects such as Economics, Politics, Sociology, Anthropology, Theology, Religion, Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity and Sikhism, Conversion, Constitutional Law, History, Land Reforms, Labour problems and solutions, Water Resource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

In the Yeola (Nasik District) Conference of the Depressed Classes convened on October 13, 1935 to review the political and social situation in the light of their ten-year old struggle and coming reforms, in a tremendously feeling speech lasting over one and half hour, Babasaheb Dr.

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

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

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



status and rights. Mr. Kanhaiyalal Gauba submitted that the Muslims were willing to concede the untouchables community equal status and equal rights in political, social and economic sphere, and that the Indian Muslims were willing to welcome Dr. Ambedkar. In the same context, Dr. Ambedkar was invited to a meeting of the Muslims representatives to be held at Badaun (U.P) on 20th October 1935. Sardar Dalip Singh Doabia, Vice President of the Golden Temple Managing Committee, wired to Dr. Ambedkar, stating that the Sikh religion fulfilled the desired requirements regarding the conversion of the Depressed Classes as it was monotheistic, all-loving and provided for equal treatment to all its adherents. But, on the contrary was an appeal against embracing Sikhism from Baba Sardar Kishan Singh Achhut of Ratangarh (Amritsar). He said in a letter that despite his best efforts to propagate and promote Sikhism, he was still called an Achhut (Untouchable). Even after receiving the 'Amrit' at Akal Takht, the stigma of caste was not removed (Keer, pp. 254, 255 and Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Struggle and Message, pp. 274. 275).

The famous Hindu missionary leader, Masurkar Maharaj, who had

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



acceptance of equal status. Masurkar had no answer. Shortly after the Yeola Conference, Dr. Ambedkar told a deputation of the Depressed Classes at Nasik that he wanted to absorb his people into some powerful community, and he was thinking of embracing Sikhism. In his speech delivered in the Untouchable Youths' Conference at Poona on 12/13 January 1936, in which few Hindu touchables, Muslims and Sikhs were also present, Babasaheb reiterated that he was bent on conversion whether the Caste Hindus meant help or hindrance. Even if God were produced before him to dissuade him from leaving the Hindu fold, he would not go back on his resolve. He attended the 'Bhajan - Kirtan' program of the Sikhs at night of January 13. He was requested by the Sikh leaders to accept the Sikh religion. The Youths Conference adopted a resolution unanimously supporting Dr. Ambedkar's move at the Yeola Conference (BAWS, Vol. 17, Pt. 3, pp. 94-95, 101, 102 and Keer, pp. 254, 255, 258, 259, 263).

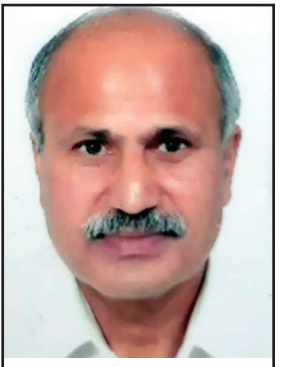
Dr. Ambedkar attended the Sikh Mission's Conference held at Amritsar on 13 and 14 April 1936. It was attended by huge crowds of Sikhs and the Depressed Classes from Punjab, Kerala, U.P and C.P. The

Conference was presided over by Sardar Bahadur Hukum Singh, a retired District Judge, and Wasakha Singh was the Chairman of the reception Committee.

The need for improving the plight of the Depressed Classes was stressed by the Sikh leaders. Addressing the Conference, Dr. Ambedkar expressed his approval of the principles of equality among the Sikhs and added that he had not yet made up his mind, though decided to renounce Hinduism.

The main feature of the Conference was the conversion of five prominent Depressed Class leaders of the Thiyya community of Kerala and fifty others from the U.P and C.P. Sometime in May 1936, Dr. Ambedkar sent his son Yashvant Rao and nephew Mukund Rao to Golden Temple Amritsar to study Sikhism. They lived there for one and a half months in the warm hospitality of the Sikhs who received them with hope. About this time Gandhi camp was also disturbed by Ambedkar's activities. On the persuasion by Seth Walchand Hirachand, Dr. Ambedkar saw Gandhi at wardha and then at Segaon, but they could not agree on the solution to the problem. Walchand Hirachand and Jamnalal Bajaj, the millionaire supporters of Gandhi were surprised at the crowds of the Depressed Classes that had gathered to receive Dr. Ambedkar, and they remarked that although they had spent money on their cause, the Harijans did not respond to them properly. Ambedkar at once answered that it was the difference between a mother and a nurse. (Keer. pp. 267-269, 276 and Dr. M.L. Shahare and Dr. Nalini Anil, Dr. B. R. Ambedkar Struggle and Message, pp. 286, 287).

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



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Dr. Ambedkar and Sikhism

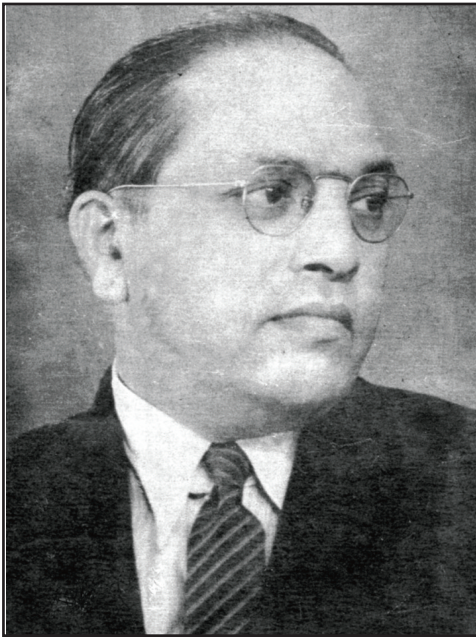
(Continue from page 6)

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Prem Kumar. Chumber

Editor-in-Chief: Ambedkartimes.com

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

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

movement was the first of its kind that became suddenly popular because of its grassroots 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.

The roots and remedy of the Caste system

A message titled 'शुलामी और पतन का कारण' (The cause of slavery and degradation) attributed to Dr. Babasaheb B.R. Ambedkar is in circulation on social media evoking multiple response and reaction these days. The detailed message is: "The Mahabharata says that a Shudra cannot become a king. Gita says that the Shudras should serve as slaves to the Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishya. The Ramayana says that if a Shudra gets enlightenment, he should be awarded death penalty. The Veda says that the place of a Shudra is under the feet of the upper three Varnas because he is born from the feet of the Brahma. The Puranas say that the Shudras are born to be slaves only. The Ramcharitamanas says that it is the *Dharma* or Righteousness to give corporal beating to a Shudra. Despite all this a tolerant Shudra continues to have unflinching faith in these *Granthas* – Scriptures containing violence. Trust me, only this is this is the cause of your (Shudras') slavery and degradation" (Dr. Ambedkar).

I have yet to come across this quotation or statement of Babasaheb in this form in his voluminous Writings and Speeches. But the essence of the message is contained in his writings which he produced after an extensive and intensive research and study of the Hindu Scriptures for fifteen years. He wrote copiously on the philosophy of Hinduism, Hindu Social Order, Hindu Scriptures, Riddles of Hinduism and genesis of the Caste system and its impact on the society and the country. One needs to go through intently and dispassionately not only his Writings but the whole gamut of Hindu Scriptures from the Vedas to Puranas to know what they really contain and convey particularly regarding the Caste system. The quest, therefore, must begin with the Vedas as they are considered to be the most ancient and the source of other Hindu Scriptures.

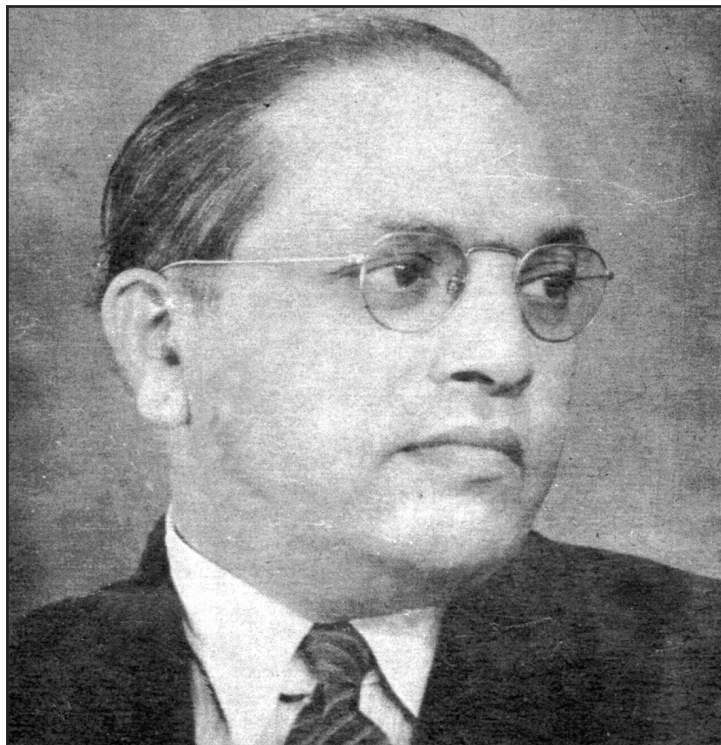
Vedas

The origin of Caste system is traced to the theory of *Chaturvarnya* contained in the nineteenth *Sukta* or hymn known as *Purusha Sukta* of the Tenth Mandala or Chapter of the Rig Veda (10.90.1-16). The unique and extraordinary *Purusha Sukta* says that the Creator of the universe and all the creatures including classes of men is the thousands-headed, thousand-seyed and thousands-footed *Purusha* who is the universe itself but overpasses it by ten fingers.

The Richas or verses of the Rig, Sam, Yajur and the Atharva Veda appeared from Him. The Brahmins originated from his mouth, Kshatriyas from arms, Vaishyas from thighs and Shudras from his feet. The moon appeared from his mind, sun from his eyes, air from ears, fire from mouth, space from navel, heavenly bodies from head, earth from his feet and directions from the ears. The same version of the *Purusha Sukta* of Rig Veda is replicated in chapter 31 of the Yajurveda with 6 additional verses. In its additional explanation of the origin of

the four Varnas, White Yajurveda says that the Prajapati (Lord of Creatures) produced the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras by lauding the God in different ways (14.28, 29). In one of the explanations of the Taittiriya Samhita of the Black Yajurveda, the Brahmins are said to have been born from the mouth, Rajanya (kshatriyas) from the breast and arms, Vaishyas from the middle and Shudras from the feet of the *Prajapati*. Apart from replicating the Purusha Sukta theory of the Rig Veda, the Atharva Veda (Kaanda or Chapter 19.6), also has other explanations. It says that Brahmin was the first born (from Brahma) with ten heads and ten feet (4.6. 1).

Another explanation says Rajanya (Kshatriya) was born from



Vratya - Vagrant, Mendicant (15.8.1). In one of the multiple explanations contained in the Satpatha Brahmana, it says that the Brahma was formerly this (universe), one only. It energetically created from itself Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras. Taittiriya Brahmana says that the Brahmin caste was sprung from the gods; the Shudras from the Asuras. At another place it says that the Shudra was sprung from the non-existence. Dr. Ambedkar says that the ancient Brahmins were evidently conscious of the fact that the origin of the four classes was an unusual and uncommon social phenomenon and that the place of the Shudra in it was very unnatural and that this called for some explanation. The variety of explanations given above and in other texts is simply bewildering (BAWS, Vol.7, pp. 21, 22, 37-41). The intelligent readers can know and understand what is what of these explanations.

According to Dr. Ambedkar, prima facie these verses do no more than explain how the four classes, namely, the Brahmins or priests, Kshatriyas or soldiers, Vaishyas or traders, and Shudras or menials, arose from the body of the Creator. These verses are treated as containing a mandatory injunction from the Creator to the effect that Society

must be constituted on the basis of these classes. They are not mere cosmogony, but contain a divine injunction prescribing a particular form of the constitution of society known as *Chaturvarnya* - parent of the Caste system as an ideal of the Indo-Aryan society. This ideal of *Chaturvarnya* was the mould in which the life of the Indo-Aryan community in its early or liquid state was cast. It is this mould, which gave the Indo-Aryan community its peculiar shape and structure. The reverence, which the Indo-Aryan Society had for this ideal mould of *Chaturvarnya*, is not only beyond question, but it is also beyond description. Its influence on the Indo-Aryan society has been profound and indelible. The Social Order prescribed by the Vedas has never been questioned by anyone

except Buddha. Even Buddha was not able to shake it for the simple reason that both after the fall of Buddhism and even during the period of Buddhism there were enough law-givers, who made it their business not only to defend the ideal of the *Purusha Sukta* but to propagate and elaborate it in parrot-like manner (BAWS, Vol.7, p. 23).

Anyone who reads the *Purusha Sukta* will find that it starts with the creation of donkeys, horses, goats, etc., but does not say anything about the creation of man. It proceeds to explain the origin of the classes in the Aryan society to be its primary concern. Dr. Ambedkar says that no theology has made it its purpose to explain origin of classes in the society. The *Purusha Sukta* makes the *Chaturvarnya* a sacred institution, a divine ordination beyond criticism and beyond change. In propounding the doctrine of *Chaturvarnya*, the *Purusha Sukta* proceeds first to raise the real, namely, the existence of the four classes in the Indo-Aryan Society, to the status of an ideal. This is a deception because the ideal is in no way different from facts as they exist. After raising the real to the status of the ideal, it proceeds to make a show of giving effect to what it regards as an ideal. This again is a deception because the ideal already exists in fact. This attempt of the *Purusha Sukta* to idealize the real and to realize the ideal, is a kind of political jugglery, the like of which is not to be found in any other book of religion. Only when a person finds a personal advantage in things as they are that he tries to idealize the real. To proceed to make such an ideal real is nothing short of criminal. The principle underlying the *Purusha*

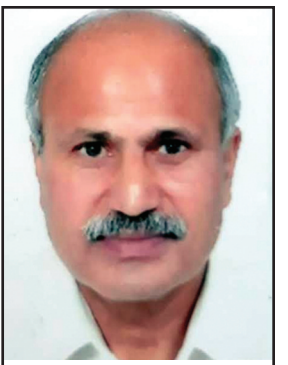
Sukta is, therefore, criminal in intent and anti-social in its results. For, it aims to perpetuate an illegal gain obtained by one class and unjust wrong inflicted upon another (BAWS, Vol.7, pp.27, 31, 32).

According to Babasaheb, the idea behind the doctrine of *Chaturvarnya* seems to be to discover a formula which will solve the problem of fixing the functions of the four classes and fixing their gradation after a preconceived plan. The *Brahmin* is equated to the mouth of the Creator. Mouth being the noblest part of the anatomy, the Brahmin becomes the noblest of the four classes. As he is the noblest in the scale, he is given the noblest function, that of custodian of knowledge and learning. Arms being next below the mouth, consequently the *Kshatriya* is given an order of precedence next below the *Brahmin* and is given a function which is second only to knowledge, namely, fighting. The *Vaishya* is equated to the thighs of the Creator, and is given an order of precedence next below the Kshatriya and is assigned a function of industry and trade which in name and fame ranked in ancient times below that of a warrior. The *Shudra* is equated to the feet of the Creator. The feet form the lowest and the most ignoble part of the human frame. Accordingly, the *Shudra* is placed last in the Social Order and is given the filthiest function of serving the rest as a menial. As the mouth cannot perform the functions of the feet, and the arms of the thighs, therefore, the classes equated with limbs shall remain confined to their fixed functions. It means perpetuating inequity on the ground that whatever is once settled is settled for all times. The principle underlying the *Purusha Sukta* is, therefore, criminal in intent and anti-social in its results. For, it aims to perpetuate an illegal gain obtained by one class and an unjust wrong inflicted upon another (BAWS, Vol.7, pp. 32, 33).

Origin and authorship of the Vedas

There is hardly any Hindu who does not regard the Vedas as the most sacred Book of his religion. It would be relevant and important to know the origin and other contents of the Vedas not only for the curious but for the benefit of common people. The theory of the origin of the Vedas has been propounded in the *Purusha Sukta* of the Rig Veda itself (10.90.1-16). It says that the three Vedas namely, Rig, Sama and Yaju came into being out of the mystic sacrifice of the *Purusha* – a mystical being. Yajur Veda says that the Rig, Yaju, Sam and Atharva Vedas appeared from the Virat (Gigantic or colossal) Yagyapuru (31.7). Atharva Veda also

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repeats the *Rig* and *Yajur Veda* in the same vein (19.6.13). In addition it says that the *Rig* verses and *Yajus* sprang from Time (19.54). At another place it says that the primeval sage and the *Rig*, *Sam* and *Yaju* and *Athrava Veda* sprang from *Skambha* - fulcrum, support (19.6.14). In another explanation, it says that the *Vedas* appeared from *Indra*. *Satpatha Brahmana* explains the origin of the *Vedas* (i) from the *Prajapati*, (ii) from *Agni* (fire), *Vayu* (air) and *Surya* (sun), (iii) from the water, (iv) from the Mind-Ocean. As per *Taittiriya Brahmana* the *Vedas* came (i) from the *Prajapati*, (ii) from the *Vach* (Speech) and (iii) from the beard of *Prajapati*. The explanation offered in the *Chhandogya Upanishada* is the same as that given in the *Satpatha Brahmana* i.e. the *Rig Veda* originated from *Agni*, *Yajus* from *Vayu* and *Sam* from the Sun. The *Brahad Aranyak Upanishada* has two explanations. In one place, it says the *Vedas* are the breathings of the great Being (*Brahma*). In another place it says the *Prajapati* created the *Vedas* through *Vach* (speech). *Manu Smriti* attributes origin of the *Vedas* to *Brahma* and *Prajapati*. Thus, eleven different explanations regarding origin of the *Vedas* are found in these texts: (1) as originating from the mystical sacrifice of *Purusha*; (2) as originating from the *Virat Yagyapurusha*; (3) as cut or scraped off from *Skambha*, as being his hair and mouth; (4) as springing from *Indra*; (5) as produced from *Time*; (6) as produced from *Agni*, *Vayu* and *Surya*; (7) as springing from *Prajapati* and the Waters; (8) as being the breath of *Brahma*; (9) as being dug by the gods out of mindocean; (10) as being the hair of *Prajapati's* beard and (11) as being the offspring of *Vacha* or sound, word or speech (*BAWS*, Vol.4, pp. 19-22). It is up to the readers to exercise their intellect to make their own conclusions as to the credibility of these explanations regarding origin and authorship of the *Vedas*.

Contents of the Vedas

One comes across multiple views on the contents of the *Vedas*. According to the sage *Charvaka*, "... The *Agnihotra* and other sacrifices are only useful as means of livelihood; for the *Veda* is tainted by three faults of untruth, self-contradiction, and tautology; then again the impostors who call themselves *Vaidic* pundits are mutually destructive, as the authority of the *Jnan-Kanda* (enlightenment) is overthrown by those who maintain the authority of the *Karma-Kanda* (sacrifices etc. rituals) and those who maintain the theory of the *Jnan-Kanda* reject that of the *Karma-Kanda*; and lastly, the three *Vedas* themselves are only the incoherent rhapsodies (ecstatic expression of feelings) of knaves." Sage *Brihaspati* says, "Vedas and karm-kanda are but means of livelihood for those who have neither manliness nor sense... There is no heaven, no final liberation, nor any soul in another world; nor do the actions of the four castes, orders

etc. produce any real effect... The *Agnihotras*, the three *Vedas* etc. were made as the livelihood of those destitute of knowledge and manliness; if a beast slain in the *Jyotistoma* rite will itself go to heaven; why then does not the sacrificer forthwith offer his own father? When once the body becomes ashes, how can it ever return again? All these ceremonies are for the dead, there is no other fruit anywhere. The three authors of the *Vedas* were buffoons, knaves and demons..." According to Prof. *Muir*: "...In these songs (*Vedas*) the *Aryan* sages celebrated the praises of their ancestral gods, and besought of them all the blessings which men in general desired - health, wealth, long life, cattle, offspring, victory over the enemies, forgiveness of sins, and in some cases also celestial facility." There is enough evidence to prove that there is no ethical or spiritual value in the *Vedas*. As to the morality there is hardly any discussion about it in the *Rig Veda*. On the other hand there are good many obscene passages to be found in the *Vedas*. The dialogue between *Yama* and *Yami*, brother and sister, in which *Yami* proposes to *Yama*, and the gods and goddesses indulging in drinking *Somrasa* (intoxicating drink) and merry making, are some of the instances. There are hymns or prayers offering *Somrasa* (an intoxicating drink) to gods seeking grant of prayers for wealth, offspring, decimation of enemies and victory in war et al. The *Atharva - Veda* is nothing but a collection sorcery, black magic and medicine. The *Rig Veda* also not altogether free from it. There are good many obscene passages to be found in the *Rig - Veda* and *Yajur - Veda*. The curious may go through the texts themselves for detailed . (*BAWS*, Vol. 4, pp. 36-52)

Upanishadas

Though there is no fixed number of the *Upanishadas*, it is generally believed to be 108. A list of these *Upanishadas* is given in the *Muktik Upanishada*. The publication from *Adyar Library Madras* carries a list of 179 *Upanishadas*. The number is 223 as per *Gujrati Printing Press Bombay* (*Shriram Sharma and Bhagwati Devi Sharma, Brahmvarchas, Shanti Kunj, Haridwar, 1997, pp. 12,13*). This is not the final list.

The *Brihadaranyak Upanishada* says that only the *Brahma* in the form of *Purusha* (*Prajapati*) alone was pre-existing in the primordial state who divided itself into male and female two parts. They assumed the form of male and female of each animal as husband and wife, and procreated man and the animal world down up to an ant level. It is the *Purusha* who created gods and the four *Varnas* - *Brahmin*, *Kshatriya*, *Vaishya* and the *Shudra* in hierarchical order with *Brahmin* at the top and *Shudra* at the bottom, with their respective duties as priest, warrior, traders and the menials to serve the upper three *Varnas*. The earth is also said to be the *Shudra* as it serves all. Though

every human being is endowed with the intellect to know the Creator and its creation, and attain enlightenment and stature of the Creator, but the gods do not want men (*Shudras*) to become enlightened, because in that eventuality none would be left to serve them like the cattle do (108 *Upanishadas, Brahmvarchas, Shanti Kunja, Haridwar, Gyankhand 1997, 1.4. 11-15, pp. 251-257*).

Nrisinh Poorvatapinee Upanishada says Women and *Shudras* are not entitled to listen to the *Mantras* or chants (sermons) of the *Yajur-Veda, Gayatri* and *Pranava*. Even if they happen to hear and know these sermons, they are degraded after death. The *Acharyas* (priest/preacher), therefore, should exercise caution so that these ineligible people do not hear the *Mantras* or else they would also fall into degradation after death like the *Shudras* and women (108, *Upanishadas, Brahmvarchas, Shanti Kunja, Haridwar, Sadhnakhand 1998, 1.7*).

Vajrsuchik Upanishada has an entirely different and contradictory to *Purusha Sukta* explanation of the origin of the *Brahmins*. It says that no one can claim to be a *Brahmin* by birth or by caste. There are instances galore that many a great sages were of low origin and born from different creatures. Sage *Shringi* was born from a doe; sage *Kaushika* from grass; sage *Jambooka* from *Jambuka* tree (tree called *Jamuna* bearing purple plums); *Valmiki* from termite mound; *Ved Vyasa* from a fisherwoman, *Gautama* from the back or hinder of a rabbit; *Vasishta* from a mermaid or prostitute named *Urvashi* and the sage *Agastya* from an earthen pot (*kumbha*). Anyone can become a *Brahmin*. The one who is enlightened, philosopher, equanimous, of steadfast wisdom, rational, beyond duality of soul, free from vices like desires, materialistic attachments, vanity, greed, avarice, sorrows, fascination and illusion is a *Brahmin* (108, *Upanishadas, Brahmvarchas, Shanti Kunja, Haridwar, Brahmvidya Khand, pp.271, 272*).

Swasamvedya Upanishada says that it is well established unanimous view that where *Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra* or *Ishwara* go, dogs, donkeys, cats and other *Krimis* (worms, maggots) also go there; dogs, donkeys, cats and other *Krimis* (worms, maggots) are neither high, middle or low. The *Tattvagyanis* (Enlightened or philosophers) do not find difference between *Brahma, Vishnu, Rudra* or *Ishwara* and dogs, donkeys, cats and other worms or maggots from pure consciousness point of view. The ignorant selfish people claim themselves to be intellectuals and enlightened, and mislead the laity in the name of gods and goddesses and their worships and other religious practices such as devotion to the *Gurus*, pilgrimage centers (108 *Upanishadas, Brahmvarchas, Shanti Kunja, Haridwar, Brahmvidya Khand, pp.339-341*).

Smritis

The *Smritis* or the *Law Books* of the *Hindus* comprise both of the religious and secular part of the society. These books contain the *Canon of Hindu Law* which is vast in its compass and treats of such subjects as religion, law, government, civic rights and duties of the different classes in society, penances for the sins and punishment for offences. The number of *Smritis* which is said to be originally twenty has ever been on the increase. *Mitramistra* refers to 57 *Smritis*, *Nilkanta* to 97, *Kamalkar* to 131 and *Mr. Kane* a great authority on the *Smriti* literature has computed their number to be 128. The *Smriti* literature is bigger than any other class of religious literature regarded as sacred by the *Hindus* (*BAWS, Vol. 4, p. 55, Vol. 3, p. 323*).

The *Manu Smriti* is the most important of all, the spirit of which pervades in rest of the *Smritis*. It is claimed to be divine in its origin and revealed to man by him to whom it was revealed by the *Swayambhu* i.e. the *Self-Creator* itself. It reiterates the theory of origin of the *Varnas* as contained in the *Purusha Sukta* of *Rig* and other *Vedas*. It says that the *Brahma* created *Brahmins* from his mouth, *Kshatryias* from the arms, *Vaishyas* from the thighs and the *Shudras* from the feet to expand the worlds (*Manu Smriti* (MS), I.31). He divided himself into male and female two parts, and created a *Virat Purusha* (Grand person) from the female. The *Grand Purusha* then created *Manu* who further created ten *Prajapatis*. The *Prajapatis* further created gods, sages, demons, animals and birds, reptiles, worms, plants, planets and stars etc. (MS, I.32-41). He created duties or functions or role of the four *Varnas* for protection of the *Srishti* (universe). To study and teach (*Vedas*); to perform *Yajnas* or sacrifices and get them performed; to give and accept *Dana* or gifts were the duties fixed for the *Brahmins*. To secure the people; to give gifts to the *Brahmins*; to hold *Yajnas* to be performed by the *Brahmins* and to study (*Vedas* as taught by the *Brahmins*) were the duties fixed for the *Kshatryias*. The *Vaishya* was assigned the duty of cattle rearing; agriculture; trading; giving of *Dana*; studying; lending money on interest. The *Shudra* was assigned only one duty of meekly serving the upper three *Varnas* (MS, I. 87-91). Being the first born from *Brahma's* mouth, and being the possessor of the *Veda*, the *Brahmin* is by right the lord of this whole world (*Bhudeva*) and its entire wealth which is meant for him only. He is the biggest, greatest, wisest, most excellent and the virtuous of all, and protector of *Dharma* (duties of all). All the people subsist with his blessings (MS, I.93-101 and X.3). He is declared to be the creator of the world, the punisher, the teacher, and hence a benefactor of all created beings. He is authorized to kill not only the king but to engage in a general massacre of men if they sought to do injury to his power and

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position. No man should say anything unpropitious nor use any harsh words against Brahmin. A ten year old Brahmin boy should be treated as father by an hundred years old Kshatriya (MS, XI. 31, 32, 35; XI. 261 and I.135). A king should bestow all sorts of jewels on the Brahmin for the performance of sacrifices (MS, XI.4). Power of a Brahmin is greater than the power of the king; by his own power alone he can punish his enemies and those who injure him. Warning the kings against displeasing the Brahmins, Manu says that though fallen unto the deepest distress, the king should not provoke Brahmins to anger because they could instantly destroy him together with his army and vehicles (MS, IX. 313).

The laws of Manu relating to the Status of the Shudras make a very important and interesting reading as they have molded the psychology of the Hindus and determined their attitude towards the Shudras who form at all times the most numerous part of Hindu society. Manu asks the householders of the Brahmin, Kshatriya and Vaishya class not to dwell in a country where the rulers are Shudras (MS, IV.61). He enacts that a Brahmin who has neither studied nor performed any other act required by the Vedas may at the king's pleasure, interpret the law to him i.e. act as the Judge, but never a Shudra (MS, VIII. 20). The Kingdom of that monarch who looks on while a Shudra settles the law will sink low like a cow in a morass (MS, VIII. 21). To a person who is privileged to study the Vedas, Manu ordains that he must never read the Vedas in the presence of the Shudras (MS, IV. 99). He prescribes that he who instructs Shudra pupils and he whose teacher is a Shudra shall become disqualified for being invited to Shradha (MS, III. 156). Dr. Ambedkar says Manu's successor went much beyond him in the cruelty of their punishment of the Shudra for studying the Veda. For instance Katyayana lays down that if a Shudra overheard the Veda or ventured to utter a word of the Veda the King shall cut his tongue in twain and put hot molten lead in his ears (BAWS, Vol. 3, p.311). As to property, Manu ordains that no superfluous collection of wealth must be made by a Shudra, even though he has power to make it. A servile man, a Shudra, who has amassed riches becomes proud, and by his insolence or neglect gives pain to Brahmins (MS, X. 129). Manu declares that a Brahmin as the lord of all may seize the wealth of a Shudra without hesitation because a Shudra is not entitled to possess personal wealth (MS, VIII. 417). Not only is the

property of a Shudra liable to conscription but the labor of the Shudra is also declared to be liable to conscription. Manu declares that a Brahmin may compel a Shudra to do servile work; for he is created by the Creator to be the slave of a Brahmin (MS, VIII. 413). Manu requires a Shu-

dra to be servile in his speech. A Shudra, who insults a twice-born man with gross invective, shall have his tongue cut out. If he mentions the names and castes of the (twice-born) with contumely, an iron nail, ten fingers long, shall be thrust red hot into his mouth. If a Shudra arrogantly presumes to preach religion to Brahmins the King shall have poured burning oil in his mouth and ears (MS, VIII. 270 – 272). He prescribes that a Shudra who has an intercourse with a guarded woman of the higher caste, should be put to death and his property confiscated. If it is the unguarded woman, he should be deprived of his offending organ – genitals, but others committing the same offence should be let off with a minor penalty. A Brahmin should never be awarded the death penalty even if he is guilty of committing the entire sins - heinous crimes. There is no sin or crime so heinous on earth as the killing of a Brahmin. Therefore, the king should never entertain even a thought of killing a Brahmin (MS, VIII. 374-382). Manu does not allow the Shudra the comfort of having a high sounding name. He enacts that the first part of a Brahmin's name shall denote something auspicious; a Kshatriya's power; a Vaishya's wealth but a Shudra's something contemptible. The second part of a Brahmin's name shall be a word implying happiness; of a Kshatriya's a word implying protection; of a Vaishya's a term expressive of thriving and of a Shudra's an expression denoting service (MS, II.31, 32). The service of Brahmins alone is declared to be an excellent occupation for a Shudra; for whatever else besides this he may perform will bear him no fruit. A Shudra must be given the remnants of their food; tattered clothes, lowest quality grains and other condemned household items such as furniture etc. (X. 121-125). Dr. Ambedkar says Manu's object was to make the Shudra not merely a servile but an altogether contemptible person. Manu insists that a Shudra shall be servile, unfit for office, without education, without property and he must be a contemptible person. His person and property shall always be liable to be conscripted (BAWS, Vol. 3, p. 311, 312).

Holding that the Shudra was born to be servile, Manu made his laws accordingly so as to compel him to remain servile. At the outset of his Code, Manu asserts emphatically and without blushing that the Lord prescribed to the Shudra one occupation only to serve meekly the other three Varnas/castes. Dr. Ambedkar says that there is no code of laws more infamous regarding social rights than the Laws of Manu. Any instance from anywhere of social injustice must pale before it. The lower classes of Hindus have been completely disabled for direct action on account of the wretched system of *Chaturvarnya*. There cannot be a more degrading system of social organization than the *Chaturvarnya* which dead-

ens, paralyses and cripples the people from helpful activity. The period of defeat and darkness in the country is the period when *Chaturvarnya* flourished to the damnation of the greater part of the people of the country (BAWS, Vol. 1, p. 63). Manu Smriti contains the philosophy of the Hinduism which is the gospel of the superman called Brahmin and it teaches that what is right for the superman is the only thing which is called morally right and morally good. It is superman's heaven and common man's damnation. The Smritis contain in all its wild and luxuriant growth the doctrine of Caste, the doctrine of superiority of the Brahmins, and their rights and privileges, the doctrine of subordination of the Kshatriyas and Vaishyas and the doctrine of the degradation of the Shudras. Such being the philosophy of the Smritis, the Brahmins were directly interested in investing the Smritis with the authority which was claimed for the Vedas and in which they ultimately succeeded to their advantage but to the ruination of the whole country. The parallel to this philosophy of Hinduism is to be found in Nietzsche - the German philosopher. Nietzsche's thought is Hitler in action and Nietzsche was the foremost pioneer of the Nazi accession to power. Nietzsche himself has declared that in his philosophy he is only following the scheme of Manu (BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 72-76, 78, 80). It is not possible to give here complete detail of the inhuman laws enacted and enforced by Manu and other Hindu law givers against the Shudras. The interested may like to go through the texts themselves for their further knowledge.

Ramayana

The same ideals of *Chaturvarnya* as contained in the Vedas and Smritis are reiterated and cemented in the Valmikiya Ramayana. It is laid down in the Ramayana that Manu and other propounders of *Dharma* (religion/faith) took unanimous decision to establish the *Chaturvarnya* system in Treta Yuga where Brahmins and Kshatriyas engaged themselves in pursuits of special knowledge and excellence, Vaishyas and Shudras were assigned the role of serving them.

Shudras were ordained to serve all the three Varnas above them in the hierarchy. They were not entitled to the right of learning and other spiritual and religious pursuits in the three Yugas – *Satya*, *Treta* and *Dwapara*. Any violation of these divine injunctions on the part of Shudras would invite capital punishment. It further says that lowly born will be inclined to perform penance in the Kaliyuga (Valmikiya Ramayana, Gita Press Gorakhpur, Part II, 1996, Uttarkanda, Sarga (chapter) 74.12-28). At another place, the Ramayana says that the four Varnas are the offspring of Manu, the daughter of Daksha and the wife of Kashyapa. 'Brahmins were born from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the breast, Vaishyas from the thighs

and the Shudras from the feet', so says the Veda (BAWS, Vol.4, p.243).

The episode of killing a Shudra named Shambooka by Rama for the offence of his undertaking *Tapasya* or austerities for attaining godhood against the scriptural dictates, speaks loudly of the caste system being strictly observed, propagated and protected in Rama's reign (Rama Rajya). The story goes that there were no premature deaths in Rama's kingdom. It happened, however, that a young son of an elderly Brahmin died a premature death. The bereaved father attributed the death to some sin being committed in the kingdom for which Rama was responsible for his failure to check such a sin or crime. He threatened to sit on hunger strike at the palace of Rama unless his son was brought to life. Rama thereupon consulted his council of eight learned Rishis led by Vasishtha. Narada amongst them told Rama that some Shudra among his subjects must have been performing *Tapasya* (austerities), and thereby going against the *Chaturvarnya Dharma*, for such austerities could be performed by the twice-born alone, while the duty of the Shudras was only to serve the twice born. Arming himself, Rama mounted his Pushpak Vimana (aeroplane) and scoured the countryside for the culprit. At last, in a wild region far away to the South he espied a man practicing rigorous austerities by hanging himself upside down. Rama introduced himself to the man and enquired of him of his caste and the purpose of such hard austerities. The man informed that he was a Shudra by the name of Shambooka practicing austerities with the aim of going to heaven in his own earthly person to achieve godhood. Hearing the word 'Shudra' Rama instantly took sparkling sword out of its sheath and beheaded Shambooka. And lo and behold! That very moment the dead Brahmin boy in distant Ayodhya began to breathe again. The Gods such as Agni, Vayu and Indra lauded and applauded the act of Rama and rained flowers on the king at his feat of protecting the *Chaturvarnya Dharma* by killing and preventing a Shudra from gaining admission to their celestial abode through the power of the *Tapasya* which he had no right to perform. They also appeared before Rama and congratulated him on his deed. (Valmikiya Ramayana ibid Uttarkanda, Sargas 73, 74. 28-33, 75, 76 and BAWS, Vol. 4, pp. 331-332). As Ramcharitamanas of Tulsi Das written in the sixteenth century does not fall in the category of Hindu Scriptures though it is very popular as Ramayana with the Hindus particularly in North India, it has not been the subject of research by Dr. Ambedkar. Nonetheless, it does say that it is justified to give corporal punishment or beating to the Shudra and woman like the drum, cattle and uncivilized person (Ramcharitamanas, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1996, Sundarkaanda, 58.3, p.663). (Contd. on next page)

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Mahabharata

Mahabharata carries multiple explanations besides the theory of Purusha Sukta of the Vedas regarding origin of the Chaturvarnya. It says that the Brahma created the Brahmins and the Prajapatis like Marichi etc. in the primeval stage. It was followed by the creation of gods, Vedas, righteousness, truth, demons and other creatures. Thereafter Brahma created the four Varnas i.e. Brahmins of white, Kshatriyas of red, Vaishyas of yellow and the Shudras of black color. The whole world was of only Brahmin Varna in the beginning. But due to different functions of the people four Varnas came into existence. The Shudra abandons the Vedas and good conduct; remains attached to eating and doing all sorts of jobs, and remains filthy or unclean both from inside and outside (Shantiparva of Mahabharata part V, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 8th edition 1998, Mokshdharmaparva, chapter 189, pp. 4902, 4903). In another explanation in the Mahabharata, Vivasvat (sun) was born to Kashyapa son of Marichi and his wife Dakshayani, daughter of Prajapati Daksha. To Vivasvat was born the mighty and righteous son Manu and renowned Yama Vaivasvata. Brahmins, Kshatriyas, and other men sprang from this Manu (BAWS, Vol.4, pp.243, 244).

In chapter 60 of Rajdharam Anushasanparva, it is said that the Brahmins are the gods of gods, and they only have created the other three Varnas. Functions of the four Varnas have been prescribed in chapter 60 of Rajdharam Anushasanparva of Shantiparva. The functions are almost similar to those prescribed in the Vedas and Smritis. It says that the Shudra has been created by the Prajapati only to serve the other three Varnas. He can derive great happiness by only serving the three Varnas. He should not accumulate any wealth as he becomes source of great sin and power to enslave the people of higher Varnas. The master of the Shudra has a right over the wealth if any of the Shudra. He should be given used umbrellas, rags, turban and shoes etc. These items become the property of the Shudra (Shantiparva of Mahabharata part V, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 8th edition 1998, Rajdharam Anushasanparva, chapter 60.9-47, pp. 4579-4581). The duties of the four Varnas have been reiterated at many places in the Mahabharata. The crux is that whatever exists in the world is the property of the Brahmins by right of primogeniture. Describing the benefits of observing the prescribed duties by the four Varnas in the Udyogparva, Vidura says that if the Shudra satisfies Brahmins, Kshatriyas and the Vaishyas by serving them justly, he enjoys the heavenly bliss after death. Vidura further clarifies that he being a Shudra born to the Shudra mother, is not entitled to perform the duties of the Brahmins. (Mahabharata ibid,

Part 3, Udyogparva, 40.25-28 and 41.5, pp. 2171, 2172).

Geeta

The Geeta is not an exception to the Vedas and Smritis regarding *Chaturvarnya system*. Lord Krishna says: "I myself have created the arrangement of the four Varnas – castes (Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and the Shudras) consistently with the differences in their qualities and occupations or actions" (Geeta, 4.13). He ordains that everyone must stick to his own prescribed occupation/duty (Dharma), and die in that occupation itself though the occupation of others may be far better and superior. The undertaking of others' occupation should be considered as dreadful – sinful (Geeta, 3.35). He further says: "...The respective duties of the Brahmins (priests), Kshatriyas (warriors), Vaishyas (tradesmen) and the Shudras (menials) have been individually fixed with reference to the qualities arising from their inherent prakriti or nature. Serving the other Varnas is the inherently natural duty of the Shudras. One must stick to the prescribed inherent duty irrespective of its nature" (Geeta, 18. 41-44, 47, 48). It is further ordained that the educated should not unsettle the faith of the uneducated who have become attached to their occupation. He himself should perform the occupation of his Varna and make others perform theirs accordingly (Geeta, 3, 26, 29). According to Dr. Ambedkar, Krishna does not want the people to undertake the work of reform. He asks them to leave the task to him as he says: "Whenever Righteousness declines and Unrighteousness becomes powerful, then I myself take birth in different Yugas to protect and establish the Righteousness (Geeta, 4. 7, 8)." (BAWS, Vol.3, pp. 127,128). Lord Krishna further declares that the Shudras, Vaishyas and women are born from the womb of sin -Paap Yoni (Gita, 9.32). (Bhishamparva, Mahabharata, Part 3, Geeta Press Gorakhpur, 7th edition, 1998, pp. 2620, 2626, 2688, 2797, 2800, 2801). Dr. Ambedkar says that Gita is Manu in a nutshell. Those who run away from Manu Smriti and want to take refuge in the Geeta either do not know Geeta or are prepared to omit from their consideration that soul of Geeta which makes it akin to Manu Smriti. There is no difference in the essence whether one takes the Vedas, or the Smritis or the Bhagwat Geeta. All of them are woven on the same pattern, the same thread runs through them and they are really parts of the same fabric (BAWS, Vol.3, pp. 80, 81).

Puranas

The number of Puranas is generally said to be 18, and their origin attributed to sage Vyasa. Subsequently, the number went up to 36 with the addition of 18 sub-Puranas. It has further gone up to 72 as per introduction to the Skandh Purana (Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1995). The date of the Puranas ranges between 100 A.D. and 18th Century A.D. as there

is mention of foreigners called Yavanas (Greeks), Mlechhas (Muslims and others) etc. and Hindu, Muslim and other historical personalities such as Prithvi Raj Chauhan, Jai Chand, Qutubuddin, Padmini, Babar, Humayun, Akbar, Salim, Aurangzeb, Nadir Shah, and Britishers in Kalikata (Calcutta) etc. in the Bhavishya Purana (Bhavishya Purana, Pt. 2, edited by Pt. Shriram Sharma Acharya, Nav Jyoti Press, Mathura, 1998 edition). It shows that this Purana was written in the 18th century when the Britishers established their control in Calcutta as it covers the historical events of the country up to that period. There has been wide range of scope and subjects of the Puranas which has been undergoing additions from time to time. There has been change in the authorship from Vyasa to Sutas (Non-Brahmins) and from Sutas to Brahmins (BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 254-257). As regards the origin of the Varna system, most of the Puranas reiterate the Purusha Sukta theory of the Vedas i.e. Brahmins born from the mouth, Kshatriyas from the arms, Vaishyas from the thighs and the Shudras from the feet of Brahma (Skandha Purana, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1995, p.494; Padama Purana, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1997, p.10; Bhagwat Purana, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1998, p.148; Vishnu Purana, Bhagwat Purana, Gita Press Gorakhpur, 1998, p.20).

In the Harivamsa Purana also there are two theories of origin of the four Varnas. It upholds the version of Vishnu Purana in the first theory. In the other theory, it says Vishnu sprang from Brahma. He absorbed himself in contemplation and became the Prajapati Daksha, and formed numerous creatures. The Brahmins were formed from an imperishable (*akshara*-immortal) element; the Kshatriyas from a perishable (*kshara*-mortal) element; the Vaishyas from alteration; and the Shudras from a modification of smoke. Produced from extinction, the Shudras are destitute of rites prescribed in the Vedas. Hence they are not entitled to be admitted to the purificatory ceremonies, nor does sacred science belong to them. Just as the cloud of smoke which rises from the fire on the friction of the fuel, and is dissipated, is of no service in the sacrificial rite, so too the Shudras wandering over the earth, are altogether useless for purposes of sacrifice, owing to their birth, their mode of life devoid of purity and their want of the observances prescribed in the Veda (BAWS, Vol. 4, pp. 247-249).

The survey shows that there is no uniformity or consistency in the explanations offered regarding origin of the Varna-Caste system. According to Dr. Ambedkar, these explanations are like effusions of the imbeciles (BAWS, Vol. 4, pp. 249, 250). They show how hard the Brahmins tried to defend the irrational and unnatural Varna system which is the parent of anti-human, anti-society and anti-nation pernicious Caste system. They

were not able to give a consistent, uniform, unimpeachable, convincing and rational explanation of the wretched system of which they have been such strong protagonists. The Vedas, Smritis and the Bhagwat Geeta all are woven on the same pattern; they are woven on the same fabric. The Geeta defends war, *Chaturvarnya* system and the Karma Marg of the performance of the observances, such as Yajnas (Karma Kaand) etc. as a way to salvation. It says that the *Chaturvarnya* (root of the monstrous caste system) is created by God and therefore sacrosanct. It offers a philosophic basis to the theory of *Chaturvarnya* by linking it to the theory of innate, inborn qualities in men (BAWS, Vol. 3, pp. 80, 81, 360-362). The Arya Samajists – social reformists claim that their idea of *Chaturvarnya* is based on worth and not on birth. Babasaheb says that the *Chaturvarnya* with its old labels is utterly repellent. The names, Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra are associated with a definite and fixed notion in the mind of every Hindu. That notion is of a hierarchy based on birth. So long as these names continue, Hindus will continue to think of the Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra as hierarchical divisions of high and low, based on birth, and act accordingly. Therefore, the Hindus must be made to unlearn all this. To allow the *Chaturvarnya* based on worth to be designated by such stinking labels of Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra indicative of social divisions based on birth, is a snare (BAWS, Vol.1, pp.58, 59). The so called Hindu sacred literature is almost entirely the creation of the Brahmins the whole object of which is to sustain the superiority and privileges of the Brahmins as against the non-Brahmins. What goes by the name of Sacred Books contains fabrications which are **political in their motive, partisan in their composition and fraudulent in content**. It is the doctrines contained in these books which are responsible for the decline and fall of their country and the society (BAWS, Vol. 7, pp. 14-16).

Babasaheb says that there is no Hindu consciousness of kind. The consciousness that exists is the consciousness of the Caste which prevents common activity. It prevents the fellow feeling and the social cement of fraternal bonding of the Sikhs and the Mohammedans. That is the reason why the Hindus cannot be said to form a society or a nation. Babasaheb, therefore, wonders: "Have not Hindus committed treason against their country in the interest of their Caste?" It is the caste system which needs to be annihilated to see the country progress and grow as one nation of one people. But the wall built around Caste is impregnable and thematerial, of which it is built, contains none of the combustible stuff of reason and morality. Add to this the fact that inside this wall stands the

(Contd. on next page)

INDIAN SOCIETY NEEDS TO EXAMINE

WHY CASTE DISCRIMINATION STILL TAKES PLACE: DESMOND TUTU

South African Nobel Peace Prize laureate and anti-apartheid campaigner Archbishop Desmond Tutu told The Hindu that he had not heard of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He was pleasantly surprised when informed that Dr. Ambedkar chaired the drafting committee of the Constitution of India.

Asked why African leaders fighting apartheid had not paid enough attention to him unlike Mahatma Gandhi, Archbishop Tutu said: "We were involved in our struggle against the racial in-

justices in South Africa, and you were looking for allies who would be able to help change your own set up. So obviously there was need to link up with those who had influence and power in their country."

He hinted that it would be natural for an alliance to develop between Africans who struggled against injustice under apartheid regime and Dalits who are struggling against caste prejudices. "More of us should be concerned about it [caste discrim-

ination] and perhaps be interrogating the other part of Indian society as to why they are allowing this to continue if it is an egalitarian society. I mean your Constitution says so." The Archbishop stressed that Indian society should be challenged about the situation of Dalits because it affects one's humanity.

Courtesy: "The Hindu"

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The roots and remedy of the Caste system

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army of Brahmins, who form the intellectual class; who are the natural leaders of the Hindus; who are there not as mere mercenary soldiers but as an army fighting for its homeland. That is why it would take ages before a breach is made in the Caste system. But whether the doing of the deed takes time or whether it can be done quickly, the reformists must not forget that if they wish to bring about a breach in the system then they have got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras, which deny any part to reason and morality. They must destroy the Religion of the Shrutis and the Smritis. This apart, the real remedy for breaking caste is inter-marriage. Fusion of blood alone can create the feeling of being kith and kin, and unless this feeling of kinship, of being kindred, becomes paramount the

separatist feeling of being liens created by Caste will not vanish. Nothing else will serve as the solvent of Caste (BAWS, Vol. 1, pp. 50-51, 55, 57, 67, 74, 75).

Religion to Dr. Ambedkar means the propounding of an ideal scheme of divine governance the aim and object of which is to make the social order in which the men live a moral order. Man is the centre of divine order called Religion. The Hindu Religion, as contained in the Vedas and the Smritis, is nothing but a mass of sacrificial, social, political and sanitary rules and regulations, all mixed up. Religion, in the sense of spiritual principles, truly universal, applicable to all races, to all countries, to all times, is not to be found in them, and if it is, it does not form the governing part of a Hindu's life. But the worst evil of this code of ordinances is that the

laws it contains are iniquitous and made perpetual in that they are prescribed to be the same for all generations. Such a religion must be destroyed and there is nothing irreligious in working for its destruction. This Religion is nothing but really Law. Babasaheb says that the reformists must take the stand that Buddha and Guru Nanak took. They must not only discard the Shastras, they must deny their authority as did Buddha and Nanak. Their religion must be given a new doctrinal basis that will be in consonance with Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, in short, with Democracy. This means a complete change in the fundamental notions of life; it means a complete change in outlook and in attitude towards men and things. It means new life. But a new life can enter only in a new body. The old must cease to be op-

erative before the new can begin to enliven and to pulsate. This is what he meant when he said that the authority of the Shastras must be discarded and the religion of the Shastras destroyed (BAWS, Vol. 3, p.6, Vol.1, pp.69, 75-78). The iniquitous, irrational, anti-human and pernicious Hindu Caste system is like a monstrous giant tree bereft of leaves, flowers, fruits and shade but laden with thorns. It is up to the people particularly the conscientious and true intelligentsia to take a call whether to water or uproot the tree which has been and continues to be the bane of the society, country and the people, and plant and nurture the flower and fruit bearing shady tree of equality, liberty, fraternity, justice and prosperity – true democracy for the smooth progress and growth of the society, country and the people.



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