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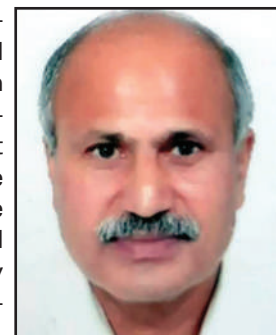
Reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) upheld by the Supreme Court

In its historical 3:2 majority verdict of far reaching consequences and ramifications the Supreme Court has upheld validity of the 103rd Constitutional Amendment which introduced 10% reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) of the General Category people in education and government jobs. The SC/ST/OBC people have been kept outside the purview of the Amendment. The five-judge constitutional Bench comprised of Chief Justice of India U. U. Lalit, Justice Ravindra Bhat, Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, Justice Bela Trivedi and Justice J. B. Pardiwala. While three judges namely Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, Justice Bela Trivedi and Justice J B Pardiwala upheld the amendment, CJI U. U. Lalit and Justice Ravindra Bhat gave dissenting verdict. There are four judgments in the case; one is written

of the Basic Structure for excluding the poor among the SC/ST/OBC category from EWS quota and (c) whether it is violative of Basic Structure for breaching the 50% ceiling limit. Upholding the amendment, he says reservation is an instrument of affirmative action by the State so as to ensure all inclusive approach and march towards goals of egalitarian society. He explained that reservations are an affirmative measure to counter not just social and educational backwardness but all sorts of disadvantages. Justice Bela Trivedi says that the State has come out with amendment for advancement of the EWS categories. Rationale behind the Amendment was to empower Government to provide reservation on the basis of economic backwardness determined by criteria such as land size owned, annual income etc. The im-

concept of EWS reservation itself permissible, but held that the Amendment is unconstitutional. Expressing his dissent, he held that the exclusion of SCs/STs and OBCs from EWS reservation violates the Basic Structure of the Constitution. He stated that 'this court has for the first time in several decades of the republic avowed an expressly discriminatory principle...The Amendment's language of exclusion undermines the fabric of social justice and the Basic Structure of the Constitution'. Referring to the Major General Sinho Commission report (2010), he stated that a bulk of the economically disadvantaged sections of India belong to the backward classes. 38% of the S/C, 48% of the S/T and 33% of OBC people fall below the poverty line. It is 'delusional', he said, to presume that these socially and educationally

tional backwardness and discrimination and stigmatization on that account. The poverty of the socially and educationally backward people is concomitant to their social and educational status. Provision of reservation and safeguards for them in the Constitution is meant to level them up socially and educationally and to provide adequate representation in the services and administration, and to remove age old historical discrimi-



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by Justice Dinesh Maheshwari, second by Justice Bela Trivedi, third by Justice J. B. Pardiwala and the fourth dissenting judgment written by Justice Ravindra Bhat consented by CJI U.U. Lalit. The BJP Government passed the 103rd Constitutional Amendment in 2019 inserting Articles 15(6) and 16(6) in the Constitution. It excluded the SCs/STs/OBCs from the category of Economically Weaker Sections on the ground that they were already beneficiary of reservation under the socially and educationally backward category. The Amendment was introduced on the basis of report of the Commission headed by Major General (Retd.) S R Sinho. The Commission was appointed by the U P A Government in 2005 and the report was submitted in 2010. The Amendment was challenged by some NGOs such as Janhit Abhyan, Youth for Equality etc. on the ground of being violative of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and that it crossed the 50% ceiling in reservation fixed by the Supreme Court itself.

pugned Amendment has to be treated as an affirmative action by the Parliament for the benefit of the EWS class. It cannot be said to be unreasonable classification. She noted that EWS is a category of disadvantage of its own. Just as equals cannot be treated unequally, unequals cannot be treated equally; treating unequals equally violates equality under the Constitution. The Amendment creates a separate class of EWS. The exclusion of socially and educationally Backward Classes from EWS category cannot be said as discriminatory or violative of the Constitution. She pointed out that there is a need to revisit the reservation policy and it should have a life span. Holding the amendment valid, Justice Pardiwala observed that reservation cannot go on indefinitely. He agreed with Justice Trivedi on the need to re-examine the reservation policy. All the three Judges upheld the Amendment saying it is not violative of the Basic Structure of the Constitution. They held that the 50% limit is flexible and it may be breached in extraordinary situations. More importantly, they found that the 50% limit applies only to reservations for socially and educationally backward classes, not to all types of reservations.

On the other hand, Justice Ravindra Bhat, writing for himself and Chief Justice U.U. Lalit, found the

Depressed Classes have an advantage over the forward caste poor only because they have the benefit of reservation under that category. He said our Constitution does not permit exclusion and this Amendment undermines the fabric of social justice and thereby Basic Structure of the Constitution. This court has held that Articles 16 (1) and 16 (4) are facets of same equality principle. The characterization of excluding the poor of the socially and educationally backward classes from the EWS category is unconstitutional. Justices Bhat and CJI Lalit further found that the Amendment is unconstitutional because it allows the government to exceed the 50% limit on reservations, as established in Indra Sawhney case. Justice Bhat held that allowing EWS reservations to exceed this limit will become a gateway for further breaches, leading to 'compartmentalization'.

The team of learned senior Counsels for the petitioners forcefully pleaded the case vehemently opposing the Amendment as violative of the Basic Structure of the Constitution and discriminatory in content and purpose. Quoting profusely Babasaheb, Constituent Assembly debates and various judgments such as Indra Sawhney, Keshavanand Bharti etc. they pleaded that the underlying principle of reservation provided in the Constitution is the social and educa-

nation perpetrated against them. The poverty of General Category people is not perpetual. It is not attributable to any historical discrimination against them, and their social and educational backwardness. The poor among the SC/ST/OBC are worse off than the poor among others. The poor among others have adequate representation in the administration and other areas. They have been given 10% reservation against their population of 2%. These and other grounds render the Amendment violative of the Basic Structure and discriminatory in nature as pleaded by the counsels and accepted by the dissenting judges.

When one looks at the struggle of Babasaheb for special rights and safeguards for the socially and educationally backward people, it is found that he had strong reasons not to consider economic backwardness as another ground for reservation. His logic was that social and educational backwardness leads to economic backwardness too. Once the socio-educational uplift is achieved the economic uplift will be the natural result. Swarnas are not only educationally and socially advanced; they are not economically backward as compared to the SC/ST/OBCs. To treat them at par with the socially and educationally backward sections for reservation

(Contd. on page 2)

My Jumpstart to Buddhism

Navayana Buddhism- by The shared mirror - A beginner's review

The concluding pages of the book states that as much as Babasaheb chose Buddhism, Buddhism also chose Babasaheb. Does that mean that in order to be an Ambedkariite, I had to follow Babasaheb's Buddhism? May be, yes. And the affirmation was clear after going through the first few pages of this book.

It would be wrong to accept that I have not been pursuing Buddhism after getting influenced by the life and writings of Dr Ambedkar. Born as a Sikh at the temporal seat of Sikhism - Sri Anandpur Sahib- the birth place of Khalsa and practicing around the same place, I am witness to the social degeneration and disintegration in the society. It is common nowadays to find multiple and separate gurdwaras as well as cremation grounds for different castes and sub-castes in a single village.

My pursuit for Buddhism took me to places like Dharamshala, Bhutan, Southeast Asia and even Japan but frankly their practices, rituals, liturgy and monastic structure couldn't get me an exit route from my religion of birth. All I found was mythology and reincarnation theories. In another failed attempt, my anesthetist was my accomplice, under whose persuasion I attended a Vipassana session. I confess I couldn't concentrate. How could I? Amidst such social and spiritual turbulence everywhere, I desired only a clear and concise way-out.

At last, I went through The Buddha and his Dhamma and have no qualms in admitting that I could not contemplate or relate to the book and ended up as an atheist a couple of years ago.

This book published by The Shared Mirror publishing house titled Navayana Buddhism- Context, Debates and Theories, by Shaileshkumar S. Darokar, Subodh N.W. and Bodhi S.R. changed my percept about Buddhism as a whole and Navayana in

particular.

The introductory note mentions that the authors had two possible readers in mind. Firstly, the general reader who is inquisitive about Babasaheb's Buddhism and second reader is the follower of Babasaheb, who values his embracing the Buddha-Dhamma and wants an elaborative interpretation of his intellectual thoughts.

This book carries a wider scope of readers than the authors originally had thought of. The content is descriptive enough to coerce a novice like me to understand and embrace Babasaheb's Buddhism. I guess it also carries clarified views for those who are already treading the Navayana path or are mistakenly into other types of Buddhism.

I am going to provide you with excerpts of this book so as to have a better understanding of Dr Ambedkar's Buddhism as interpreted by these three Navayana Buddhist intellectuals. Believe me, there are umpteen numbers of reasons to read it. Here are some of them- Starting from the basics, it describes definition of religion according to Babasaheb and how he considered it important for the society?

Read this book if you want to know the basic parameters to judge a good religion. If your religion is falling short of those parameters, get to know the methods of reforms suggested by Babasaheb.

Navayana widens the scope of religion from what was a conventional thought of religion being personal matter (man to God) to a more comprehensive social sphere. It redefines religion, sets up a new framework to judge and execute reforms.

Detailing reasons that led Babasaheb Ambedkar to embrace Buddhism, the authors clarify that Babasaheb was looking for a Margadata rather than a Mokshadata. His new vehicle religion purged the con-

cept of God from Buddhism and introduced Dhamma and morality in its place. For Babasaheb, what God is to other religions, morality is to Dhamma.

The authors interpret Navayana Buddhism with Tri-ratana of Buddha-Dhamma-Sangha as its framework. They further represent:-
Buddha- liberty, freedom, awakening
Dhamma- law of equality
Sangha- an enlightened fraternity

Dr Ambedkar emphasized on cultivation of mind and this book explains the four basic methods Navayana practitioners employ to attain insight and wisdom. These are worth emulating.

Ambedkars Buddhism does not teach us to follow Buddha sitting with eyes closed and do Vipassana (meditation) but to follow Buddha that teaches us to see the world with open eyes and Samyadrishti (an attitude of equality and stability).

The authors conduct an epistemological enquiry into Buddhist philosophy concluding that Pradnya, Karuna and Samata are its three fundamentals. They consider Buddhism as an epistemological revolution and claim Navayana turned people who were recipient of knowledge into producers of knowledge.

Babasaheb gave back to the whole world the epistemology of Buddha after a thorough cleansing of its historical alteration, ontological manipulation and theoretical distortions, subjecting every historio-theoretical proposition of Buddha to the test of rationality, welfare, justice and the most fundamental test of all- the test of equality.

At last, if one wants a detailed and simplified explanation of the Buddhist way of life proposed by Babasaheb in his last book The Buddha and his Dhamma one can take help of this one.

It provides an expert opinion of Babasaheb's Buddha by those who

have been practicing it from last 65 years and how Buddha's panchsheel and das-sheel along with Babasaheb's 22 vows can lead to holistic development of society. Right from the basic concept of Atta Deepo bhava to difference between Dhamma and religion and revolution enforced by Dhammakranti in 1956, this book is total-package.

Part of this experience of Navayana Buddhism may have been told before, but never with such freshness, elaboration and plain-sailing. An important part I found missing was a comprehensive glossary of difficult words which would have been a great help for a beginner like me. Furthermore, a critical analysis is awaited from experts like Dr Amritpal Kaur whom I consider my mentor in this field.

For people like me, who come from religion where God occupies a central place in the belief system and held the view that the Buddha is a GOD or Supernatural Being, this book gives a clear understanding of what Buddha -Dhamma -Sangha stands for. If this book had come earlier I would have been a practicing Buddhist, perhaps one of the few born as a Sikh.

Indeed, I was living under a set of religious rules and got exposed to principles of Navayana by going through this book published by The Shared Mirror.
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Reservation for Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) upheld by the Supreme Court

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purpose is apparent travesty of the truth. It appears that 103rd amendment has political overtones rather than the Constitutional need. Two of the majority Judges have expressed the need for revisiting the reservation policy as a whole as it cannot go on perpetually. Now this observation is enough for the anti-reservation forces to flare up the issue. No doubt the reservation is not the end but the means to achieve the end of equality, fraternity and justice. The question is as to whether the end purpose of the reservation has been achieved. If not,

what stood in its way and how would it be achieved? This is the question which calls for an answer. The kind of pervading social and educational scenario is the testimony of the fact that much more needs to be done to achieve the purpose of reservation. Is it difficult to imagine the coming events from the shadow of this judgment? The point is as to what should be done by the victims of age old social discrimination and injustice against them? They suffered deprivation, discrimination, tyranny, injustice, servitude and destitution for thousands of years. Is it possible to wipe

out the stigma and criminal injustice of ages in years and months? Is it not a wakeup call for the people of perpetual victim sections and for the men and outfits responsible to work the Constitution to shed off the inertia and catch the bull by its horns in order to achieve the constitutional objectives?

Babasaheb fought relentlessly with back to the wall for nearly four decades to uplift the conditions of the marginalized sections and to provide basic human rights and necessary safeguards for them in the Constitution containing ideals of equality, liberty, fraternity, justice and egalitarian

society. It is the sacred duty of his people to emulate him and follow in letter and spirit what he exhorted. They need to forge unity among their millions of outfits and come on one page in order to catch the bull by its horns to effectively meet the current and impeding challenges. They must water the tree planted by Babasaheb if they want to enjoy its shade and fruits. They must maintain the house built by him at every cost or be prepared to shed tears perpetually over its ruins. Nothing can come and stand in the way if one has the will and determination to achieve the goal.

Happy Guru Nanak Gurburb Day



Guru Nanak Dev Ji: Caste and gender

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

Life and teachings of Shri Guru Nanak Dev Ji brought a gigantic transformation in the way social and religious thinking were articulated in the Brahminical social order. He made the stupendous task of spiritual regeneration and social transformation his lifelong mission. He traveled long [Udasis] in all directions to convey the message of the oneness of the mankind and the Omnipresence of the non-anthropomorphic and formless God.

His social transformation agenda revolves around two main issues: Caste and gender. Guru Nanak minces no words in categorically condemning caste and gender based discriminations. His negation of caste is absolute. He said: FakarJatiphakarnau, Sabhanaji-aikachau [Worthless is caste and worthless an exalted name; for all mankind there is but single refuge]. Another Shabad is: NeechanandarneechJati, Neechihunatineech, Nanak tin ke sang sath, Vadiansiyonkyarees, Jitheneechsanmalian, Tithe naddrteriBakhshish [I am the lowest of the low castes; low, absolutely low; I am with the lowest in companionship, not with the so-called high. Blessing of God is here the lowly are cared for] (Translate. as in Harish K. Puri, "Scheduled Castes in Sikh Community: A Historical Perspective", EPW, Vol. 38 (26), June 28, 2003, p. 2694).

Guru Nanak Dev's concern for the eradication of caste assumes practical shape in his taking up of cultivation of land, often clubbed with low caste professions. He took to cultivation in order to assign dignity to manual labour. In fact, regard for manual labour had always remains the hallmark of the all low caste saint-poets also. In addition, Guru Nanak introduced the institutions of 'Sangat' and 'Pangat' (eating together in Langar). Thus KiratKaro (do labour), VandChhako (eat by sharing), NaamJapo (recite God's name) became the mantra of equality for all.

Giani Gurnam Singh and Giani Ompal Singh will be remembered for their loyal services Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (CA)



Our Gurughar (Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg, California's) Granthies, Giani Gurnam Singh Ji and Giani Ompal Singh Ji, have moved on to start a new chapter of their lives after serving this Gurughar for almost 8 years. They came to Sri Guru Ravidass Temple in Pittsburg (California) in December 2014 for a few months. After seeing their dedication and hard work, committee decided to keep them as Granthies. They performed all the Gurughar services e.g. Kirtan Sewa, Path, weddings, Langar Sewa and so much more. They stayed loyal to Gurdwara Sahib. Number of devotees increased

quite a bit during this period. They loved keeping Gurughar clean and beautiful.

Giani Ompal Singh Ji's wife did the Langar Sewa in the kitchen for several years. She kept herself busy with cooking, cleaning and praying.

They will be missed by the committee and the entire Sangat. Committee members and Sangat were tearful saying farewell to the family.

We wish them all the best in their next endeavor. May Waheguru Ji bless them and fulfill all their desires.

- Ramesh Suman

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Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD



Goodie Takhar, PhD

Communal strife and Hate Speech - a layman's views

The very Preamble of the Indian Constitution opens with the sentence comprising of words like 'Secularism' and 'Fraternity'

And as such there should not be any reason to subscribe to the negative sentiments which lead to communal strife and upset the social fabric of the society. These are the very fundamentals of our polity and society as stipulated in the law which needs to be established and nurtured with political will and constitutional morality. It is more so as we live in a multi-cultural, multi-lingual and multi-religious country; India that is Bharat. We the people of India willingly and consciously adopted this way of liv-



ing in a democratic way since Independence in 1947. The issues like India as a Hindu State, Akhand Bharat and any other such formulations was resolutely negated and rejected by our forefathers in the India's new constitution. Fraternity and Harmony are the two catch words which would guide our 'Tryst with destiny' which we embarked upon on the mid-night speech on August 15, 1947 by the first PM Jawahar Lal Nehru and by the Chief Architect of the Continuation, Dr. B.R. Ambedkar on November 25, 1949 in his last speech in the Constituent Assembly while referring to history that how did we lose our independence earlier in the past he said, "Will history repeat itself? It is this thought which fills me with anxiety. This anxiety is deepened by the realization of the fact that in addition to our old enemies in the form of castes and creeds we are going to have many political parties with diverse and opposing political creeds. Will Indian place the country above their creed or will they place creed above country? I do not know. But this much is certain that if the parties place creed above country, our independence will be put in jeopardy a second time and probably be lost forever. This eventuality we must all resolutely guard against. We must be determined to defend our independence with the last drop of our blood."

India has come a long way in transforming India into Bharat as visualized by our leadership, the Margdarshaks. India's secular credentials do not give any space to 'Majority or Minority' in our polity and society and provide an equal status to all as Indians or Bharatiyas. We are to understand this clearly; sooner the better. My motivation to write my thoughts on the increasing communal strife in the recent years has come from the

Supreme Court's recent observations on 'Hate Speech', a much needed and desirable step to safeguard 'national unity and integrity' of India, if we want to remain on track to take India to its destination – a developed and prosperous country. I don't think anybody in his or her sanity would disagree that, of late, the issues like; Hindu-Muslim divide, Hindu and Sikh fears on Conversion, Treat-



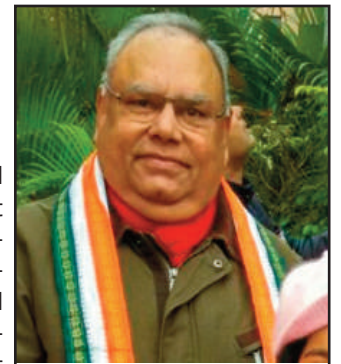
ment of the welfare sections of the society, commonly called dalits, Majority Vs Minority, inter alia, have surfaced and all of us, consciously or otherwise, are made to follow the dictates of both political and religious leaderships having narrow agenda and vested interests. It is a dangerous trend. Let us admit this ground reality before we proceed further.

Supreme Court of India has taken note of "hate speech" which is the fountain head of increasing 'communal strife' in the country, much against the spirit of our constitution and the secular edifice of our polity. "Where we have reached in the name of religion and what we have reduced religion to is tragic," an anguished Supreme Court observed on October 20 and further added, "This is the 21st century! Article 51A of the constitution says we should develop a scientific temper" Holding that the Constitution envisaged a secular nation, the court directed the states to promptly register criminal cases against the offenders without waiting for a complaint to be filed. The apex court warned that any delay on the part of the administration in taking action on this "very serious issue" would invite the contempt of the court – Der Ayet Daroost Ayet. While the direction of the highest court of the land must be respected and appreciated, it would have been better if the courts decide to take suo-motu cognizance of 'hate speech' and di-

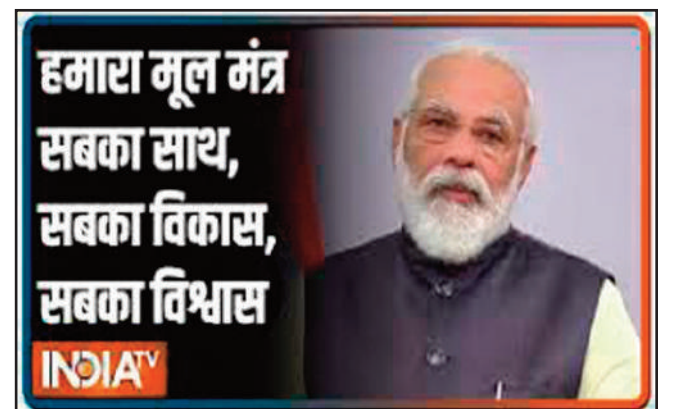
rect the concerned law and order authorities to register FIRs against the offenders. It would serve as a much needed deterrent to stop this invisible enemy of the Communal Harmony in the country. The court has also rightly observed, "There cannot be fraternity unless members of community drawn from different religions or castes of the country are able to live in harmony." Not long ago, Supreme Court also

motivated masses. It is a dangerous situation and a big challenge not only to the democratic polity but also to a civilized society.

What is way out? These issues of hate speech, religious fanaticism, majority-minority syndrome, pseudo nationalism, real or perceived fears of conversion etc. need to be



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advised electronic media and anchors and the government to stop supporting and encouraging hate speech and said, it was the duty of an anchor "to

see that hate speech doesn't continue the moment someone starts." While commenting on how anchors fan hate speech, the Court said, "They are not being dealt with firmly. They can be taken off air, fined; if such sanction comes... Any anchor will have their own views and won't be divorced from the channel's business lines. What is wrong is people invited not being allowed to express their own view, being muted or run down. Their right is lesser than that of the listener." Courts cannot do much, if the government of the day tends to encourage the so called free and fair media, popularly called, these days as 'Godi Media'. This trend is the very negation of democratic polity and just society, the forebearers of communal harmony and fraternity.

Not that one segment of the society or any particular group of the majority or minority communities is responsible for the deteriorating communal harmony and fraternity; clapping could be done by both the hands. Of late, it has been observed that social fabric of the society is getting tattered by frivolous considerations unleashed either by design by the vested interests or otherwise by ignorance as societal camp following by the uneducated and religiously

addressed on priority and with sincerity. No religion could be above the security and integrity of the country, over all well being and progress of the society, rule of law and constitutional morality. How this could be done? It is big question and my off the cuff and humble suggestions are:-

Majority-Minority issue should be dealt with sensitivity and mutual respect both by the government and the civil society respecting the secular credentials of constitutional arrangements and also the emotional aspects of the majority community; the main stream of the society. India that is Bharat is not a 'Hindu State' but from centuries together, it is called 'Hindustan'. This fact cannot be ignored to respect and accommodate the sensitivities of 'Hindutava' elements. Similarly, the Muslim minority, as big as more than 200 million, made India as their home by choice in the wake of partition in 1947 on the premise of 'two nation' principle. They carry the ancestry and legacy of their forefathers who happened to be the rulers, good or bad is not the issue, not only as Muslims but Hindustanis too. The Hindu majority should stop taunting them of their religious lineage. What is their fault or crime in taking birth in a Muslim family? The Mughals came and assimilated with the main stream of the society and made Hindustan their home. They remained with the society in thick and thin and fought for the freedom of India standing and marching with Hindu brethren against the colonial forces like Portuguese, French and British. Much more could be written on this aspect but I stop here.

Muslim minority, in the larger interest of the society and going by the spirit of th

(Contd. on next page)

Communal strife and Hate Speech - a layman's views

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constitutional set up and spirit, should stop harping and insisting on some of small irritants like Hijab, Madrassa, Ajaan, Muslim personal law etc. to integrate with the main stream of the society with open mind and magnanimity. I say so not to harm the identity of the Muslim community but to underline the fact these attributes or traditions are not prevalent or practiced in the 'Muslim World' universally. There is no harm in going by the 'Common Civil Code' in a democratic set up.

Conversion is a 'non-issue', to my mind. It is a bogie. Generally, one remains what one was born. Only a microscopic fringe changes or converts due to various reasons; social, economic, political, and religious or let us says by coercive way. Why the majority Hindus with as large and mind boggling size, more than 110 crores, should fear or worry? There is no point in making this an issue. Of late, it is surprising to note that even Sikhs are threatened by Christians, Hindus and Sikhs are threatened by Buddhists. Conversion has many aspects and one of major one, to my mind is caste and

bias against the socially oppressed and depressed sections of the society. Instead of opposing conversion, it is desirable to address the social ills of society like caste system and graded inequality prevailing in the society. Conversion is a difficult decision and generally no one easily succumbs to go ahead. Let us introspect ourselves before raising this boggie.

Demographic imbalance is yet another non-issue. Of course, increasing population is a matter of concern which may be addressed in the national population policy, as deemed appropriate. But the flagging the so called imbalance and blaming the Muslim minority for this is not correct. By such non-issues, minority community gets threatened and defensive and tends to generate avoidable friction and strife. The fact of the matter is that undue population increase is an offshoot of 'poverty and illiteracy' as a vicious cycle. Muslim minority and dalits are on the receiving end. With their socio-economic empowerment, demographic imbalance would automatically disappear.

More such points may be listed to stem the rot in the communal har-

mony. PM Narendra Modi addressing a meeting in Gujarat to commemorate Sardar Patel said that 'For India, its unity has never been a compulsion, but has been its uniqueness.' He added, has "This unity of our country has been an eyesore for our enemies. Not just today, but for thousands of years and even during the period of our slavery, all foreign attackers did whatever they wanted to do to break this unity," He underlined and said, "Those forces are still prevalent, they want to make the people of the country fight in the name of caste, region and language, he said, adding that history is also presented in such a way that people cannot stand with each other." Rightly so; we the people of India should be cautious and mindful of divisive forces in the name of 'caste, religion and language' as alerted by PM Modi. There is a rider, if I venture to say candidly, to the approach and thinking of the majority community and the currently ruling party in this regard. We should stop digging history which could not be changed and wiped out. We are to live with it and strive to make India strong and prosperous in the coming years perusing the lofty ideals of "Sab

Ka Sath-Sab Ka Vikas-Sab Ka Vishvas", the professed mission of PM Narendra Modi. I conclude this with a poetic assertion of Allma Iqbal:-
Hawaida Aaj Apne Zakhm-e-Pinhan Kar Ke Chorun Ga
Lahoo Ro Ro Ke Mehfil Ko Gulistan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

I will surely exhibit all my hidden wounds today
I will surely change assembly to a garden with blood-mixed tears
Jalana Hai Mujhe Har Shama-e-Dil Ko Souz-e-Pinhan Se
Teri Tareek Raaton Mein Charaghan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

I have to light every heart's candle with hidden pathos
I will surely create bright illumination in your darkness
Parona Aik Hi Tasbeeh Mein In Bikhare Danon Ko
Jo Mushkil Hai, To Iss Mushkil Ki Asan Kar Ke Chorun Ga

If stringing these scattered pearls in a single rosary
Is difficult, I will surely make this difficult task easy



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HOW TO PROTECT CHILDREN FROM NATURAL DISASTERS?

On 25 October 2022, UNICEF released a report titled "The Coldest Year of the Rest of Their Lives: Protecting Children from Escalating Impacts of Heatwaves". According to this report, due to an increase in the average temperature of the earth, every child in the world would be affected by heatwaves every year by 2050. In 2020, 559 million children were affected by four to five heatwaves a year. By 2050, the number of these children could increase fourfold to 2 billion, even if the temperature rise is only 1.7 degree Celsius. This report provides estimates and analysis on the number and percentage of children expected to be exposed in 2020 and by 2050 to four measures of heat: high heatwave frequency, duration and severity and extreme high temperatures. It examines two scenarios of average increase of temperature for 2050 – a low greenhouse gas emission scenario with an estimated 1.7 degree Celsius increase of average temperature of earth by 2050 and a very high greenhouse gas emission scenario with an estimated 2.4 degree Celsius increase of average temperature of earth by 2050.

According to the report, in 2020, 10 per cent of Africa's children were exposed to frequent heatwaves under the influence of high temperature scenario, but in 2050, this number will increase to 100 per cent under both temperature increase scenarios. As many as 402 million children in Asia, (1 out of 3 children), were affected by four to five-day heatwaves in 2020. In 2050, the number of these children may increase to 816 million (2 out of 5 children) under the influence of the low temperature increase scenario. In 2020, heatwaves were having a greater impact on children in 23 countries. In 2050, with an increase in temperature of 1.7 degree Celsius children of 33 countries and with an increase of 2.4 degree Celsius children of 36 countries will come under the influence of heatwaves. In 2050, children in Africa, Asia and Europe may be more affected than other places affected by high temperature increases. Only a small proportion of children 5 per cent (13 million) were affected by high heatwaves severity in the Americas in 2020, but in 2050, the number could be 62 million. According to this UNICEF report, by 2020, 58 per cent of the children were not yet affected by any kind of heatwaves.

Due to the increase in the average temperature of the earth, heat records have been broken in many countries of the world in 2022. The past seven years have been the warmest years on record. In March of 2022, an increase of 30 and 40 degree Celsius has been recorded in the average temperature in the Arctic and Antarctica respectively. The 122 years old record of increase in average temperature in India in March has been broken. In 2022, the temperature in Pakistan reached 48 degree Celsius while temperature reached 40

degree Celsius in many parts of Europe. In many countries of the world, summer arrived prematurely causing spring to fade away. With the early arrival of summer, heatwaves also came earlier for a longer duration. The intensity of the heatwaves was so high that drought conditions arose in many countries of the world. China, the United States of America and many countries of Europe and Africa came under the grip of drought. Europe is facing the worst drought in the last 500 years while the western region of the United States of America is experiencing the worst drought of 1200 years in the last two decades. African countries like Somalia, Kenya, and Ethiopia have been in the grip of severe drought for the last four consecutive



years. This year, due to the record-breaking heat, the rivers of China and many European countries almost dried up. In 2022, natural disasters like record-breaking temperature, heatwaves, droughts, wildfires, and floods have wreaked havoc in various countries. The main reason for the occurrence of so many natural disasters is the increase in the average temperature of the earth. Compared to the Pre-Industrial Revolution period, the average temperature of the earth has increased by 1.1 degree Celsius.

Now let us think that if the increase of 1.1 degree Celsius caused so much destruction by natural disasters, what will happen with further increase in temperature. All these types of natural disasters affect the health of children more than adults. Children's bodies, unlike adults, are not able to adapt to the increase in temperature. The more children are exposed to heatwaves, the more health-related problems they have.

Children's lives are at risk due to climate change. As much as 88 per cent of the burden of natural disasters falls on children under 5 years of age. Heat-related mortality is four times higher among children under 1 year of age than in persons aged 1-44 years, because children's immune systems and organs are developing when they are young, but older peo-

ple's immune systems and organs are fully developed, so they can better balance their bodies during natural disasters than children. Children spend more time outside of their homes than adults, while playing or at school.

An increase in the average temperature of the earth increases all kinds of natural disasters. Children are very sensitive to natural disasters like wildfires, floods, severe storms destroying children's homes, schools etc., they get traumatized and mentally stressed, due to which both their health and education are affected. Due to mental stress, they have a higher likelihood of falling under the grip of heart disease, brain stroke, high blood pressure etc. Children in areas affected by hurricane Sandy in

allergic to pollen and airborne pollutants. Sulfur dioxide and ozone gas cause respiratory diseases among children. Ozone gas is known to cause asthma. According to a study by the American Lung Association, 2 million children with asthma live in areas of the United States of America where ozone concentrations exceed safe limits.

Children who are aware of their basic rights should be heard. In 2018, Greta Thunberg, a school girl in Sweden, launched a campaign called 'Fridays for Future' to protect children from environmental pollution and to make leaders around the world aware. She said that the leaders of the present generation have no right to spoil our future. Such informed children's views should be heard and included in planning to make children's future healthy and safe.

The increase in the average temperature of the earth is a serious threat to children's present and future. Because of this, the basic rights of children are also in danger. In order to save children from this dangerous trend born on earth, the government of every country needs to take efforts at the national level along with the governments of all countries together at the international level as soon as possible. Internationally, countries should provide comprehensive information about efforts to educate children about natural disasters due to climate change in schools. In areas prone to natural disasters, provision should be made to provide shelters at safe locations such as public cooling centres in areas prone to heatwaves. Arrangements and institutions should be established to provide psychiatrists for children suffering from fear of natural calamities. Children are the future of any country. Therefore, the government of every country should be committed to take special care of children's needs and health.

The sixth report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) clearly suggested that at the international level, all countries must take immediate and decisive measures to reduce the emission of greenhouse gases.

As per the recommendations of the sixth report IPCC roads should be environment and pedestrian friendly, plant-based food-stuffs should be prioritized over animal-based food-stuffs and greenhouse gas emissions should be reduced by increasing the area under forests. Seeing the bleak future of children, which is highlighted by the Unicef report, perhaps at the Conference of Parties-27 in November, the world's major leaders will collectively resolve to take concrete steps to give the world a healthy and intelligent generation for the time to come.



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The Ad Dharm Movement and Dr. Ambedkar

When in 1915 Dr. B. R. Ambedkar was giving final touches to his Ph.D. thesis at Columbia University in New York, a Punjabi youth, who

had gone to America a few years earlier, was involved in a dangerous mission of smuggling guns from California to the Punjab for inciting mutiny in India. This Punjabi youth later became famous as Babu Mangu Ram, the founder of the Ad Dharm Movement. Mangu Ram was born in a small village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur, Punjab on 14 January, 1886 in an untouchable family; his father was a leather merchant. As by then the doors of education had been opened to all by the British rulers, Mangu Ram was sent to the school in the nearby village, Mahilpur, but the treatment meted out to him by the Hindu teacher was far from human. Like Bhim Rao in Satara, Mangu Ram too was made to sit outside the classroom. Not only that, even the teacher would not teach him directly; he was invariably given lesson through a Muslim student. Somehow, Mangu Ram passed his middle examination and joined high school at Bajwara, a nearby town. Here too. He was subjected to the same humiliation, and was made to sit outside the classroom. One day, it rained so heavily that in spite of taking shelter under a tree, Mangu Ram was completely drenched. And when the snow-balls, accompanied by high velocity winds, fell like missiles on him, he was unable to bear it any longer. So, he ran to take shelter inside the classroom. As soon as he had entered the room, the teacher saw him, and instead of showing any sympathy, he started beating him with a stick for having come inside. Weeping and crying, Mangoo Ram went out, and somehow reached his home.

Unmindful of the insult and beating, Mangu Ram again went to the school next day. As soon as he reached there, he was surprised to see the teacher in the process of purifying the classroom by sprinkling water on the wooden table, chair and the tats on which the students used to sit. On seeing him, Brahmin teacher cried out, "Oh Chandal, you have come again". Fearing another beating, Mangoo Ram hastened back, never to go again to the school. And that was the end of his education.

With his education coming to an abrupt end, Mangu Ram became unemployed, and bit frustrated too. In 1909, he, along with some other young men from the village, went to California, U.S.A. in order to earn some money by working in the Peach Orchards of Fresno and elsewhere in the San Joaquin valley of central California. Instead of earning money, he, however, became involved in the activities of the Ghadar Party, an international network of militant Punjabi

nationalists led by Lala Hardayal. By his sheer devotion and sincerity to the cause of India's freedom, he came to be regarded as the most dependable and reliable member of the organization. In 1915, Mangu Ram volunteered to be one of the five Ghadarites accompanying a shipload of guns and propaganda material headed for India. This ship was unfortunately intercepted by the British as Batavia, and was sealed. It remained sealed for nearly a year, with the five Ghadarites as prisoners inside. In the meanwhile, they were prosecuted in absentia, and sentenced to death for taking out the weapons illegally on the ship. On hearing the capital punishment, some patriot Indians in Germany decided to help the imprisoned Ghadarites. Somehow, they managed to smuggle the prisoners out from the sealed ship, and sent them in different directions. Mangu Ram was put in a ship going to Manila. By mistake,



however, the ship reached Singapore. Unfortunately for Mangu Ram, here he was recognized by some traitor Indians who had earlier worked for the Ghadar Party. They informed the Police. By now, for running away from Batavia, death warrants had been issued by the British Government to be executed wherever any one of them was found. Accordingly, the Singapore Police began preparing for his execution. Then a miracle happened. Just half an hour before his execution, a gentleman named Barde, whom Mangu Ram had never seen or met, came, caught him by the arm, took him out of the Thana, and putting him on the same ship in which Mangu Ram had come, he asked the Captain of the ship to sail for Manila. By the time the Police swung into action, the ship had crossed the Singapore Port Limits. Having failed to intercept the ship, the police caught hold of some drunkard; executed him to cover up their lapse, and announced that Mangu Ram had been executed. This news was later published in the Indian Newspapers.

For the next 7-8 years, Mangu Ram hid in the Philippines, and during this period he had no contact with his family as no letters could be written

for fear of being intercepted. Taking him, therefore, as dead, his wife married Mangu Ram's elder brother, who was a widower. The validity of the death warrant issued by the British Government lapsed in 1924. Then Mangu Ram thought of returning to India. Accordingly, he came back to Punjab in 1925. Soon thereafter, Mangoo Ram became involved in another kind of freedom struggle, the liberation of the untouchables, the people among whom he was born, and the people who were meekly suffering the atrocities of the Hindus. Babu Mangu Ram's association with the Ghadar Party had broadened his outlook, and sharpened his skills as an organizer. Soon he found a band of like-minded young men involved in the social work, and began organizing them in order to liberate the downtrodden from the clutches of the Hindu social slavery.

Encouraged by the response to his



ideas, Babu Mangu Ram convened a Conference at his village Mugowal in district Hoshiarpur on 11-12 June, 1926. Addressing the largely attended Conference, Babu Mangu Ram proclaimed that the Untouchables constituted a separate Qaum, a religious community like the Muslims, Sikhs and Hindus, and those they were the original inhabitants of this country. Hence, the movement was named as Ad Dharm; and its leaders devised distinctive costume, bright red turbans and shashes; coined a new sacred mantra or symbol, "So-hang" and exhorted the people to call themselves as Ad Dharmis.

The primary object of the Ad Dharm was to give the untouchables an alternative religion. Its another object was to reform the society from within. As social movement, the Ad Dharm exhorted the people to abstain from immoral practices; to lead a life of purity and piety; to discard the use of alcohol, drugs, give education to boys and girls, and to treat all men and women equal in the society. On the whole, the movement was aimed at giving the untouchables a sense of pride and dignity as members of the Ad Dharm.

The headquarters of Ad

Dharm Mandal were established in Jalandhar city from where the movement was organized in a systematic manner, and the devoted missionaries spread the message far and wide in the Punjab, and even beyond. Since the Mandal had accepted Sahib Shri Guru Ravidass Ji as its spiritual leader, the movement became primarily popular amongst the Chamars, and they readily adopted the nomenclature of Ad Dharmi.

At the time, Babu Mangu Ram was organizing the untouchables of the Punjab under the banner of Ad Dharm; Dr. Ambedkar was fighting a similar battle in another part of the country. Though they were thousands of miles apart, yet their ideas and methods of struggle were almost identical. Both believed that the present day Scheduled Castes are not Hindus, and that their salvation lies only in being independent of the Hindu religion. Both believed in self-help and advocated peaceful means to achieve their goal. Both laid the greatest emphasis on 'education'. Babasaheb considered "education" the key to all progress, and Mangu Ram says that only "education can lead us to Sachkhand (the realm of truth)." Again, Babasaheb exhorted the people to follow the Three Commandments of 'Education, Agitation and Organization' to gain power. According to Mangu Ram, the poor have three kinds of power: "Qaumiat (collective solidarity), Mazhab (spirituality) and Majlis (organization)".

Within a year of its founding, the Ad Dharm movement created quite a stir in the Punjab by constant rallies and conferences, if forced the Government of the day to take notice of the problems of the untouchables. One of the reasons of the poverty and exploitation of the untouchables was the pernicious system of beggar, the system under which they were forced to live at the beck and call of others and were obliged to do a great deal of work without any remuneration whatsoever. The Ad Dharm Mandal agitated against the system of beggar, and demanded its abolition. The Mandal also agitated for repealing the Punjab Land Alienation Act which prohibited the untouchables from buying even a small piece of land. The Ad Dharm movement reached its peak at the time of 1931 Census. As a result of their sustained propaganda, more than half a million untouchables declared themselves as Ad Dharmis. This showed the organizational skill of its leaders. "The massive support", as says Mark Jueregensmeyer, "created political capital, and Mangu Ram used that capital in political ways. Ad Dharmi candidates stood for public offices and an alliance was created with the Unionist Party. In both instances, scheduled caste leaders supported by the Ad Dharm organization achieved public positions".

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



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November
11-12-13, 2022
Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's
"Parkash Utsav"



Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Parkash Utsav will be celebrated at Gurughar on **November 13, 2022**. Akhand path will start on Friday 11/11/22, at 10:00 AM and will conclude with Bhog ceremony on Sunday morning 11/13/2022. Late Pt. Kewal Krishan Sudhir and Nirmal Devi Sudhir's son Varinder Kumar Sudhir with his wife Renu Bala Sudhir, sons Puneet Sudhir and Ankush Sudhir, will host the Akhand Path and Langar Sewa.

Famous jatha of Bhai Vijay Singh ji and Gurughar jatha of Bhai Balwinder Singh ji will delight Sangat with Shabad Kirtan.

Hoisting of **NISHAN SAHIB** (Nishan Sahib Sewa) Nishan Sahib Hoisting Ceremony will be held on November 12 (Saturday) at 11:00 AM. Bhai Hardial Singh Banga and Bibi Kulwant Banga will be doing the Nishan Sahib Chola Sewa. The entire Sangat and the Managing Committee is thankful to Banga family for their Sewa of getting new hydraulic Nishan Sahib installed.

Ist Parbhat Pheri will be at 6:00 AM on Saturday, November 12, 2022.

Sangat is requested to come and get Guru Sahib's blessings.

May Waheguru bless the dedicated Sudhir Family and Banga Family in Chardi Kala.

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