

GURU GOBIND SINGH JI - HIS MISSION AND VISION

ARTICLE

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INTRODUCTION

When Guru Gobind Singh was called upon to assume the leadership of Sikhs, the circumstances were not congenial. Sikh movement was committed to usher in an era of liberalism in politics, social affairs and religious field. The Government headed by Aurangzeb was not in a mood to tolerate any movement. Sarmad, a score of Muslim Sufis and Guru Tegh Bahadur had to suffer execution because of their liberal views in the sphere of religion and social system. Even the internal administrative organization of the Sikhs, known as *Masand System*, had gone rotten. The *Masands* had become corrupt and extremely selfish. Hindu masses were completely demoralized. Hill Rajas were more interested in their feudal interests than in their people. The Sikhs had yet to come out of the shock they had suffered in the wake of the unjust execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur. Besides this, the age factor also did not favour the Guru.

Guru's resources, were also very scanty¹. Guru Ji was faced with a very daunting task of giving a suitable reply to different challenges without resorting to atrocities and meanness. A suitable reply he gave without relegating the moral values. Guru Gobind Singh, succeeded in leading the Sikhs in such a way that they became instrument of progress, not only of the community to which they belonged but also of their country, even of the whole humankind. In this process, he exhibited remarkable insight into the human nature, their psychological reactions and responses to different problems and challenges, and into the contemporary social mechanism².

Guru's Vision

Guru Gobind Singh was a magnanimous soul. His vision, creation (the Khalsa) and his literary writing all have a common link. He gave expression to the doctrinal ideology of *Gurmat* through his writings²⁻³. As a further elaboration and extension of this ideology, he started a war for the freedom and upliftment of society. Thereby devoting himself completely

ABSTRACT

Guru Gobind Singh, the tenth Sikh Guru, was a divine preceptor and crusader for noble cause of human welfare. He was a great religious leader, a poet and a mystic, a true scholar and philosopher. He was also a fearless warrior and a military commander, who always fought against tyranny and oppression, to establish a just and benign state. In his hymns of 'Bachitar Natak', he proclaimed his mission as 'to protect the righteous, oppressed and downtrodden people and to destroy the evil-doers'. He stressed on the unity between humans, rejected all sorts of discriminations and preached equality and goodwill.

Being a prolific writer and a poet of rare sensibility, Guru Gobind Singh greatly enriched the literary heritage of India. His poetic vision depicts the glorious epitome of medieval Indian literary traditions. Through his compositions, he enunciated a doctrine of armed struggle for the protection of truth and justice. The fusion of the devotional and martial, of the spiritual and the heroic ethos is the most important feature of his literary work and his charismatic leadership.

With his spiritual dynamism, he attempted to reconcile the transcendent with the immanent through his creation of the Khalsa. The commonwealth of the Khalsa was founded based on all round equality and total dedication to one Supreme Reality. Guru Gobind Singh was a pioneer Indian leader to introduce republican set up and democratic institutions. His teachings have great relevance for the modern man to build a global society with a commitment to peace and goodwill across all sorts of constraints and geographical boundaries.

through discourses and deeds, Guru ji totally transformed the very face of Indian society.

With a view to create a society, free from exploitation and

tyranny, he spelt out his aim - "*Dharam yudh ko chao*" (Aspiration for a war of Righteousness). To create such a society, he envisioned an ideal human being imbued with absolute faith in the God. Departing from the purely idealistic tradition of Indian philosophy, which holds that the material world was unreal, he regarded material things a reality and wanted that men should endeavour to improve their material world. For that matter, the struggle of the Guru revolved around the establishment of the rule of the virtuous and the elimination of the evildoers.

ਧਰਮ ਚਲਾਵਨ ਸੰਤ ਉਬਾਰਨ ॥

ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਨ ਕੇ ਮੂਲ ਉਪਾਰਨ ॥

(I have been born) to spread Dharma, and protect saints, and root out tyrants and evil-minded persons.

(Akal Purakh Bach, Chaupai, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 58)

ਅਵਰ ਬਾਸਨਾ ਨਾਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਧਰਮ ਜੁੱਧ ਕੇ ਚਾਇ ॥

O Lord! I have no other desire and have only the zeal for the war fought based on righteousness. (SDGS, p 1134)

He wanted his followers to struggle and strive to be God-like. Even in the midst of the material battles, he stole time to sit and mutter 'Thou art, Thou art' the only reality. He preached genuine love for 'God' and his creation. He stressed that it meant to be loving, caring and being successful in this world. Thereby, a Sikh looks upon the world as a genuine place to live, enjoy and to elevate himself. Thus *Khalsa*, his creation, became an inspired group of men surcharged with the spirit of participating in the world, to improve and ensure its progress.

Guru's Approach

He employed theology, literature, poetry and philosophy to prepare the mind of the people to serve his purpose. Through training and education, he succeeded in transforming the psyche of the people. Thereby the potentialities, which lay dormant under the killing weight of the Mughal despotism and the outworn social system as imposed by Hinduism,

were awakened and forged into a dynamic force to live and die for the sake of truth and righteousness⁴⁻⁵.

ਧੰਨ ਜੀਓ ਤਿਹ ਕੇ ਜਗ ਮੈ ਮੁਖ ਤੇ ਹਰਿ ਚਿੱਤ ਮੈ

ਜੁਧੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੈ ॥

ਦੇਹ ਅਨਿੱਤ ਨ ਨਿੱਤ ਰਹੈ ਜਸੁ ਨਾਵ ਚੜੈ

ਭਵਸਾਗਰ ਤਾਰੈ ॥

ਧੀਰਜ ਧਾਮ ਬਨਾਇ ਇਹੈ ਤਨ ਖੁੱਧਿ ਸੁ ਦੀਪਕ

ਜਿਉ ਉਜੀਆਰੈ ॥

ਗਯਾਨਹਿ ਕੀ ਬਢਨੀ ਮਨਹੁ ਹਾਥ ਲੈ ਕਾਤਰਤਾ

ਕੁਤਵਾਰ ਬੁਹਾਰੈ ॥

Bravo to the soul of that person, who remembers the Lord through his mouth and reflects in his mind about the war of righteousness; who considers this body the war of righteousness; who considers this body as transient, ascends the boat of Lords' praise and ferries across the dreadful ocean of the world; Who makes this body as the abode of forbearance and enlightens it with the lamp of intellect and who taking the broom of knowledge in his hand sweeps away the rubbish of cowardice. (Sri Krishan Avtar, Bachitar Natak, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 570)

ਸਾਚੁ ਕਰੋ ਸੁਨ ਲੇਹੁ ਸਭੈ ਜਿਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੀਓ ਤਿਨ

ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਪਾਇਓ ॥

I speak Truth, all should turn their ears towards it: he, who is absorbed in True Love, he would realize the Lord.

(Akal Ustat, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 14)

Living Separateness (*Niarapan*)

Guru's vision that his followers must keep up 'living separateness' was another noble idea. He asked his disciples to keep themselves in 'living separateness' (as long as the *Khalsa* keeps up its living separateness, it will enjoy all my prestige). By living separateness, he meant that his disciples having raised themselves to the ideals he had set for them should be conscious of it and ever remain vigilant that they were not swallowed up by the environment whose improvement was yet to be effected. This was a unique contribution, because it has been

observed that the cultural-pattern, which gives up its living separateness and neglects its self-defence, is bound to be swallowed up.

ਜਬ ਲਗ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥

ਤਬ ਲਗ ਤੇਜ ਕੀਉ ਮੈ ਸਾਰਾ ॥

ਜਬ ਇਹ ਗਹੈ ਬਿਪਰਨ ਕੀ ਰੀਤ ॥

ਮੈ ਨ ਕਰੋਂ ਇਨ ਕੀ ਪਾਰਤੀਤ ॥

While the Khalsa stays true, I will offer my full support.

When they follow the ways of others, I will withdraw my assistance from them.

(Khalsa Mehima, Sarabloh Granth)

Guru's Mission and Vision as a Leader

His mission as a leader was not to lead the people in the context of contemporary circumstances but also to make them conscious of their role, even in the times to come. Guru did not allow his following to develop narrow religious patriotism. He exhorted them to enlarge their vision to awaken to the ideals of establishing the rule of the virtue all over the world⁶. The *Khalsa* was his noble creation with its face to the future.

ਜਾਗਤਿ ਜੇਤ ਜਪੈ ਨਿਸ ਬਾਸੁਰ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਮਨ
ਨੈਕ ਨ ਆਨੈ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਸਜੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਗੋਰ ਮਤੀ ਮਟ ਭੂਲ
ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

ਤੀਰਥ ਦਾਨ ਦਇਆ ਤਪ ਸੰਜਮ ਏਕ ਬਿਨਾ ਨਹ
ਏਕ ਪਛਾਨੈ ॥

ਪੂਰਨ ਜੇਤ ਜਗੈ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਤਬ ਖਾਲਸ ਤਾਹਿ
ਨਖਾਲਸ ਜਾਨੈ ॥

He is the true Khalsa (Sikh), who remembers the ever-awakened Light throughout night and day and does not bring anyone else in the mind; he practices his vow with whole hearted affection and does not believe in even by oversight, the graves, Hindu monuments and monasteries; He does not recognize anyone else except One Lord, not even the bestowal of charities, performance of merciful acts, austerities and restraint on pilgrim-stations; the perfect light of the Lord illuminates his heart, then consider him as the immaculate Khalsa.

(Swayyas, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 712)

He enjoined⁷⁻¹⁰ upon his followers that they were *Akal Purakh ki Fauj* (Army of the Almighty) and they should continue to strive to see that a society, where there is no exploitation and no discrimination on the basis of cast, creed, clime, wealth, birth and sex and there is freedom of expression, of adopting any profession and where everyone has a right to hold his head high and where mutual love for each other is established.

ਦੇਹ ਸਿਵਾ ਬਰੁ ਮੋਹਿ ਇਹੈ ਸੁਭ ਕਰਮਨ ਤੇ ਕਬਹੂੰ
ਨ ਟਰੋ ॥

ਨ ਡਰੋ ਅਰਿ ਸੇ ਜਬ ਜਾਇ ਲਰੋ ਨਿਸਚੈ ਕਰਿ
ਅਪੁਨੀ ਜੀਤ ਕਰੋ ॥

ਅਰੁ ਸਿਖ ਹੋ ਆਪਨੇ ਹੀ ਮਨ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਲਾਲਚ ਹਉ
ਗੁਨ ਤਉ ਉਚਰੋ ॥

ਜਬ ਆਵ ਕੀ ਅਉਧ ਨਿਦਾਨ ਬਨੈ ਅਤਿ ਹੀ ਰਨ
ਮੈ ਤਬ ਜੂਝ ਮਰੋ ॥

O God, grant me this that I may not hesitate from performing good actions. I may not fear the enemy, when I go to fight and assuredly, I may become victorious. And I may give this instruction to my mind and have this temptation that I may ever utter Thy Praises. When the end of my life comes, then I may die fighting in the battlefield.
(Epilogue to 'Chandi Charitar, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 99)

Though Guru Gobind Singh exhorted his followers to be ever ready for war of righteousness (*Dhram Yudh*), but use of arms was recommended¹¹ as the last resort when all other options of a peaceful resolution of a situation fail. Even then, *Khalsa* was censured to use the force of arms against helpless or weak.

ਚੁ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਰ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜਸਤ ॥

ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸ਼ੀਰ ਦਸਤ ॥

When all other methods fail, it is proper to hold the sword in hand.

(Zafarnamah - The Epistle of Victory, Dasam Granth, p 1471)

ਮਜਨ ਤੇਗ ਬਰੁ ਖੁਨਿ ਕਸ ਬੇ ਦਰੇਗ ॥

ਤੁਰਾ ਨੀਜ ਖੂੰ ਚਰਖ ਰੇਜਦ ਬਤੇਗ ॥

Do not be rash in striking your sword on helpless, otherwise the Providence will shed your blood.

(Zafarnamah, Dasam Granth, 1474)

Political Vision

Sikh Gurus as is evident from their utterances, wanted to establish an order where goodness should prevail and unrighteousness eliminated; and where people should have absolute faith in the oneness of God. The Gurus evolved a new form of government¹⁰ to which Guru Gobind Singh gave the name of *Khalsa Raj*—Divine kingdom; though its five beloved ones who happened to belong to five castes and five regions of India: Bhai Daya Singh, a Kashatariya, belongs to Punjab; Bhai Mohkam Singh, a washerman from Dwarka (Gujrat); Bhai Sahib Singh, a Barber from Deccan; Bhai Dharam Singh, a *jat* from (U.P.) and Bhai Himmat Singh, a Cook from Jagannath Puri in the Eastern India. He thus, in a unique way, secured an inter-regional unity of India. He made all the representatives to eat from the same pan and the Guru himself ate from the same container. The attempt at inter-regional unity and inter-communal identity besides being a divine act was also a political weapon. The Guru was planning for the establishment of the *Khalsa Commonwealth*. Corresponding to these five regional representations, Sikhs have five regional seats of authority, for Eastern India, the throne of Patna, for the Deccan the throne at Nanded (Hazur Sahib), for the Panjab, at *Akal Takht Sahib* at Amritsar, for the hilly Himachal at Anandpur and for the Southern Punjab in Takht Damdama Sahib. Five regions of India, five seats of authority, five representative beloved ones, thus wise the Guru wanted to establish the Republic of the Five⁷⁻¹⁰.

The martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur was symbolic of the assertion of the fundamental right to freedom of conscience, and freedoms of religion,

belief and practices both on individual and corporate levels. For the Guru, this freedom was not an empirical expediency in religiously heterogeneous society, but had a transcendent value. This transcendent value was described by Guru Gobind Singh as *Dharma* in *Bachittar Natak*. According to him, *Dharma*, has a characteristic of multi-religious, multi-cultural and multi-ethnic society. Sikh Gurus sought to evolve a perspective consisting of composite integrated Indian/global society based on religion and political pluralism. It was in furtherance of this historical mission that the Sikh Gurus envisaged a non-sectarian, non-communal, all-inclusive integrated polity wherein there would be no room for religious, social or political exclusiveness.

Religious Vision

Guru Gobind Singh's religious vision was also striking and tinged with the revolutionary fervour. He repeatedly pointed out that his religion did not consist in turning increasingly towards veiled stones, nor in approaching altars or in throwing one self-prostrated on the ground, nor raising the hands before gods, or deluging the temples with the blood of the beasts, not in keeping vows, but in beholding the height of God within a peaceful soul, in dedicating one's mind, heart and soul to the service of humanity, which is the highest manifestation of the spirit of God²⁻³.

ਕਾਰੂ ਲੈ ਪਾਹਨ ਪੂਜ ਧਰਯੇ ਸਿਰ ਕਾਰੂ ਲੈ ਲਿੰਗ
ਗਰੇ ਲਟਕਾਇਓ ॥

ਕਾਰੂ ਲਖਿਓ ਹਰਿ ਅਵਾਚੀ ਦਿਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਕਾਰੂ
ਪਛਾਹ ਕੇ ਸੀਸੁ ਨਿਵਾਇਓ ॥

ਕੇਉ ਬੁਤਾਨ ਕੇ ਪੂਜਤ ਹੈ ਪਸੁ ਕੇਉ ਮ੍ਰਿਤਾਨ ਕੇ
ਪੂਜਨ ਯਾਇਓ ॥

ਕੂਰ ਕ੍ਰਿਆ ਉਰਿਝਓ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਜਗ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਭਗਵਾਨ ਕੇ
ਭੇਦੁ ਨ ਯਾਇਓ ॥

Someone worships stone and places it on his head. Someone hangs the phallus from his neck. Someone visualizes God in the South and someone bows his head towards the West. Some worship the idols and some worship the dead. The

whole world is entangled in false rituals and has not known the secret of Lord-God.

(Akaal Ustat, Dasam Granth, p 42)

Guru's Social Vision

A close study of the life of Guru Gobind Singh, his precepts¹² and his utterances lead us to the conclusion that the Guru's Social Vision has four pronounced ingredients. These are social equality, universal-brotherhood, seeking well of all (altruism) and social service. These ingredients are inter-related and interactive. Altruism and social service are, in fact, practical measures to realize universal brotherhood. He was very vocal and copious in his comments upon the contemporary social institutions, which instead of unifying humankind on the principle of social equality propped up the inequitable and inquisitorial social organisations and social ethics. Guru Gobind Singh subscribed to what his predecessor Gurus had determined and established. He carried forward the work they had commenced or had conceived to be done. The Guru spared no pains to strengthen the institutions of *Guru Ka Langar* (Guru's free kitchen), *Sangat*, *Kirtan* as they were great levelers and unifying agencies.

The Guru declared¹³ caste a taboo in the *Order of the Khalsa*. He declared categorically, "There is no consideration of caste or membership of *Varnas*." He is all sympathy for the downtrodden and the so-called low-caste people. He remarked, "True service is the service of those people, I am not inclined to serve others of higher castes. Charity will bear fruit, in this and the next world, if given to such worthy people as these. All other sacrifices and charities are profitless. From top to toe whatever I call my own, all I possess or carry, I dedicate to these people." It was in this context that Guru Gobind Singh spoke, "Consider all humankind of one caste alone."

Sikhism teaches the followers to build a social structure based on universal goodwill, love for each other, equality, fraternity and *Sarbat-Da-Bhala*. It

believes in individual as well as collective prosperity. It preaches that the human beings are sons and daughters of the same universal father (God). All of them have the same aim of realizing the ultimate Reality. Human race is one. Guru Gobind Singh proclaimed in his hymns of Akal Ustat:

ਕੇਉ ਭਇਓ ਮੁੰਡੀਆ ਸੰਨਿਆਸੀ ਕੇਉ ਜੇਗੀ ਭਇਓ
ਕੇਉ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਚਾਰੀ ਕੇਉ ਜਤੀ ਅਨੁਮਾਨਬੇ ॥

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕੇਉ ਰਾਫਜੀ ਇਮਾਮ ਸਾਫੀ ਮਾਨਸ ਕੀ
ਜਾਤਿ ਸਬੈ ਏਕੈ ਪਹਿਚਾਨਬੇ ॥

Somebody became a Bairagi (recluse), somebody a Sannyasi (mendicant). Somebody a Yogi, somebody a Brahmchari (student observing celibacy) and someone is considered a celibate. Someone is Hindu and someone a Muslim, then someone is Shia, and someone a Sunni, but all the human beings, as a species, are recognized as one and the same.

(Akal Ustat, Dasam Granth, Vol 1, p 19)

Bhai Nand Lal, the court poet of Guru Gobind Singh, has recorded in his *Rehatnama* that the Guru had decided⁴⁻⁵ to merge four *Varnas* into one and lead them to God. On 2nd November, 1675, Bhai Jaita, the sweeper, known as *Rangretta* (a man of low caste) carried the sacred head of Guru Tegh Bahadur from Delhi to Kiratpur where Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Gujri and Reverend Mother Nanki came to receive it to carry it in a palanquin to Anandpur. Guru Gobind Singh greeted Bhai Jaita affectionately and blessed his whole clan by conferring on it the honorific *Rangrette Guru Ke Bete* (*Rangrettas* are the Guru's sons). Significantly, the Guru's utterance embodied a message that the deeds determined the status and not the caste/profession or birth. The Guru's priorities from the day one were very clear that society based on caste/birth should be discarded and a fresh one be reconstructed on the bases of love for all, equal rights for all, divinity of individuals, dignity of labour and faith in the singularity and unicity of God with a commitment to improve upon the lot of the people.

A family, comprising of several individuals, is a basic unit of human society. Guru Gobind Singh emphasised the importance of family life, but one is advised to live a life free of five evils (lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego). He stressed that one must practice patience, humility, compassion and forgiveness.

ਰੇ ਮਨ ਐਸੇ ਕਰਿ ਸੰਨਿਆਸਾ॥

ਬਨ ਸੇ ਸਦਨ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਿ ਸਮਝਹੁ ਮਨ ਹੀ ਮਾਰਿ
ਉਦਾਸਾ॥੧॥ਰਹਾਉ॥

ਜਤ ਕੀ ਜਟਾ ਜੇਗ ਕੇ ਮੱਜਨੁ ਨੇਮ ਕੇ ਨਖਨ ਬਢਾਓ॥
ਗਯਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਆਤਮ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ਹੁ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਭੂਤ ਲਗਾਓ
॥੧॥

ਅਲਪ ਅਹਾਰ ਸੁਲਾਪ ਸੀ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦਯਾ ਛਿਮਾ ਤਨ
ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ॥

ਸੀਲ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਬਾਹਿਬੋ ਰ੍ਹੈਬੋ ਤ੍ਰਿਗੁਣ ਅਤੀਤਿ
॥੨॥

ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਲੇਭ ਹਠ ਮੋਹ ਨ ਮਨ ਸੇ ਲਯਾਵੈ ॥
ਤਬ ਹੀ ਆਤਮ ਤਤ ਕੇ ਦਰਸੇ ਪਰਮ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਹ
ਪਾਵੈ ॥੩॥੧॥

O mind ! The asceticism be practised in this way: Consider your house as the forest and remain unattached within yourself.....Pause. Consider continence as the matted hair, Yoga as the ablution and daily observances as your nails, consider the knowledge as the preceptor giving lessons to you and apply the Name of the Lord as ashes.1. Eat less and sleep less, cherish mercy and forgiveness; Practise gentleness and contentment and remain free from three modes.2. Keep your mind unattached from lust, anger, greed, insistence and infatuation, then you will visualize the supreme essence and realise the supreme Purusha.3.1.

(Ramkali, Dasam Patshah, Dasam Granth, Page 1345)

Legacy

The main contribution of Guru Gobind Singh was developing the concept *Khalsa* or *Sant-Sipahi*. He through his creation of *Khalsa*, turned the concept of *Sachiyar* (being Truthful) of Guru Nanak, into a social ideal and an active ideal. *Khalsa* is the dialectical pair of the *Sachiyar*. As their foundations were the same, one

easily turns into another. *Sachiyar* is more of contemplative type whereas the *Khalsa* ideal is practical.

To understand the long term impact of Guru Gobind Singh on Indian and world map, it is good to see the appraisal of his contributions, as done by various writers, scholars and historians.

Hakim Allah Yaar Khan Jogi, a renowned poet, has elaborated on Guru Gobind Singh's contribution towards opposition to the tyranny of Islamic rulers as;
ਨਾ ਕਹੂ ਅਬ ਕੀ, ਨਾ ਕਹੂ ਤਬ ਕੀ, ਅਗਰ ਨਾ ਹੋਤੇ
ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸੁੰਨਤ ਹੋਤੀ ਸਭ ਕੀ॥

Neither will I talk of present, nor of the future. Had there been no Guru Gobind Singh, all would have been under Islamic sway (circumcised).

Cunningham, a noted Historian proclaimed: *"Through the creation of Khalsa, Guru Gobind Singh roused the dormant energies of a vanquished people and filled them with a lofty thoughtful longing for social freedom and national ascendancy. Thus, the Khalsa, by virtue of their faith to fight tyranny at all costs, engendered by Guru Gobind Singh, rose as a political force to be reckoned with."*

Field Marshal (Sir) Archibald Wavell, who has been Viceroy and Governor-General of India, during Oct. 1941- Feb. 1947 reported¹⁴ about the bravery of Sikhs as: *"Never met a despondent Sikh in the front line, in a hospital, in the rear, he may moan over a small wound but in a fight, he will go on to his last breath and die laughing at the thought of paradise with the battle cry of "Bole so Nihal Sat Sri Akaal" as he falls"*.

Pearl S. Buck, a Nobel Laureate, describes the legacy of Guru Gobind Singh as: *"The creation of the Khalsa was the greatest work of the Guru. He created a type of superman, a universal man of God, casteless and country less.....The Khalsa was the spearhead of resistance against tyranny"*.

Dr. Zakir Hussain, The late President of India, reported on the indelible

contributions of Sikh Gurus and their creation - Khalsa towards eradication of tyranny and injustice as: *"So long as the instinctive dread and hatred of tyranny is alive in man, so long as quiet but unmistakable voice of his conscience, that brooks no compromise under political threat and pressure, is not stilled in him, and so long as the disgust for social inequalities, religious fanaticism, hollow ceremonies and rites remain an active condition of his mind, the world will not easily forget the name of Guru Nanak and of his supreme successor, Guru Gobind Singh."*

Swami Vivekananda, an Indian Hindu monk, has described the rejuvenation of the spirit of India by the Great Guru as: *"Guru Gobind Singh by a flash of his sword filled the dying soul of India with life-giving light and truth, and Lo! It shone in its glory again in the life of newborn Khalsa! The light of reality had kindled the spark of life again in the dying soul of India."*

Professor Puran Singh, a renowned poet and litterateur, apprised Guru Gobind Singh's contribution towards fight for justice as: *"Khalsa lived poised in sword's sharp edge, and died kissing its cold steel. Indeed iron had gone into his soul at his nativity. But it would be a great mistake to associate the Khalsa with wanton wars and bloodshed. He took to the sword because of a crisis of conscience."*

CONCLUSIONS

Guru Gobind Singh envisioned and worked to cultivate a society of saint-soldiers, which became a nation in its own right. To this end he laid an extreme emphasis on self-determination via weapons, both politically and spiritually. The political weapon, which he gave to the Sikhs is the sword, whereas the spiritual weapon is the *sabd* (Word). Along with this he gave a distinct identity and way of life to the Sikhs, which makes them unique from predecessor religious traditions.

The creation of *Khalsa* was an extraordinary mission of the Guru Gobind Singh. Just as the Guru (according to his own writings and belief) was the chosen instrument of God for restraining men from senseless acts, so his Sikhs of the *Khalsa* order were the willing agents for working out that mission. Thus, the *Khalsa* was the body of humankind always at war for destroying the evil and protecting righteousness.

The creation of the *Khalsa* was not merely an endeavour to integrate the members of his community; it was also a powerful bid for the culmination of the mission set in motion by his predecessors in the field of social and religious life. From sociological point of view, the *Khalsa* represented a new mosaic where tribal or caste affiliations had no room, nor were the superstitions, demeaning ceremonies and empty rituals given any accreditation status. It stood for broad outlook transcending parochial prejudices. Even the differences on the basis of religion were considered irrelevant. The *Khalsa* stood for righteousness, social equality, faith in *Nirgun (formless)* God, honest labour, and division of its fruit and repudiation of all types of exploitation. Evidently, this type of social pattern was greatly successful in arousing the dormant energies of the people and making them flow into the channel, which fed the national stream of the country.

In the religious sphere, *Khalsa* as a corporate body was equalitarian *inter se*, as well as in terms of relation to the Guru himself. In 1699, Guru Gobind Singh first administered baptism to the select five and then himself received baptism from them. By doing so, he underscored the point that there was complete identification between the Guru and the *Khalsa*. The fact has been very clearly brought out in *Sarabh Loh Granth* as well as in a *Var* by Bhai Gurdas Singh who overwhelmed by a sense of wonderment exclaimed, *"Let all of us hail and greet Guru Gobind Singh who was Guru and Disciple at one and the same time."*

By the Guru's reforms, the Sikh community was not only strengthened but also converted into a great vehicle of revolution. Consequently, the *Khalsa* had to launch a titanic struggle first against the Mughals and then against the Afghans who ruled over Punjab, the territory where the overwhelming majority of the Sikhs lived. The struggle continued until the *Khalsa* emancipated the land and established their sovereignty in 1765 after the conquest of Sirhind. Later on rise of 11 Misls and thereafter establishment of the Kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Punjab made the dream of Sikh sovereignty a reality. Thus, Guru Gobind Singh's farsighted vision has laid down solid foundations for the success of his everlasting mission of fight for the righteousness and against

tyranny and injustice. His teachings have great relevance for the modern man to build a global society with a commitment to peace and goodwill across all sorts of constraints and geographical boundaries.

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