

A TALE OF A

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# VISIONARY

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SHRI MANGE RAM GOEL

“LALAJI”

1927 - 1983



## **A 'sun' is born**

As the country stood by watching the social evils of discrimination, illiteracy, and extreme poverty, Shri Pyare Lal and Smt. Ram Kali Devi from a village of Ghaziabad were blessed with a son. The family owned a humble commodity business and held a respectable status in the village.

Eldest of the six siblings, Shri Mange Ram Goel ji, was born on 25th June 1927. Most of his childhood was spent at the Gadhi Navada (present-day Ghaziabad).



Lalaji opened eyes to a society corrupted by illiteracy and poverty. This environment left a mark on the heart of the young and impressionable child that was soon to bring massive influence on the lives of his countrymen.

## **Life of a visionary**

Like many in the village, "Lalaji" set out in the quest for early education, 10 km away from home to his Mama's place. Lalaji's life revolved around bringing a lasting permanent change that would revolutionise education and development. An ardent follower of promoting education to curb the social evils, he believed in the power of literacy to take the country to the top.

In December 1957, he married Smt. Krishna Devi. The couple was blessed with four daughters and three sons.

They say there is a strong woman behind a successful man. The family remembers the immense contribution of Smt. Krishna Devi in Lala Mange Ram ji's lifelong commitment to social work. She supported Lalaji and her sons in their endeavours to do good. Staying at home while the men in the family remained out for months on business pursuits, this iron lady took hold of the household responsibly.

More than preaching his philosophy, Shri Mange Ram ji was among the few who walked the talk. He stood for the education of women, and all his daughters were among the handful of educated women at a time when there were hardly any learning opportunities for women.



This was not an easy feat in the society he grew up in, and his mere encouragement to his daughters to study was an outrageous act of revolt against the societal mind set.

Shri Mange Ram Goel ji having tea with members of the so-called "lower caste" was a common sight for the people in his time. At a time of social persecution and discrimination of the lower castes, Lalaji was way more progressive. On one occasion his teacher, Shiv Murari Lal, belonging to such a societal category, was having tea and when offered the same, without hesitating Lalaji drank from the same cup. This trait alone made him transcend all the restrictions standing in the way of development and prosperity.

Around 1947-50, when walking was the only way of commuting, regardless of the distance, Shri Mange Ram ji was the first to get a "bina ghaas ka ghoda"- a bicycle in the village. Being highly adaptive, open to changes and development focused, Lalaji stood against the social practices that hindered literacy, in every way he could. This man's societal contribution knew no bounds.

In a poverty-stricken society, technology was a luxury reserved for a few. Being the first to bring a television to his village, he would host the people for television streaming and helped them in keeping up with the world. Lalaji's progressive viewpoint proved vital in transforming the state of the people around him. On Sundays, over a hundred people would gather for a delightful evening of cinema at Lalaji's house for their share of leisure.

Shri Mange Ram ji's respect in society was well known. People would come to him to seek blessings for the marriages in the village. The bidai of the bride was thought to be incomplete without Lalaji's presence.

The countless incidents from Lala Mange Ram ji's life became imprinted in the minds of the people around him. His morals, values and philosophy made people gravitate towards him. However, this level of fame and reverence doesn't come easy. At the heart of this man's visionary image, are immense sacrifices.

## Memorable Encounters



*Lalaji's Residence in Loni*

Shri Mange Ram ji worked for bringing people together and always worked for the betterment of society. His encounters with the people of his time and his behaviour with socially outcast people made him an influential personality. So much so that the people who never met him, recognised him from his stature and personality. An aura of spiritual enlightenment accompanies the person who wants to do good for humanity.

The story goes like this; One of the business associates consulted Lalaji over a fantastic deal that involved compromising with quality. Any shrewd businessmen would've taken the deal in an eye-blink, but this man was built differently. Lalaji declined the deal and

cleared his name of dishonesty under the guise of business, once and for all. He was an honest man first and a businessman later.

An incident of his self-sacrificing nature dates back to the time he was around 38 years of age. Being actively involved in the grain business, Lalaji used to travel up and down the village. Loni, being at the height, had rough roads. At one instance, in the pursuit of saving the truck from sabotaging the little shops all along the highway, Lalaji almost lost his leg! The disability was thankfully restored by his efforts and will power within six months. His vow for the greater cause helped him overcome such challenges as well.

On another occasion, Lalaji resolved a dispute within the workers of the brick kiln that was affecting the production. Lalaji's ability to resolve conflicts was recognised by the people of his time. Even the affluent families of the times trusted this common man in a dhoti kurta with some of their most private disputes. Carrying forward the legacy of societal contribution, the family holds a reputation for resolving the troubles and conflicts of the local people to this day.



## Accomplishments



*Kanya Pathshala built by Lalaji in Loni*

In 1962, Lalaji moved to Loni. Being ahead of his times, he knew the importance of good quality of life. Leaving the comforts of his village for the greater good of the society highlights the strong character this man possessed. Nothing caused this man with an iron heart to lose sight of his mission.

The like-minded individuals soon recognised his genius in society, and he came out as an active member of the Panchayat. Lalaji was actively involved in collecting funds and managing functions. People would miss him whenever something went wrong with organising family functions. This man in a simple attire with an intermediate degree knew more about management and business than the white collar graduates of his time. This exceptional management understanding was built over years of sacrifice and courage.

Listing this man's material accomplishments is in no way comparable to the lives he touched. There was a reason why he was well known in over 24 villages that came under Loni District. His work ethic and the calibre for social work helped in playing a pivotal role in transforming the state of his village and other nearby areas.

Whether it is working for a Dharamshala (called the Kanya Pathshala) in a society without coeducation or the establishment of a Devi temple in his area corrupted with



*Durga temple established by Lalaji*

patriarchy; Shri Mange Ram ji stood in the face of adversity as a true visionary. There was only one Shiv temple in his village at that time. He laid the foundation stone for the first Devi temple with his own hands, and his name is still engraved on the walls of the holy place.

Shri Mange Ram ji was the Ramleela Adhyaksh for a significant period of his life and was an active member of the yearly aayojan. A spiritual personality, he believed in the importance of teaching the value of tradition and culture of India in its true colours to the next generations.

He was a person of esteemed presence in the temples and actively worked as a social campaigner for collecting funds and helping people.

His religious inclinations made him a spiritual person who was gifted with an intellect way ahead of his times. From the very beginning, Lalaji saw through the deceptive political speeches and always called for social and communal harmony.

He continued his quest of making education accessible



*Durga temple with Lalaji's name engraved on its walls.*

to all till his last breath. This legacy of promoting education as a sole means for development and prosperity was taken ahead by his able children. After all, the family was a close witness to an exceptionally well-lived life.



## **A life well-lived**

Lalaji believed in the potential of honest hard work and patience in bringing the change you wish to see in the world. Carrying forward the vision of curbing the social evils through active struggle, Lalaji was joined in this journey by a supporting woman, his wife, Smt Krishna Devi. She stood by him all his life and kept the family strong.

Lalaji not only preached but lived the principle of "Niyat mein Barkat hai" (there is a virtue in intentions). His devotion towards bringing societal change and doing things with a clean heart made him a memorable personality in the hearts of hundreds of people. His concept of "padhana zaroori hai" (education is necessary) was monumental in transforming the lives of people from his own and nearby villages. In brief, it would be appropriate to sum up his vision as 'Be the source of knowledge.'

However, none of Lala Mange Ram ji's accomplishments happened in a day. Establishing a successful business of Kirana and a thriving brick kiln meant a lot of work. It was the slow, relentless progress that helped him become a visionary. The tremendous patience and gratitude this man possessed has become an inspiration for generations.

Lalaji never relied on bookish knowledge in his approach to life. His commendable stature and people skills were not a result of learning from posh seminars and splurging on university tuition. It was a rightfully earned result of perseverance and resilience that helped him win people wherever he went.

Shri Mange Ram ji's life story is proof that there are no shortcuts to success. Good things take time, and if you are patient and honest, your life will be remembered by generations to come as an inspiration!

Community members, villagers, family and friends fondly recall Lalaji's forward-thinking and regard his life as an inspiration for the youth. At the age of 56, Shri Mange Ram ji's sudden demise left an undying flame of a lifelong commitment to society in the able hands of his family members.

## Honouring The Legacy



*The hall built in the memory of Lalaji by his sons in dharamshala of Loni.*

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Lala Mange Ram ji believed in the potential of good parenting and refrained from using anger. Disciplining his children with love and understanding, he exemplified the principle of producing societal change starting from his own home.

Being born and raised by a visionary, the sons carried the business forward. Inheriting his father's business acumen and honest traits, Shri Davender Kumar worked to expand the business. By the year 1995, the family became one of the greatest exporters of rice all over the country. Back in the day Saraswati Trading Company became immensely popular in Punjab and even Delhi, including the markets like Naya Bazaar.

Valuing Lalaji's philosophy of "kuchh saath nhi jaayega" (Nothing will go with you), the family remains actively involved in social contribution. Today, Shri Davender Kumar, is a trustee in Maharaja Agrasen Hospital, Rohini, Maharaja Agrasen School, Ashok Vihar and a regular contributor to the Ekal Vidyalaya foundation. Carrying forward the vision of his father, he had set up an educational institution of par



excellence in New Delhi's Rohini area. He has been running this school, actively contributing to the field of imparting quality education for the past eight years.

Stemming from Lalaji's vision all the ventures of the family were rightly named after his initials-MRG. Their current residence is now named as the MRG house. The MRG group umbrella became the driving force behind successful establishments like MRG World Pvt Ltd and MRG Global.



*The residence of Lalaji's son named after his initials.*

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In continuation with this legacy of producing social change, the next generation of the family is relaunching the eight years old school with enhanced education system and infrastructure by the glorious name - MRG School. With traits of honesty and relentless social work from their grandfather, Rajat Goel ji and Ujjwal Goel ji are the brains behind this project of imparting knowledge in its true essence to the young, impressionable minds! They intend to take the vision of their grandfather and their father by taking the school to new unprecedented heights.



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