



Ambedkar Times

Weekly

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VOL- 13

ISSUE- 34

November 3, 2021

California (USA)

www.ambedkartimes.com

www.deshdoaba.com

THUS THE REAL SEQUENCE OF THE SLOGAN IS: EDUCATE, AGITATE AND ORGANIZE

Prem K. Chumber

Editor-In-Chief: Ambedkar Times / Desh Doaba

Educate, Organize and Agitate is the most misquoted slogan of Baba Sahib Dr. Ambedkar. Its true version is: Educate Agitate and Organize. Baba Sahib uttered these precious words at the end of his historic speech delivered at the All-India Depressed Classes Conference (July 18-19, 1942 at Nagpur), convened to create an All-India organization with distinct aims and purposes in co-operation with all the inter-provincial forces. It was at this very conference that a declaration was made about the formation of the All-India Scheduled Castes Federation. Below are given the exact words of the concluding part of this historic speech of Baba Sahib, as cited in his 'fascinating biography' authored by Dhananjay Keer:

"My final words of advice to you are educate, agitate and organize; have faith in yourself. With justice on our side, I do not see how we can lose our battle. The battle to me is a matter of joy. The battle is in the fullest sense spiritual. There is nothing material or social in it. For ours is a battle, not for wealth or for power. It is a battle for freedom. It is a battle for the reclamation of human personality" (Bombay: Popular Prakashan, 3rd ed. 1971, p: 351, emphasis added).

Baba Sahib' struggle for the uplift of the socially excluded was precisely spiritual in the sense that it intends to restore their lost dignity and make them equal with all the other sections of the rest of the society. For that the method he chooses was democratic-constitutional. Being educated in the oldest democracies in the world, Dr. Ambedkar imbibed the true spirit of democracy and constitutionalism. He wanted his fellow-beings and his countrymen to follow democratic ways for the peaceful resolution of all one problems including the most fatal one – the Untouchability.

In his democratic scheme of conflict resolution, education figures at the very beginning of the social struggle. Hence "educate" comes first in his three stepped slogan of educate, agitate and organize. By education Baba Sahib did not mean merely certificates and degrees. For him to educate means to become aware of ones real life conditions; to be conscious of ones surroundings; to raise objection to the inhuman existence in the society; and to ask for change for the better. "Tell the slaves he is a slave and he will revolt", that is the real meaning of education.

It is such education that will stir agitation within, leading to what Baba Sahib called "agitate". To "agitate" does not mean to organize guerrilla warfare, to do Murdabad – Murdabab. On the contrary, it means to become aware about ones social conditions and to seek viable steps for the eradications of the causes of the problems. Baba Sahib told us that only real and true education could only make us to "agitate".

And it is this agitation, which is within, that would ultimately help us to "organize". The true example of which is Baba Sahib himself, who after obtaining critical and rational sense through his education felt toofan within and consequently organized three political parties (Independent Labor Party, Scheduled Caste Federation and Republican Party of India) to secure Dalit human rights.

**Thus the real sequence of the slogan is:
Educate Agitate and Organize.**

Farmers and Agricultural Labourers' Suicides- Time for governments and society to wake up

Figures on suicides released by the National Crime Records Bureau on October 28, 2021 show that 10,677 people related to agricultural sector committed suicide in the country during 2020. Among those who committed suicide were 5,579 farmers and 5,098 agricultural labourers. During 2019, 5957 farmers committed suicide, which is 5579 during 2020. These figures show a 6.35 per cent reduction in farmer suicides between 2019 and 2020. During 2019, 4324 agricultural labourers committed suicide, which is 5098 during 2020. These figures show a 17.9 per cent increase in agricultural labourers' suicides between 2019 and 2020. Out of the suicides committed by farmers during 2020, 5335 were committed by men and 244 by women. Women account for 4.57 per cent of farmer suicides. Out of the total number of suicides committed by agricultural labourers during 2020, 4621 were committed by men and 477 by women. Women account for 10.32 per cent of agricultural labourers' suicides.

The statistics being released from time to time by the National Crime Records Bureau on the number of suicides committed by farmers and

The country was facing a severe shortage of foodgrains before the First Five Year Plan (1951-56) since World War II. The first five-year plan gave priority to the agricultural sector, which helped overcome the problem. But as a result of prioritizing the development of the industrial sector during the Second Five Year Plan (1956-61), the country again faced a shortage of foodgrains. Drought in the country between 1964-66 exacerbated the food shortage. To overcome this problem, the Union government had imported food grains from the United States of America under P.L. 480 for which the country had to pay a high price.

To overcome the severe shortage of foodgrains, the Union government has decided to adopt



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'New Agricultural Technology' in the country which is a package of high yielding seeds, assured irrigation, chemical fertilizers, insecticides, pesticides, fungicides, herbicides, and other chemicals, machinery, and modern agricultural practices. This technology was adopted on priority in the state of Punjab on the basis of its courageous farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans and rich natural resources and later in other parts of the country in view of its success. The hard work of



agricultural labourers in the country have been criticized by various scholars and institutions. The bureau relies on the information provided by the State and Union Territory governments for compiling and releasing statistics on farmers and agricultural labourers' suicides. The most frequent criticism of these governments is that they reduce the number of suicides committed by farmers and agricultural labourers to protect their image and send information to the National Crime Records Bureau. The bureau releases statistics on suicides by farmers and agricultural labourers on the basis of information provided by these governments, but does not mention the reasons for the suicides. Apart from farmers and agricultural labourers, rural artisans also contribute in the agricultural sector and the information regarding the number of suicides committed by them is not collected. In addition to the suicides reported by families of farmers and agricultural labourers, there are also suicides that they have committed after disappearing from their homes as a result of losing all hopes for their lives and their bodies being cremated as unclaimed bodies.

the country's courageous farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans, and the overuse of natural resources, overcame the serious problem of severe food shortage, but the government's agricultural policies, weakened social relations due to the commercial spirit of the 'New Agricultural Technology' package, the 'new economic policies' of liberalization, privatization, and globalization in the country since 1991 and some other factors have deteriorated the socio-economic conditions of farmers, agricultural labourers and rural artisans drastically.

During 1951, 82 per cent of the country's population depended on agriculture for their livelihood, which was given a share of 55 per cent of the national income. At present, about 50 per cent of the country's population is dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, but in 2018-19, this half of the population was given a share of 16 per cent in the national income. In the distribution of national income, the biggest hit among the agriculturally dependent classes is on the marginal, and small farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural

(Contd. on next page)

Farmers and Agricultural Labourers' Suicides- Time for governments and society to wake up

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artisans.

Released statistics and research studies on suicides of farmers and agricultural labourers have revealed the fact that marginal, and small farmer suicides are a major component among farmers and the number of agricultural labourers' suicides is on the rise. Poverty and debt, as well as a deterioration in social re-

lations are the main reasons for the suicides of these two categories in the agricultural sector.

Marginal, and small farmers constitute 88 per cent of the total farmers out of which 77 per cent are marginal farmers (who own less than 2.5 acres of land) and 17 per cent are small farm-

ers, handing over the pricing of inputs used in agricultural production to the unregulated market, the lack of employment opportunities in the

Technology'. Farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans were sharing the agricultural production even if it was not fair. In times of crisis, big farmers helped the marginal, and small farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans financially and otherwise. The commercial spirit of the 'New Agricultural Technology' has weakened the social relations amongst the various sections of the agricultural sector.

The contribution of the agricultural sector to the survival of human beings should not be overlooked. So, the present time is giving a wake up call to governments, society, and farmers, and agricultural labourers themselves.

This can only be possible if governments formulate and implement their agricultural policies in favour of the sections dependent on the sector. The relatively affluent sections of the society have to stand up for them in view of their contribution. The three sections dependent on the agricultural sector have to come forward to adopt the cooperative farming system. The unions of farmers and agricultural labourers must educate their members that committing suicides is no solution at all to their problems. The peaceful and democratic struggles by these sections of the farming community would be helpful in raising and solving their problems. In order to solve the problems of the farming community, the government must adopt a pro-people and nature-friendly economic growth model.



ers (who own 2.5 and less than 5 acres of land). These farmers have very little surplus produce to sell in the market. Non-profitability of MSP for agricultural commodities, non-purchase of all agricultural commodities even at MSP, financial problems, reduction in working

non-agricultural sector, and the like are responsible for the poor plight of marginal, and small farmers.

While the use of herbicides and machinery in the package of 'New Agricultural Technology' has hit employment in the agricultural sector hard, the biggest hit has been on agricultural labourers, and rural artisans because they have no other means of production except selling their own labour. The growing number of suicides by the country's agricultural labourers, especially women, is a risky endeavor as employment in the agricultural sector is declining rapidly for them, but there are no employment prospects in the non-agricultural sectors. Social relations amongst farmers, agricultural labourers, and rural artisans were warm before the adoption of the 'New Agricultural

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Currently Resident of:

945 Billie Jean St,
Apt 208 Bldg E East
Santa Rosa, CA-95407, U.S.A.

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In the line of duty – Paying back to the society

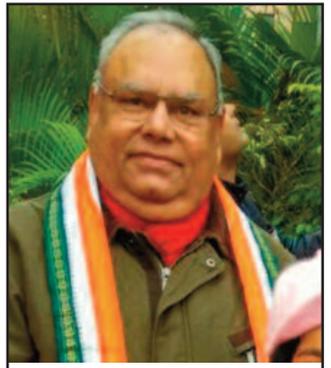
I am a retired diplomat, back to my roots in Jalandhar after a long 40 years of service. The purpose of my coming back to Jalandhar was to engage myself with the community and the society at large with a sense of 'paying back' to the society in a humble way. I engaged myself in educational and socio-cultural consultative pursuits in helping the common man in their day to day difficulties or work with government and non-government agencies particularly pertaining to the Ministry of External Affairs and Indian Diplomatic Missions abroad. I have a feeling of satisfaction that I could do my humble bit in this regard over the

'distinct identity' for dalits as 'Ad-dharmis' (Moolniwasis) and also supported Babasaheb Ambedkar in his crusade in the Round Table Conferences for gaining due space in the political and socio-economic structures for the depressed and deprived people of India. Babu Manguram Mugowalia fully deserved greater recognition which did not happen. Let us hope the present dispensation in Punjab with well-meaning Ministers like Sardar Pargat Singh under the leadership of CM Sardar Charanjit Channi would listen to the public sentiments in this regard. Similarly, in the case of Gurdas Ram Alam, a people's poet of the region certainly

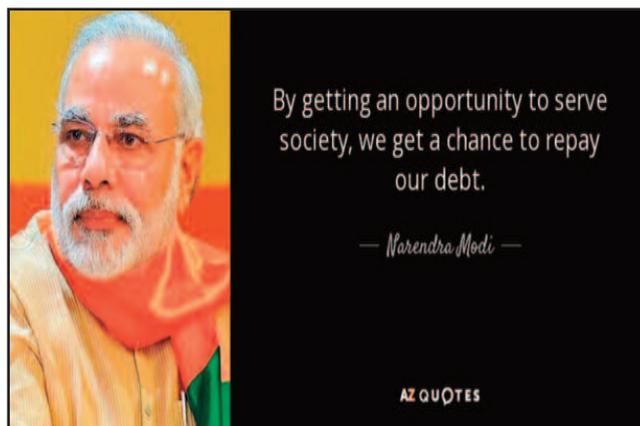
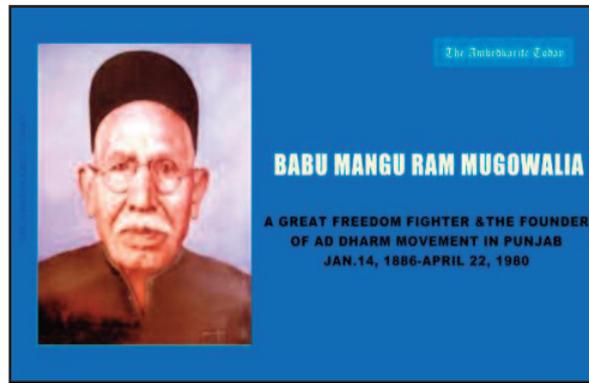
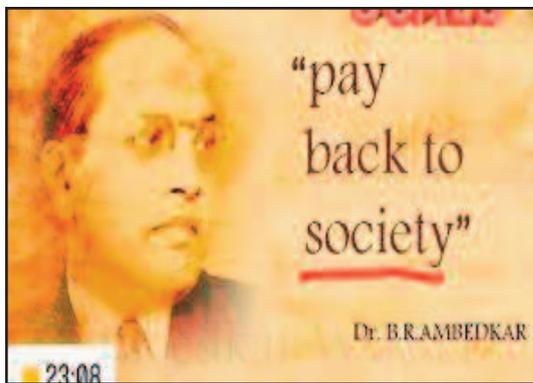
the last decade or so, I have come across two media organs – The Desh Doaba, a Punjabi Weekly and The Ambedkar Times, an English Weekly being published from California in the USA. The Editor-in-Chief of these mouth-pieces of the weaker sections of the society conforming to the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar, Babu Manguram Mugowalia, Manyawar Kanshi Ram among others and also the flag bearer of the lofty ideals of Guru Ravidass and the great Sikh Gurus, Prem Chumber is the scion of the famous Chumber family of Jalandhar. His elder brother, Late C.L. Chumber, a community activist was an associate of Manayawar Kan-

and socio-cultural issues pertaining to dalit communities of Punjab. I take this opportunity to request and urge Prof. Ronki Ramji and

some of my friends who always tend to speak candidly on matters of concern and interest to the community



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years. I must thank my junior and senior colleagues in the IFS fraternity and my friends otherwise who always extended a helping hand and listened to my, off and on, requests and submissions. I am confident that we would continue, in the line of duty, to mutual satisfaction in the days to come. INSHALLA. In this process, I would like to mention two of my latest initiatives which I have taken to pay my debt of gratitude to the persons who did a lot for the community towards empowerment of the weaker sections of the society:

1. Recognition and honour to Babu Manguram Mugowalia and Gurdas Ram Alam – I wrote to Hon'ble Minister of Education of Punjab, Sardar Pargat Singh to honour the two important icons of dalit communities, both greatest sons of Punjab, by naming school/college in their respective native places in Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar. My letter dated October 18 is appended below for information and perusal. Babu Manguram Mugowalia, a Ghadrite Baba and founder of the Ad-dharam Movement was a leader by his own right. He stood and fought against social discrimination against dalits and sought

very much deserved greater recognition as a worthy son of the soil. Alam Sahib's poetry revolves around life of a common man living in penury and social neglect. The beauty of his poetry lied in the fact, to my mind, that Alam Sahib said and explained high flown political dictums of the likes of Karl Marx in such a simple way which people could understand - "Asin Vit To Baddu Deende Han; Sannu Lod Mutavik Milda Nahin" – it is the Punjabi version of Karl Marx's famous dictum - "To each according to his need; From each according to his capacity". Let us honour and recognize Alam Sahib and give his due before it is too late.

2. Due and much needed support to Dalit Media – There is a saying in Punjabi – "Ganji Ne Naona Ki Te Nichodna Ki" (A bald person not to worry about washing his or her head as there is nothing or no hairs to dry). There is hardly any dalit media as such and dalits are conspicuously absent from the mainstream national media in India. The dalit voices, as usual, go unheard which is a negation of democracy which we boast of rightly or wrongly. Over

shi Ram who launched and run "Qoumi Uddarian" in 1980s in Jalandhar. It is a matter of satisfaction that both the Desh Doaba and the Ambedkar Times, in the face of all odds, could stand up and got accepted by the Indian Diasporas in the Americas and beyond and also in India as secular and free & fair ragtags without any governmental or administrative support. With a view to support these dalit media mouth-pieces, I wrote a letter to Hon'ble CM of Punjab, Sardar Charanjit Singh Channi for listing these publications for the Punjab Government advertisements not as a special favour but along with others as and when any occasion arises. Unfortunately, till now no government thought of doing this which may be seen as discriminatory. Let us hope someone listens to these submissions with an open mind. My letter dated October 18, 2021 to Hon'ble CM Charanjit Channi may be seen at Appendix -2. My immediate motivation to write and take these initiatives was informal and friendly suggestions made by one of my close friend, Prof. Ronki Ram of Punjab University, a renowned commentator on political

to kindly endorse and support these submissions to honour two of our contemporary icons, Babu Manguram Mugowalia and Gurdas Ram Alam.

3. April 14, birth anniversary of Babasaheb Ambedkar as International Day of Equality – I have been writing about the proposed International Day of Equality repeatedly in my blogs. This initiative is still to see light of the day. PM Narendra Modi's government is blissfully silent on the issue. The SC Members of Parliament and Ministers are behaving as if they did not hear of Ambedkar though in the run up to grabbing important positions they always claimed that they were the flag-holder of Ambedkar and his legacy. It is a matter of regret. I have no doubt in my mind that Ambedkar himself is such a potent force that the proposal on International Day of Equality will surge on its own sooner than later. Nevertheless, we would do our best to awake the sleeping decision makers from their slumber and honour the greatest son of India, Babasaheb Ambedkar.

अकेले ही चले थे जानबि मंजलि;
लोग साथ आते गए और कारवां बनता गया



Sue Frost

Sacramento County Supervisor. District 4



Sue Frost

Stop the SVP Placement

The rush to release prisoners from our jails and prisons was initially a response to court orders to reduce prison overcrowding, but lately it's become a radical effort to recast criminals as victims and abandoning actual victims and their families. Now we are facing the placement of sexually violent predators (SVPs) that some bureaucrats decided are fit to rejoin society.

Other than the primary risk of creating more victims to sexual violence, there are additional concerns that counties have no input in whether or not an SVP can be placed in their communities. Recently, the



San Diego County Board of Supervisors took a definitive position on the state's policy for how SVPs are placed. Knowing that Sacramento County has faced its own battles to keep SVPs out, I intend to join San Diego's example and bring an item before the Sacramento County Board of Supervisors to demand more say in the dangerous practice of placing violent sexual predators in our neighborhoods.

Many Sacramento County communities have had to fight to keep an SVP out of their neighborhoods. In 2019, an SVP convicted of multiple sexual acts with minors was being considered for placement in Del Paso Heights. That same SVP was nearly relocated to Wilton earlier this year. That SVP had no connection to Sacramento County, but the courts were considering placing him here anyway. When such risky placements are proposed, community members can, and thankfully did, voice their opposition to having an SVP dropped in their neighborhood, but no formal avenue exists for the County to influence such decisions. What San Diego County proposed, and what I will be proposing, is a change in the state law that dictates how SVPs are placed that gives the counties a formal role in the process.

Currently, an SVP is a person that has been convicted of one or more violent sex crimes, has a diagnosed mental disorder, and is likely to engage in violent, criminal behavior. At the discretion of the courts and California Department of State Hospi-

tals, SVPs can qualify for conditional release (CONREP). CONREP allows SVPs to live in a community with supervising and treatment requirements dictated by the court. They have daily contact with a Liberty Healthcare regional coordinator and must wear a GPS bracelet at all times. After a year of CONREP, SVPs can then petition the court for unconditional release. While the protocols of CONREP seem thorough, and I am sure Liberty Healthcare and all involved agencies want to keep communities safe, how can any community or parent feel safe knowing that an SVP is down the street? How do the courts, especially courts in other counties, know which communities are best to locate their SVPs?

The current code says that counties will provide assistance and consultation for the placement of SVPs but it does not create a formal avenue for input on their placement. There is also the perception that the courts tend to place SVPs in communities with high minority populations or in rural areas. In all things, the County leaders can make better decisions about their communities than someone from a completely different county. Especially when that decision is where to place an SVP with no ties to the area. For that reason, I am joining San Diego in asking our County Chief Executive Officer (CEO), to oppose the placement of any SVPs in Sacramento County until the welfare and institutions code (WIC) is amended to give local jurisdiction a formal role in release and placement of SVPs. That includes the authority to veto their placement in our county entirely.

It is unfair that any of our residents should have to fear the placement of known sexually violent, mentally ill criminals with no mechanism for their local officials to stop it. I will bring this before our board before the end of the year so that Sacramento County, and hopefully other counties to follow, can join the effort to formalize our authority in this process and we can protect our communities.

Rehabilitation and redemption are important values, but support for crime victims and protecting our communities should be our top priority.

For a complete list of all my past newsletters, which each contain a commentary like this one, click here.

Sacramento County Redistricting
Sacramento County is seeking community input on draft maps proposing

new district lines in Sacramento County. The draft maps can be viewed on the County's Redistricting Webpage.

The Board of Supervisors will review, discuss and provide staff direction on possible revisions to the draft maps, taking into consideration the public's input in the process.

The County is encouraging all interested stakeholders to provide their input on these draft maps in any of the following ways:

Send written comments by email to redistricting@sacounty.net

Draw boundary line maps using these tools

Attend a Board of Supervisors meeting or virtual workshop and provide public testimony

Upcoming Board Meetings/Workshops

November 2, 6:05 p.m., Board of Supervisors Meeting (First Round Draft Maps)

November 6, 1 p.m., Public Virtual Workshop (First Round Draft Maps)

November 16, 6:05 p.m. Board of Supervisors Meeting (Second Round Draft Maps)

November 17, 2 p.m., Board of Supervisors Meeting (Second Round Draft Maps)

December 7, 2 p.m., Board of



Supervisors Meeting (Final Adoption of Map)

Visit Sacramento County's redistricting webpage for information about redistricting, including the redistricting process, written public testimony, a timeline and more.

Every ten years, following the Census count, the resulting census data is used to geographically define electoral districts, at all levels of government, through a process called redistricting. Redistricting ensures that each of the electoral district boundaries have about the same number of people and comply with the federal Voting Rights Act of 1965.

Redistricting is important because it determines which neighborhoods and communities will be grouped together for the purposes of electing a

Board member.

Sacramento County residents are encouraged to participate in the redistricting process. Residents can sign up for Redistricting news stories, information and upcoming meetings via email or text. People can also view past and upcoming meetings at the Redistricting Meetings webpage and are encouraged to check-in for additional upcoming workshops and hearings.

Keep Your Pets Safe During a Disaster

As pet parents, we all understand the importance of providing our pets with the proper nutrition, exercise and care in order to ensure their health and happiness. Often overlooked, however, is the significance of planning for your pet's safety and care in the event of an emergency.

Here in Sacramento, we know the threats and dangers associated with flooding, wildfires and earthquakes; and although many families are prepared for these events and may have detailed and practiced plans in place if a disaster were to strike, these plans frequently do not include specific instructions for making sure the family pet is looked after.

Pet parents should follow seven quick steps to ensure their pet's safety during an emergency:

Ensure your pet can be identified by both a microchip and collar ID tag and that contact information is up-to-date.

Prepare a "Pet Emergency Go-Kit" of pet supplies that is readily accessible in an emergency.

Display a pet rescue decal on your front door or window to let first responders know there is a pet in the house. Include your veterinarian's contact information.

Learn where your pet likes to hide in your house when frightened. Finding your pet quickly will help you evacuate faster.

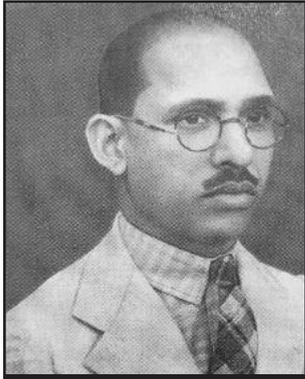
Identify a location to take your pet if you need to leave your immediate area. Keep in mind that disaster shelters for people may not be open to pets. Scout hotels and motels



with pet-friendly policies in advance and ask relatives or friends if they
(Contd. on page 7)

My Struggle in Life

Religion



Ishwar Das Pawar
District and Sessions Judge (Retd.)

What is religion? What is God? And where is he? Is he merciful and justice-loving? What is the purpose of this creation where intense misery and suffering reign supreme? These are

some of the questions that have all along baffled the uncommitted thinkers. No rational and generally acceptable answer has so far been found. But the search for a true answer goes on and shall continue for all times to come. Only the atheist and the fundamentalist have reached certain definite and final conclusions not on any rational basis but because of their unswerving deep faith. But it cannot set all the troubled minds at rest. Man's mind gropes and gropes even in the face of utter disappointment and disillusionment. The quest for truth knows no bounds and no end.

It is claimed that religion elevates the soul and transforms a person into a good human being. But there have been in the name and for the protection of religion crusades, jihads, massacres, untold atrocities on persons of different religions, exploitation of the weaker sections, and the preservation of vested interests. Peoples of different faiths take pride in their respective beliefs and testify to their truth by running at each other's throats, breaking heads, ripping open chests and bowels. One believes in the principle of equality and brotherhood; another person professing another religion believes in principle of inequality, untouchability, and hatred between man and man; and yet another commits inhuman acts for the propagation of religion of his concept. All this in the name of religion and for the religion! The Shankaracharyas, the great religious leaders of the Hindus, believe in the observance of untouchability as an essential part of their religion.

It is also true that religious concept has produced remarkable personalities. Take the case of Mother Teresa of world fame. For her humanitarian zest, she draws inspiration from Jesus Christ, the son of God. She has dedicated her life for the cause of the poor, the forsaken, the unwanted; and she has come to be known as the lady of the slums, the champion of the poor, the apostle of the unwanted, the angel of mercy, saint of the gutters, the Gentle Mother. Another case is no less remarkable. There is Bhagat Puran Singh of the Pingalwara fame. He derives inspiration from the gurus and their teachings, and he has dedicated his life to the service of the sick and suffering humanity. In them we can see angels in flesh and blood treading this earth.

Sri Krishna claimed that he was God-incarnate, Jesus Christ proclaimed that he was the son of God, and Hazrat Mohammad said that he was the last messenger of God. With the sole exception of the Buddha, all the founders of various religions assumed the role of mokshadata (salvation giver) and claimed infallibility for themselves because they gave to man what was given to them by God himself. On the other hand, the Buddha was content with the role of a guide and margadata (path giver). His teachings are based on morality, ethics, and scientific reasoning. Hindus claim that the Vedas (the oldest scriptures of Hinduism) were revealed by God himself through the rishis (sages) in the beginning of the universe, and that these scriptures imbibe the true and complete knowledge of everything, Musalmans claim that the Holy Quran was revealed by God through Prophet Mohammad, and similarly, the Christians assert that the Bible is the only true religious book.

Who is right and who is wrong is a question not for everybody to decide? Only the followers of the particular faith can decide about their religion. Moreover, reason has no place in the matter of religion. Intelligence and the power of discrimination are said to be the gifts of God to man who can use these faculties for his own good and the good of others. He can also use them for his own destruction and the destruction of his fellow beings. But ironically, these gifts cannot be pressed into service to know and understand God or his attributes or his ways of working. These things can be learnt only from the religious books but without questioning and nothing done beyond that. Whatever is written there must be accepted as the final truth. This is fundamentalism, dogmatism. There must be complete surrender to God and the revealed scriptures. This is the way to understand God and his ways. One must first get back to the position of a child—pure, innocent, ignorant, lov-

ing, no reason, no inquisitiveness. The secret of God's ways of working lies as a closely guarded virtue. Nobody can have access to that cloistered secret. But it is, needless to say, that God himself grew the tree bearing the fruit of knowledge, understanding, and realization.

The essential concomitants of religion are fundamentalism, dogma, superstition, surrender of reason, bigotry, secrecy, mythology, ritualism, mystifying language, and institutionalized places of worship. These are the real and strongest pillars of religion. The most important question that comes uppermost in the mind is why good persons rot and suffer intensely throughout their lives while, on the other hand, sinners, haters of men, debauchers always in search of new pastures, exploiters, cheats, thieves, robbers, and thugs and the like prosper? It is said that sufferings inflicted on good people are by way of a test that God applies to judge the extent and depth of their faith, of the strength of their mind, and so on. Well, how long such a test should continue? For the whole life? Such tests are unknown even in the world of imperfect man. It is in fact a tyranny, an apparent punishment, for what sins or crimes, we do not know. It is a strange mode of giving a test. Then what is the purpose of this test? Test is given to know something not known or cannot be satisfactorily known by other means. The knowledge and the power of the giver of the test is evidently limited and weak. But what about God? He is omnipotent, omnipresent, and omniscient and, as such, knows everything open or hidden without a test. Can he not know the depth of faith and strength of mind of a good person? Man is a weak creature, not of his own liking or choice, but because the all-powerful God made him so.

It is said that unless so commanded by the Almighty, not even a leaf can stir on its own, and that whatever God commands man obeys. That being so, why should man be held accountable for what he is commanded to do? Side by side, it is also maintained that man has been left completely free to do whatever he likes. Naturally, a question arises: why in the case of man an exception has been made as regards the divine dispensation that nothing shall happen without his command? And why should he be made liable to be punished for his deeds, which are classed as sinful? And then, what is the criterion for determining what is sinful and what is not? There seems to be no universal rule or law on this point.

What is happening in the life of the jungle? Strong and ferocious beasts are killing and devouring smaller and weaker animals, big fish swallowing small fish. And from where does a spider get training for spinning and weaving into so fine a fabric as a web designed exclusively for capturing innocent and unwary flies and other insects to make palatable food for the eight-legged ensnarer? All creatures of God! This does not happen as a result of plotting and planning. The animals act under their instinct—a natural guiding force. The aggressor and cruel animals are not to blame. They have no animus. They act according to God's compulsive laws. There is also the karma philosophy. According to this thesis, the present prosperity or adversity of individual human beings is the result of good or bad deeds done in the past life. Little is known about the past, and nothing can be known about the future. These theories have no rational basis; they are only conjectures. What about the present which can be seen and realized? Which is real to the eye? What we see about is patently unjust and against all the accepted canons of justice and fair play. We see sinners prospering and virtuous men suffering. There is none to impart even-handed justice. It is no consolation to say that it is inevitable or that it is due to past deeds or that final justice will be meted out in the life to come or on doomsday. It is all groping in the dark, giving way to frustration. It is said that the sinners shall be held to account for their misdeeds.

But when?

"When all its work is done, the lie shall rot;

The truth is great and shall prevail,

When none cares whether it prevails or not."

There is another aspect. If the doctrines of karma is accepted and put into practice, it will, without any doubt, spell ruin to society and mankind. If births, poverty, misery, and agonizing sufferings that afflict humanity are determined by the divine dispensation for the evil deeds of individuals in their past lives, the tiny mortals will have no option but to surrender to their doomed

fate and suffer without demur the punishments awarded to them. None is competent to defy the decisions of rewards and punishments recorded by the Lord himself. Consequently, any

help to the hungry, the naked, the sick and the needy, and to those bent down with pangs of bodily and mental pain and anguish would amount to defiance of the mandate of the Almighty. The result will inevitably be that all institutions providing medical aid, organizations rendering social service, and charitable institutions, and even courts will become not only irrelevant but would also invite the retributive wrath of the creator and ruler of the universe. This is bound to lead to utter confusion in the mutual social relations of human beings. Nothing can be more absurd.

It is argued that God has cast a duty on man to help his fellow beings in distress. This boils down to saying that it is the prerogative of the Supreme Being to inflict punishment on his erring creatures and then to enjoin upon their comrades to do their best to extricate them from the hellish situations. A very funny way of working! Why inflict punishment if the mandate is to be corrected and toned down afterwards and that, too, through the instrumentality of man? "Justice delayed is justice denied," is a well-known maxim in man's legal jurisprudence. So even the delay in the administration of justice mars the beauty of the decision even though just and fair. What will be its worth if, besides delay, nobody knows that justice has been done? The sinner may rot in passing through the mythological eighty-four lakh forms of life (yonis) as the Hindu philosophy of karma and the cycle of births, called the transmigration of soul, would have us believe; but of all this, neither the sinner nor anybody else knows who is punished, when, and for what. These philosophies and mythology are nothing short of a trap. For this intriguing cobweb woven by the imagination of man, there is an easy inlet but no outlet. Once a man is caught in it, he finds no way out.

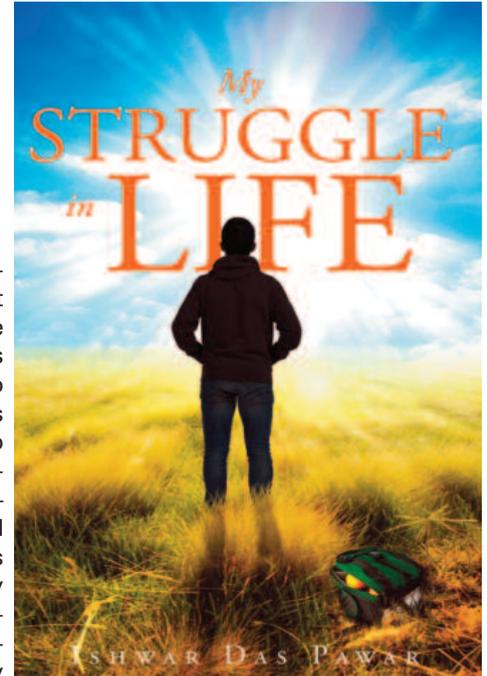
God is the greatest authority, but queer as it may seem, there is also the parallel authority of the serpent, Satan. Virtue belongs to God while vice belongs to Satan. They reign in their respective spheres. God created man, Adam, after his own image. From a rib of Adam, his lifelong companion Eve was created. They were lodged in a beautiful garden—the Garden of Eden. It had fruit trees of various kinds. Both Adam and Eve were allowed to eat and enjoy any fruit.

They were, however, commanded not to eat the forbidden one, the fruit of the tree of knowledge. The parallel ruler, Satan, got scent of the God's creation, and he thought it was time for him to assert his authority and show that he had the capacity to outwit God. In the form of a serpent, he wended his way to the garden. Reaching there, he contacted Eve first, considering her to be more pliable, and by his clever and dexterous reasoning and advocacy, persuaded her to eat the forbidden fruit. Thereupon knowledge dawned upon her that she was naked. With this successful result, Adam was also brought round by Satan with the help of Eve to eat the forbidden fruit. In the same way knowledge dawned upon him too. Feeling the shame of being naked, they sewed fig leaves together and made themselves aprons to hide their shame. Thus the powerful devil succeeded in beguiling the God's couple into violating the mandate of their master. Having done his self-assigned job, he hastened his way back.

The omniscient God did not know what had happened. As usual he came to the garden on his evening stroll, but the couple was not visible, previously they used to run to him and greet him. Finding them nowhere in sight, God called out, "O Adam, O Eve, where are you?"

"We are naked, our master," came the reply. "Have you eaten the forbidden fruit," inquired the

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My Struggle in Life

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angry master? Eve replied, "My lord, I was duped into eating the fruit by the serpent. I am not at fault."

"I was misled by Eve and the Satan to eat the fruit," replied Adam.

Finding them guilty, God inflicted punishment upon them. Adam was told that henceforth he would be earning his livelihood by the sweat of his brow. To Eve, he said that she would cry for granny while in excruciating pain at the time of delivering a child. After the announcement of the verdict, they were driven out of the garden, the paradise, to repent forever and, in addition, to spell ruin to their progeny for all times to come. This verdict was never reviewed though the progeny were not a party to the crime directly or indirectly.

God's justice was relentless. Alas! We are suffering for the sins of our revered first ancestors, Eve and Adam. At least once in the history of mankind justice was done on the spot, and the accused were told why they were being punished. Again, it was at least once in the beginning of the creation that the lord creator used to give darshan (appearance) to his creatures and also would condescend to enquire after their welfare. This benign character was, however, never repeated after the Lord's wrath had visited the first man and woman.

What is the form of God, and where does he live? According to the above mythology, he must be having a form like that of man and woman as he created the man after his own image. But it is also said that he is formless. Some say he is sitting on a majestic throne, very possibly somewhere in the vicinity of heaven and hell. Others maintain he is omnipresent, pervading everywhere. But nobody can see him. Why is he hiding himself from his creation? Inscrutable are the ways of his work. The creation is denied his auspicious glimpse for

reasons beyond the comprehension of poor man. Then what is the remedy? Complete surrender to him. Why? Because we are helpless, and it is not for us to utter why. All these secrets lie well-guarded in his bosom.

What is the extent of God's greatness? There is nothing except God. The universe we see around is simply a manifestation of the creator. There is another theory also. There are two indestructible beings—God and the soul (jiva). There is yet another view but no less strange. It is said there are three independent existences—God, the soul (jiva), and matter (prakriti). Which theory or view is correct and which is incorrect? These different and apparently irreconcilable assertions have been made by the founders of various religions themselves and by authoritative theologians. Persons believe the version given by the founder of the faith they follow. This may be termed as a case of unity in diversity. Why dispute? Man's imagination is limitless.

Where is heaven and where is hell? If the answer be that these places are on this earth, it is quite understandable. We see and know all this from what is going on around us. This world of ours is mostly and basically a hell. An overwhelming majority of good persons lie in hell while most of the sinners enjoy as if they are in heaven. All this we see day and night. In case the supposed heaven and hell are situated somewhere in the high blue skies—the lands unknown and unknowable—they cannot be known and seen by human beings till they find a place there. Well, sinners are to be lodged in hell after accounts have been taken on doomsday. Heaven can have only a few people who can be said to be virtuous, and they will enjoy the company of God himself. At the same time, they will also be hearing the cries, groans, and moans of their dear and near ones in horrible distress in the adjoining hell. Is this the Leela (divine workmanship) of God? The merciful creator, enjoying and reveling in the misery and sufferings of his children like it's a mirthful play! All joy and happiness just by the side of hell

where the inmates are in agony, anguished—being bitten by serpents, scorpions, their flesh being torn to pieces and eaten up by deadly wild animals! No rest, no sleep, nothing to eat and to drink, and none to console them! This is the Lord's sport, Leela, for which the universe was created?

God is mother; he is father. He is the best friend. What kind of a relationship? His children in hell! Mother, father, the best friend making merry over all this! No earthly mother, father, or friend can tolerate the sight of such a ghastly drama. But the merciful and just creator enjoys reveling in his Leela! Innocent, ignorant children put in a room by mother and father. A room full of attractive and tempting things—sweet flowers, tempting eatables, lovely and beautiful toys.

The command to the innocent children is not to touch anything on pain of being punished ruthlessly. Not possible for the children to resist the temptation, little realizing the consequences that might follow. Then the kind and loving mother and father coming down heavily on the disobedient children and putting them in hell. An

abhorrent idea for earthly parents! This would be sheer unmotherly, unfatherly, and unfriendly, and above all, inhuman. And why did the merciful God create hell at all? Why not heaven alone?

Answers to these puzzling questions might be found in mythology, in religious philosophy generally based on fundamentalism. But philosophy is only a philosophy, not necessarily the truth. It may simply be a cobweb, a labyrinth created by some fertile imagination.

In this context one is reminded of a story of a philosopher. A wellknown philosopher, born and brought up in a big city, once went to a village to see a farmer friend of his. He had never been to a village before. His curiosity was aroused on seeing a handful of cow dung lying in a niche in the outer mud wall of the house. His problem was to find an answer to the question how a cow could leave her droppings in an inaccessible place like the niche. He felt perplexed; a queer problem confronted him. He thought and thought over it, spinning reasons and arguments to justify the premises of how the cow's droppings were present in the niche. He wrote page after page till it became a voluminous thesis, well documented and well-reasoned, theorizing and philosophizing. He explained the mystery in a mysterious way, not understandable probably even by him, but certainly not by any reader of his thesis. Poor philosopher! He could have spared all the pain and hard labor and solved the mystery by just putting a simple question to the illiterate and unsophisticated housewife as to how the cow dung happened to be in the niche. The answer would have been simple and correct. But he was a philosopher after all and of considerable renown. A philosopher is judged by how high his imaginative power can soar. This is called the gobar (cow dung) philosophy. Sometimes it becomes a case of a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury but signifying nothing.

In the totality of things, it will be seen that religion has done more harm than good. On the question of the existence of God and man's faith in him, it is asserted that all that we see around us is an unimpeachable proof of the fact of the creator's existence, and that all the natural phenomena are the manifestations of the Lord. Just see the wonderful working of Nature, its pristine and exquisite beauty; fine, fascinating, and exuberant flowers showing varied hues, shedding sweet and delightfully refreshing fragrance all round, far and wide; and the luxuriant greenery and vegetation. Look at the majestic trees bent low in humility, signifying their gratitude for the bumper crop of flavorsome and delicious fruits they bear. Think of the physiography and physiognomy in particular, and physiology of living things, animals and vegetation. Has anybody been able to fully understand and unmask the intricacies and complicacies of the texture constituting their gross bodies? Observe the variety:

what a wonderfully planned order of consummate excellence! The wonders of the sun, the moon, the stars, and countless other satellites, known and unknown, should not be missed. Does all this come about on its own without the will and dictate of some invisible divine power? Nothing comes into existence without its creator. When we perceive some object or a thing,

we perforce think of its maker, its master. That being the case, is it permissible or logical to contend that there is no force behind the enigmatic and puzzling phenomenon? What else can be a satisfactory and rational explanation for the astoundingly profound mystery of the universe if there is no creator, sustainer, and destroyer?

The above are some of the points that emerged from the lengthy discussion that took place between two learned scholars: Bhoji, a theologian, and Khoji, a rationalist. They discussed God and religion. There were scintillating arguments and counter-arguments on both sides. They were, however, unable to reconcile themselves to each other's view point. They held diametrically opposite views, and these differences widened as a result of the discussion. They were unable to agree on any major issue, and therefore, in the ultimate analysis, they agreed to disagree. But in order to have the disputed points settled authoritatively, they went to a popular wise man, Gianswarup by name, who lived quite nearby, to have his verdict on the sensitive subject.

Gianswarup received them warmly, and after exchange of pleasantries, they settled down to grapple with the problem the two scholars had brought to him. Bhoji started by addressing the wise man thus:

"I have unflinching faith in God. He is the creator of the universe. He is the greatest, justice-loving, merciful, omnipotent, omniscient and everything else. He is all virtue. Am I right, O blessed one?" The wise man replied, "You are perfectly right in what you say, O man of great learning." Then Khoji's turn came. He said to the wise man, "I do not believe in God. I totally deny that he is the creator of the universe. He is merely the creation of man's imagination. He is nothing but a hoax. Am I right, O man of wisdom?"

Gianswarup replied, "O man of great learning, you are perfectly right in what you say."

Having thus answered the contradictory assertions of the two learned scholars strangely in identical terms, and seeing them puzzled over the answer, Gianswarup warmed up a little and spoke to them thus: "O men of great learning and scholarship, disabuse your minds of all other ideas and thoughts and lend me your undivided ear. One day, at the dead of night, when Dinabandhu was lying asleep in his cottage like a log on a bare cot made of rugged material, he was awakened by an intruder who had fluttered in. He was dazed and amazed to find an extraordinary stranger in his humble hut—a strange sort of being, an embodiment of brightness and luster, of purity and pristine beauty. In all humility, Dinabandhu inquired from him what had brought him to his humble cottage at that unearthly hour. The stranger told him that he was Dharmaraj-doot (the messenger of God,

the envoy of God) sent down on earth by his master Dharmaraj on an errand to prepare a list of persons who had done good, noble, and pious deeds in their lives and were therefore entitled to his love and affection. He therefore beseeched Dinabandhu to recount to him the noble and pious deeds he had done during the long years of his life. Dinabandhu was virtually dumbfounded and perplexed. However, he soon regained his calm, and then said, 'O Dharmaraj-doot, the messenger of God, I have no such deeds to my credit to detail. To temples, mosques, and churches I have never been, nor have I ever worshipped God. I have never said my prayers, nor ever attended sermons or any other religious discourses. I have never toiled the temple or the church bells, nor did I ever

(Contd. on next page)

My Struggle in Life

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offer incense at the altar of gods. I have never read or even seen a book of gospel. In fact, I have had no time for all this. But I remain busy performing duties of my own liking and choice. Every day I rise quite early in the morning, and after getting ready, I make my way to the far-off, isolated colony where patients of leprosy live in a segregated place. They are a suffering lot of humanity, very unfortunate, and they pass their days in distress and gloom without any hope of a brighter future. I help them in washing and bandaging the diseased parts of their bodies. Sometimes I have to lend a helping hand to them in taking their food, as their afflicted hands do not work. After comforting them and saying a few encouraging words, I take my leave till the next day.

From there I proceed to the poor people's hospital situated in lonely and unhygienic environments in a dilapidated building, and there I render odd services to the groaning and moaning patients. As soon as I make my appearance in the patients' wards, the inmates greet me with gleeful smiles. Indeed they keep waiting for me. They have their own small problems where I help them. I love them, and they love me too.

'Thereafter my duty lies with the poor slum dwellers. They are hungry, naked, shelterless. To me

they are the sons of God, and I am their humble servant. They are always prone to fall, a prey to all sorts of diseases. I extend to them a helping hand with pleasure in various small matters, in whatever manner needed. Sometimes I go about begging and thus collecting a few loaves for their empty stomachs, a few old discarded rags for their naked bodies. They are indeed a miserable lot. Small children hovering about or sitting in the corners of grand hotels where rich people take their food, waiting for the bearers to emerge with the leftover crumbs of food of the rich customers. They rush at these useless things to catch at something. They eat them with gusto.

'They all are living in a society which claims to be civilized. My heart breaks on seeing them in such an awful condition. Even God has forsaken them, not to speak of the callous and irresponsible society.

'This way, I go about from morning till evening every day. The intervening night gives me the much needed rest, which restores my energy and stamina for the next day. Look at my haggard and doubled-up face, disheveled hair, disorderly clothes, and shapeless, decaying body! The long years of life thus spent have started telling upon me.

But I shall be at the post of my duty when I die. Occasionally an idea haunts me. The worry is that I might not be able to accomplish my mission fully be-

fore I leave the scene of this world of sufferings, sorrow, misery, and anguish. I have yet miles to go and promises to keep. O noble Dharmaraj-doot, waste not your precious time over me. Turn to your errand and go out into the multitude and find out the kind of noble persons you want.'

"Hearing Dinabandhu speak thus, the Dharmaraj-doot left the hut, traveled from land to land, from city to city, from town to town, from village to village and met men and women, old and young in search of persons who had done good, noble, and pious deeds.

"One day, at dead of night, the Dharmaraj-doot again fluttered into the hut of Dinabandhu, awakened him and showed him the list he had prepared of the persons of pious deeds. There were in the list hardly a dozen names. To his great surprise, Dinabandhu found his own name written at the top of the list. Before he could say anything, the messenger of God winged out and was immediately on his way back to his master."

On hearing Gianswarup, the faces of Bhoji and Khoji beamed. They felt enlightened. They were changed persons. They thanked him in affectionate and reverential words for showing them the right path. After making obeisance to the great wise man, they took leave of him.

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could house you and your pet.

Carry a picture of your pet in the event of separation.

If you need to evacuate, consider taking a pet carrier or crate for transport and safe-keeping.

Being prepared is the best step families can take to ensure people, and their pets, are ready to face an emergency together. Families looking to learn more about disaster preparedness and safety for their families (including pets) can visit the Ready Campaign website.

Flood Preparedness Information

This past week was Flood Preparedness Week in California. After the storm we experienced last week, now is a good time to look at reducing the risk of flooding in your area.

Yes, we are in the midst of a drought, but it is still important to know the flood risk to your home or business. The weekend's record-breaking storm caused six different creeks and streams in the county to reach flood stage. What we just experienced is a real reminder of the havoc wet weather can cause with downed trees and flooded roads, and when the skies open up, we can quickly find that flooding is no longer a threat,

but the real deal.

The Department of Water Resources has information to help you understand the threat flooding may pose to your property. Log onto www.stormready.org and click Flood Zone Information to learn more about your flood risk.

If you live in a flood zone, you can reduce the potential for damage by being proactive.

One of the best ways to reduce flooding in your immediate area is to clear storm drains of leaves and debris to ensure the water freely flows away from your home. Clogs can cause localized flooding to streets that could eventually back up to your doorway. If you come across street flooding, call 3-1-1 to have County crews come out and clear the clogs. Also, don't drive through flooded streets. If you see items dumped into nearby creeks, call 3-1-1 and report it. It's important to clear those areas before the rain to avoid problems.

If you live near creeks or streams, you can monitor their levels during a storm by turning to sacflood.org. The County offers a real-time system to keep you updated on how much water levels rise.

In Sacramento County, nearly 20 percent of flood insurance claims come from moderate to low-risk areas.



You can still obtain flood insurance if your home or business is not in the mapped floodplain. If unchecked, localized flooding can also cause a lot of damage. If you live in an area prone to flooding, consider talking to a qualified insurance agent about flood insurance.

Sacramento County takes part in a special Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) program that helps reduce the cost of flood insurance. Through FEMA, if you live a designated Special Flood Hazard Area, you may save \$446 per year on the full cost of a standard flood insurance policy.

During Flood Preparedness Week, develop a plan if you have to evacuate. This plan will be useful for any potential disasters, including fires. It's not too early to decide where you will go and what you should take.

There are the five Ps that you should have ready to go if you need to leave your home.

People and pets

Papers (important documents)
Prescriptions (medication, eyeglasses, hearing aids)
Pictures (Irreplaceable memories)
Personal computer

Also, have a designated meeting place if you are separated from family. On Stormready.org, you can also look at evacuation maps as well as the region's flooding history.

The County has three sandbag locations in the unincorporated area. If you live in a flood-prone area, this will offer the chance to grab sandbags in advance of a storm. The County supplies the sand and bags, but you need a shovel. There is a 20-bag limit per visit. Locations:

Branch Center (3847 Branch Center Rd. Sacramento CA 95827)

Westside Park (6555 West 2nd St. Rio Linda CA 95673)

Orangevale Community Center (6826 Hazel Ave. Orangevale CA 95662)

Keep up with the latest information during flood threats by signing up to Sacramento Alert. This Countywide system run by the Office of Emergency Services will keep you informed about potential flooding or any other emergency threatening your neighborhood. Use Flood Preparedness Week to make yourself Storm Ready.



Dr. Paramjit S Takhar, MD

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Goodie Takhar, PhD



SHRI GURU RAVIDASS SABHA (CA)

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Sri Guru Ravidass Temple Pittsburg (CA) Gurughar's coming programs

Diwali Celebrations November 4, 2021

Diwali will be celebrated in the Gurughar with Sukhmani Sahib path starting at 6:00 PM. Jatha of Bhai Ajit Singh and Bhai Nirvair Singh along with Giani Gurnam Singh/Giani Ompal Singh will do the Kirtan Sewa. Guru Ka Langar will be hosted by Suman family. Sangat is requested to come for Ardas and celebrations. May Waheguru bless His Sangat with good health and happiness.

Sukhmani Sahib Path & Langar Sewa by Jatinder Singh Ralmil and family November 14, 2021

Sukhmani Sahib Path and Langar Sewa will be hosted by Jatinder Singh Ralmil and family to thank Guru Sahib for blessing them with a daughter. May Waheguru keep Ralmil family in Chardi Kala.

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Parkash Utsav November 21, 2021

Satguru Nanak Pargateya - Miti Dhund Jag Chanan Hoya

Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's Gurburab will be celebrated at our Gurughar on November 21, 2021. Akhand path will start on Friday 11/19/2021, at 10:00 AM

and will be concluded on Sunday morning 11/21/2021 followed by Kirtan. Path and Langar sewa will be hosted by devoted family of Pt. Kewal Krishan Sudhir, Phagwara Wale. Giani Ompal /Giani Gurnam Singh will adorn the occasion with Shabad Kirtan along with other Kirtani Jathas.

Guru Nanak Sahib Ji (The founder of Sikhism) was born in 1469 at Talwandi, now known as Nankana Sahib. His life and spiritual teachings, as enshrined in the holy pages of **GURU GRANTH SAHIB**, are an embodiment of truthfulness and godliness which illuminated the millions of ignorant souls. HIS simple message of **"UNIVERSAL BROTHERHOOD" EQUALITY** and Love of Mankind formed the basic principles of Sikh Religion. His firm belief that God is formless, infinite and all pervasive, dwelling within us awakened the entire mankind.

The entire Sangat is humbly requested to participate in this "Gurupurb" and do the SEWA with TAN, MAN and DHAN.

For food & other stalls, please contact the management committee. We have a limited space, so please call as soon as possible to reserve the stall space or for any other Sewa. First come, first choice.

"NANAK NAM CHARDI KALA TERE BHANE SARBAT DA BHALA"

2021-2022 Committee of Sri Guru Ravidass Sabha Pittsburg (CA)



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