



## BANEFACATION OF LALA LAJPAT RAI TO JALANDHAR

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### ABSTRACT

Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the greatest Indian Political Leaders of the first half of the twentieth century. He was elected President of the Indian National Congress in 1920 and presided over Calcutta session of the congress, which was held in the month of September. He was not only a great political leader, but also an equally important social, religious and educational reformer. Shri V.C. Joshi writes, "Lajpat Rai left a rich legacy for the countrymen whom he had loved and for whom he had suffered. It was a legacy of a true patriot, a relentless campaigner for freedom and an ardent religious and social reformer."<sup>1</sup>

### KEYWORDS

Political, Session, Congress, Leader, Reformer, Campaigner.

### INTRODUCTION

Lala Lajpat Rai was born on 28 January, 1865 in the village of Dhudike near Jagraon. A very suitable memorial has been constructed near the site of his birth place in this village. Although he spent greater part of his active life in Hissar (1886-1891) and Lahore (1892 to 17<sup>th</sup> November, 1928), yet Jalandhar also received sufficient attention from him. Jalandhar was a very important centre of the activities of Arya Samaj. A fierce struggle was going on between the two sections of Arya Samaj. Mahatma Munshi Ram (Later on, Swami Shraddhananda)<sup>2</sup> was the leader of Gurukul Party while Lala Lajpat Rai was the leader of College Party (or D.A.V Group) Therefore, he often came to Jalandhar.

### LALA LAJPAT RAI AND ANNUAL FUNCTIONS OF JALANDHAR ARYA SAMAJ

Arya Samaj had been established<sup>3</sup> in Jalandhar in 1882, but the college party could not establish their hold in the city. In 1903, Pandit Mehar Chand held the first annual celebrations of the Qila Arya Samaj. Lala Lajpat Rai came from Lahore in the various annual celebrations of this Samaj. He would keep the audience spell bound by his learned discourses.

### ESTABLISHMENT OF SAIN DAS ANGLO- SANSKRIT SCHOOL AND SECRETARY- SHIP BY LALA LAJPAT RAI

When in 1896, Sain Das School was established, Mahatma Hans Raj became the President and Lala Lajpat Rai became the secretary of the Managing Committee of Sain

Das School. Lala Sunder Dass, Son of Lala Sain Dass had been appointed the Headmaster of the school. Lala Sain Dass faced a very stiff opposition and all kinds of obstacles were placed before him, but he was a man of very firm determination and had taken an oath that until 200 students were admitted this school, he would sleep on the ground. He kept up his oath and soon the number crossed the fixed target. At that time Sain Dass School was in the present Qila Mohalla Primary School building. The financial condition of the school was extremely bad. All these factors had a very bad effect upon the health of Lala Sunder Dass. He became a prey to T.B and died in February, 1900. Pandit Mehr Chand got Lala Sunder Dass Block constructed in Lakhpat Rai hostel of Dav. A. V. College, Jalandhar. The following inscription<sup>4</sup> reminds us of the excellent work which Lala Sain Dass did in the school which was functioning when Lala Lajpat Rai was the Secretary of the School. " Sunder Dass Block - This block is dedicated to the sacred memory of late Lala Sunder Dass B. A., son of Sain Dass ji of Las are (village), Jalandhar, one of the early fathers of Arya Samaj. Lala Sunder Dass was one of the founders and the first Headmaster of the Sain Dass A. S High School, Jullundur and an educational missionary. He manfully worked and cheerfully suffered for the school and the Arya Samaj. He lived a hero and died a martyr for the cause. "-Mehr Chand

The death of Lala Sunder was a severe blow to the school. The school was on the verge of closure. Mahatma Hans Raj himself thought of taking leave from Lahore D. A. V. College in order to save the sole D. A. V. institution of Jalandhar, but he was persuaded not to take this step. On 24th November, 1902, at the annual function of Arya Samaj, Lala Lajpat Rai drew the attention of the audience to the very critical condition of the school. His fervent appeal produced a great impact upon the audience. Pandit Lakhpat<sup>5</sup> Rai of Hissar gave all his savings upto that time (Rupees Nine thousand) while Lala Lajpat Rai gave one or four thousand rupees from his own pocket. Thus, the financial crisis was tided over while Pandit Mehr Chand offered his free services to the school. He worked as Honorary Headmaster of this school from March<sup>6</sup> 1903 to April, 1918 when he assumed charge of D.A.V. College, Jalandhar as Honorary Principal till his death in 1944.

### **LALA LAJPAT RAI LAYS THE FOUNDATION STONE OF THE BOARDING HOUSE OF SAIN DASS SCHOOL, 1913.**

Pandit Mehr Chand had started the construction work of the Sain Dass School (near present Patel Chowk) and the school shifted to its own building in 1906. Soon the reputation of the school spread far and wide. Students from other districts were attracted to this institution. Then there were some students who came from far away villages. Thus, a necessity was felt for a hostel. Pandit Mehr Chand succeeded in getting some land (on which Dayanand public school stands today). Then it was learnt that the proposed piece of land was going to be acquired for Jalandhar - Ferozepur Railway line. Pandit Mehr Chand approached Mr. Bagely and convinced him of the genuineness of his worry. Mr. Bagely was kind enough to slightly change the track of the line. Thus, the

land was saved from being acquired by the Government. After this Pandit Mehr Chand invited Lala Lajpat Rai to come from Lahore and lay the foundation stone of the hostel of Sain Dass School. Lala ji arrived and the work for the construction of the hostel was begun. Perhaps it would not be wrong to say that the great D. A. V. Campus (including D. A. V. College, Jalandhar, Mehr Chand Polytechnic, Mehr Chand Hostel, Dayanand Model School and Ayurvedic College) is the result of the beginning which was made by Lala Lajpat Rai in 1913. The following inscription on the gates of former Brahmchari Ashram (Bachelor's hostel and now Dayanand Model School) proves the close connection of Lala Lajpat Rai with D. A. V. Institution of Jalandhar. The inscription is both in Hindi and English. The following is the text of the inscription: "**BRAHM CHARI ASHRAM**, Sain Dass A. S. High School Boarding House. Foundation Stone laid by Shriman Lala Lajpat Rai, pleader, on Sunday the 26th October, 1913(11th Kartik 1970 Vikrami)<sup>7</sup>."

### **GREAT IMPACT OF LALA LAJPAT RAI UPON PANDIT MEHR CHAND**

Pandit Mehr Chand made a very substantial contribution towards D. A. V. Movement in Jalandhar Division. He infused a new life into Sain Dass Anglo- Sanskrit School. He encouraged the opening of a very large number of Schools in the surrounding areas like Nakodar, Alawalpur and Kath Garh. He remained their manager till his death. He became the founder Principal of D. A. V. College for next 26 years. For 41 years he served the cause of D. A. V. Movement with total dedication and did not take a single paise as salary from March 1903 to 13th March<sup>8</sup>, 1944. Pandit Mehr Chand had been drawn towards Arya Samaj at quite an early age. Lala Lajpat Rai greatly influenced him. Lala Lajpat Rai was one of the most eloquent speakers. In fact, he was an orator of a very great calibre. Pandit Nanak has rightly remarked, "Lala Lajpat Rai generally made an appeal for funds. His speeches were most eloquent. He was a great orator. In punjab, there had not been a speaker like him.... Lala Lajpat Rai could bring tears to the eyes of his audience. Fired with religious zeal or patriotic fervour, Lajpat could ascend heights of eloquence which no Punjabi had done so far <sup>9</sup>." Pandit Mehr Chand had had joined Forman Christian College, Lahore for doing his graduation. He passed intermediate examination. Then he joined the service of D.A.V. College, Lahore as Superintendent of Boarding House. At that time Lala Lajpat Rai was the Secretary of the College Committee. During his service, Pandit Mehr Chand came very close to Lala ji. He was much influenced by the personality and habits of Lala Lajpat, who inspired in him great love for the Arya Samaj. Pandit ji met Lala ji on a number of occasions. It was on hearing the speech of Lala Lajpat Rai that Pandit ji declared that he would give up his Headmastership of Har Bhagwan Memorial High School, Ferozepur and would give his free services to D. A. V. Institutions of Jalandhar. Lala Lajpat Rai remained Secretary of Sain Dass School while Pandit ji was the Headmaster of Sain Dass School. As a token of great gratitude to Lala Lajpat Rai, Pandit ji decided to name the library of D.A.V.

College, Jalandhar as Lala Lajpat Rai Library<sup>10</sup>. It was built in 1932. It was designed by the late Rai Bahadur Lala Ralla Ram, Retired Chief Engineer.

### **LALA LAJPAT RAI'S WORK FOR THE UPLIFT OF HARIJANS**

One of the main objects of the Arya Samaj Movement was to establish equality in the Hindu Samaj. In Arya Samaj, a number of measures had been taken to improve the lot of the sections which had suffered at the hands of others. Lala Lajpat Rai himself has written, "Let us take the question of untouchability. I find no sanction for it in the Hindu Shastras. I find no sanction for it in history. As far as the Hindu untouchables are concerned, most sensible Hindus are agreed that in their case, at least, it is senseless, inhuman and intolerable, because of the fact of their being followers of the same religion and members of the same community as the so-called higher castes. Some of the advanced reformers like the Arya Samajists are prepared at once to raise them high in the social scale by investing them with the sacred thread and starting inter-dining and inter-marrying with them<sup>11</sup>." In November 1913, on the occasion of the Arya Samaj anniversary, Lala Lajpat Rai gave a donation of Rs 50,000 for work among the depressed classes. A number of schools and centres for depressed classes were started in Jullundur. Bhai Balmukand, the martyr, looked after these centers under Lajpat Rai's direction<sup>12</sup>. After a year Balmukand left the service of Lala Lajpat Rai and became an active revolutionary. It is alleged that Bhai Balmukand was the man behind the Lahore Bomb Case and the attack upon Lord Hardinge in Chandni Chowk. He was hanged on this account<sup>13</sup>.

### **GULAB DEVI TUBERCULOSIS HOSPITAL**

A notable<sup>14</sup> creation of Lalaji's last years was the Tuberculosis Hospital named after his mother (Gulab Devi). More correctly, the hospital had a posthumous birth. Lalaji had merely created the Trust and given a corpus of more than two lakhs. Tuberculosis which had taken away Dalpat Rai, the most promising of his brothers in the prime of life, and then the most promising of his sons, Pyare Krishan, when he was barely twenty, naturally claimed his special attention. At the time of 1947 partition of India, the Gulabdevi Hospital was a well-established institution doing highly useful work. Most probably this hospital is still serving the people. This hospital<sup>15</sup> is now working in Jalandhar city (near Burlton Park). From the Jalandhar District Gazetteer (edition of 1980), we get some interesting details. The hospital was first established at Lahore in July 1934 and its foundation stone was laid by Mahatma Gandhi. After partition of the country, it was re-established at Jullundur in January 1955. Now it has extended its activities and is providing medical treatment to a very large number of indoor and outdoor patients.

### **LALA LAJPAT RAI AS REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PEOPLE OF JALANDHAR**

(January 16, 1926 to 17th November, 1928). Raizada Hans Raj, a very great patriot<sup>16</sup> of Jalandhar and President of District Congress Committee, a Bar-at-Law from

U. K., had been elected a member of the Central Legislative Council. Lala Lajpat Rai has undergone an imprisonment of about two years and some of books written by him had been proscribed and banned. Therefore, an interpretation had been given that Lala ji was not eligible for Central Legislature. There was some difference of opinion about his eligibility. Ultimately the British Government of India accepted the view that Lalaji could contest elections. Then Raizada Hansraj made a great personal sacrifice and decided to tender his resignation. Thus, Lalaji became a representative from Jalandhar constituency<sup>17</sup>.

He was again elected in November, 1926 in the General Elections. This time he was elected from the two constituencies (Both East and West Punjab). He had to resign from one of these two seats. He resigned from West Punjab constituency and retained his Jalandhar constituency. He held this seat till his death on 17th November, 1928. It was during this period that he joined<sup>18</sup> the swarajya party headed by Pandit Moti Lal Neeru and Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya. It was also during this period that he not only proposed boycott of Simon Commission, but also got the resolution passed by a majority vote (68 to 62) by Central Assembly.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Thus, Lala Lajpat Rai had a very close connection with Jalandhar. Sain Dass School and Gulab Devi Hospital are permanent reminders of his linkage with Jalandhar. He greatly influenced the life of Pandit Mehr Chand, Founder Principal of D.A.V. College Jalandhar. Pandit Ji was the biggest pillar of D.A. V. Movement in Jalandhar Division in the first half of the twentieth century. All those persons who have received education in any of the D.A.V institutions in Jalandhar or in the neighbouring areas which were connected with Pandit ji, have been indirectly benefitted by the impact of Lalaji upon Pandit ji. He inspired Pandit Mehr Chand to offer his lifelong services to the D.A.V Movement, free of any charge. Similarly, lakhs of persons who have been benefitted from the medical facilities provided by Gulab Devi Hospital, are reminded of the fact that Lala Lajpat Rai had given 2 lakh rupees for the establishment of a T.B. Hospital in memory of his mother Gulab Devi. (It was more than two crores of today as gold was sold Rs. 30 per Tola in those days. Thus, the residents of Jalandhar owe a great debt to Lala Lajpat Rai who helped them to get higher education and also enabled them to have good medical facilities through Gulab Devi Hospital. He had also made an effort to improve the lot of the scheduled castes. Of course, the people had tried to acknowledge their obligation towards him when they elected him twice to the central Legislative Council. We should also not forget the great sacrifice which Raizada Hansraj, Bar-at-Law made when he voluntarily resigned his membership to accommodate Lala Lajpat Rai. In the historic meeting which was held on 30th October, 1928 after lathi blows had been given to Lalaji, Lajpat Rai had said that not only he received blows but "similar blows were struck at Raizada Hans Raj whose hands were profusely bleeding even there on the spot"<sup>19</sup>.

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