

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

# THE SIKH REVIEW

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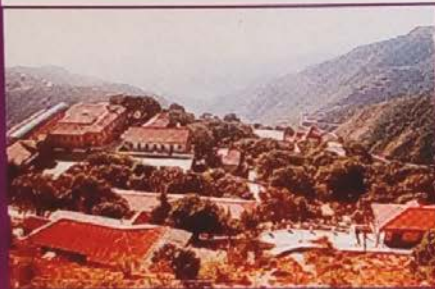


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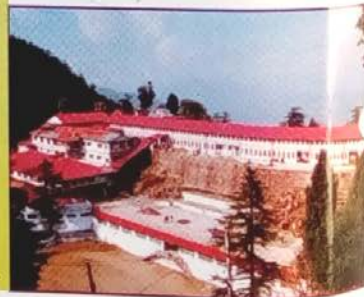
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A STATE OF BLISS IS ATTAINABLE  
IN COMMUNION

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਸਲੋਕੁ ਮਃ ੳ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਾਤਿ ਹੈ ਮਨਿ ਤਨਿ ਨਾਮਿ ਸਮਾਦਿ ॥

ਨਾਮੋ ਚਿਤਵੈ ਨਾਮੁ ਪੜੈ ਨਾਮਿ ਰਹੈ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਮੁ ਪਦਾਰਥੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਗਈ ਬਿਲਾਇ ॥

ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਤਿਸਨਾ ਭੁਖ ਸਭ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੇ ਰਤਿਆ ਨਾਮੋ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥੧॥

[SGGS: 653]

**Translation**

Within the God-oriented reigns blissful peace - their mind and body  
in Holy Name absorbed.

The Name they contemplate; the Name *their* focus.

In the Name their minds absorbed.

As blessing of Holy Name all worries are dispelled.

By contact with the holy Guru arises *devotion* to the Divine;

All temptation and avarice disappear.

Saith Nanak: By attachment to Holy Name is realization attained.

---

\* Based on translation by Prof. Gurbachan Singh Talib.



## ‘Kesh’ - An intrinsic Ordainment for Sikhs

DIMPY GURVINDER SINGH\*

“*Sikhi keshâ suasâ sang nibhai, Tinha dee kamaee da dhyan dhar key, Khalsa ji, bolo ji Waheguru*”, a Sikh prays daily in the *Ardas* (or supplication) to God, either at the collective level of the *sangat* (congregation) in a Gurdwara or at the personal level in the privacy of one’s home.

What does it mean? Those who equated one’s life’s breath with the *kesh* (scalp hair) and who followed Sikhi by maintaining *kesh* till the last, even under life-threatening situations, but never gave up being a Sikh; remembering the sacrifices made by them, say Waheguru O’wondrous Lord.

**Elemental:** *Kesh* - the elemental gift as one of the five *kakaars* ordained by Guru Gobind Singh Ji to keep and maintain. Keeping uncut hair is the hallmark of a Sikh. A Sikh is identified by the *Kesh* and *Dastaar* (turban) as protection and adornment. When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa out of a pious Sikh, a great psychological transformation took place. Any other human being can hide in the multitude of a crowd, but how can a Sikh hide himself? The physical identity given to a Sikh – that of maintaining and keeping uncut hair on one’s head makes it child’s play to spot such a person. One need not ask that person who he/she is – it is understood that the person is in all probability a Sikh. Giving a physical iden-

tity to his followers, Guru Gobind Singh Ji shattered the ‘fear factor’ and thus, were ‘hawks born out of sparrows’. It needs tremendous courage to stand up for one’s faith. A Sikh is always taken for granted as a fearless and bold person, who can do anything under the sun, not caring for anyone other than what the Guru commands.

**Love & Loyalty:** A Sikh is a learner and a disciple of one’s Guru. How can a *chela* not be in love with one’s Guru? A Guru becomes the trend setter. Whatever one’s Guru says, one follows each and every command and does not dare to challenge or refute. If I love someone, it is quite natural that I shall not disobey that person and whatever the person likes and wants me to do, I shall do without any hesitation, what the Guru commands. Whatever I do shall be within the gamut and benchmark of the Guru’s teachings.

The love and loyalty arise out of the respect I develop for someone due to the virtuous qualities present in that person. A person is identified, liked and respected due to the presence of extraordinary qualities. The sacrifices made by Guru Gobind Singh Ji and His family are extra-ordinary and unforgettable. How can a Sikh forget the sacrifices made also by Guru Tegh Bahadur, Guru Arjun Dev, Bhai Taru Singh, and by all those Sikhs who gave

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up their lives but never gave up *Sikhi*. How lucky am I to be one of the descendants of Guru Nanak's transmitted ideology and revolutionary thoughts that freed me from the '*janama, janama dey bharam*' (doubts and delusions accumulated from a multitude of births).

**Futurist:** Had the hair 'ordination' for Sikhs not been decreed intrinsic by Guru Gobind Singh - Sikhs would have long ago been sucked into the 'black hole' of the majority community. Keeping uncut Keshas is the unspoken commitment, which universally declares, "Come what may, I shall never give up my Sikh Way of Life and my faith."

There are many hidden agendas with ulterior motives all over India to erase the identity of the Sikhs with subtle attacks made (by the Arya Samajists in particular) since pre-independence. The continuous ridiculing of Sikhs in the media, specially the impudent Bollywood films, and puerile 'Sardar ji' jokes, since independence from British Rule, has created a deep dent in the psychology of Sikh youth to create a sub-conscious feeling of inferiority complex for oneself.

**Self-serving History Books:** At the educational front, Indian school history books have never given the due respect that the Sikh Gurus' sacrifices highly deserve. Another attack is the attempt of (the RSS instigated) conspirators who intend changing the terminology of Guru Granth Sahib. When will the Sikh leaders learn that Guru Granth Sahib bears the final seal of the Tenth Master? Whoever dares

to tamper with the Holy Granth of the Sikhs is the gravest enemy of the Sikh Panth? No effort should be spared to counter such forces even at the cost of one's seat of power and, if required, to put at stake one's life too. Shouldn't the same criteria be followed when anyone dishonors any of the *Kakaars* of a Sikh?

**Outrage:** The recent incident in Jaipur of a Sikh school boy in his teens whose hair was forcibly tonsured by a group of miscreant youngsters in a melodramatic manner, apart from relevance of the instigation due to the involvement of a girl, portrays the psyche of the non-Sikh community who dare to touch a 'key article' of the Sikh Faith in fits of rage, resentment and hostility. How can a true Sikh at heart sit mute and not protest over such audacity and insult meted to a fellow Sikh?

All Sikhs have to become alert and aware that no one, [I repeat, no one] can dare to play, touch or dishonor the hair, hallmark of a Sikh and expect to get away unpunished. Sikhs all over India are deeply hurt and seething in anger, wanting immediate justice for the Sikh teenager and timely punishment for the guilty. It is comforting to note that the Sikh Federation of U.K. has offered support on behalf of a number of Sikh organizations in Great Britain and elsewhere, which is crucial at this juncture. Perhaps, 'an online declaration' to condemn the action can influence the Indian Sikh leaders to take a strict stance on this sentimental issue.

It is equally essential to make the non-

Sikh communities aware of the need to respect the Articles of Faith of a Sikh. Mere staging of demonstrations, peace rallies and submitting petitions to the Governor (like the one held at Mumbai, Delhi and Kolkata) is not the final solution. What purpose will the Commission appointed by the S.G.P.C. serve?

**Strategy:** A double-pronged strategy needs to be adopted. The civil and criminal laws in India need to be amended with respect to the minority Sikh community. A Bill has to be presented in Parliament whereby honoring and giving due respect to the Articles of Faith of the Sikh community be made mandatory and directives be given to the N.C.E.R.T to include such information in school text-books all over India under various Educational Boards in Social Science subject under the Civics section. Furthermore, for those indulging in perpetrating disrespect and dishonor of any Article of Faith of the Sikh community, severest punishment be meted out for which new laws, if necessary, should be framed. Signed petitions on a mass scale should be urgently submitted to the Prime Minister in this matter by all the Sikh organizations active in Sikh affairs all over India and the diaspora through the Akal Takht to take up this matter expeditiously with the Centre to maintain peace and harmony amongst diverse communities co-existing in India.

The initial and timely reaction at Mumbai where Sikhs held a 'peace march', followed by a 'Trade Bandh' of

Sikh establishments, is highly appropriate and commendable. The rest of the country was too slow and lethargic in responding to staging mass protests. The Commission, which was appointed by the S.G.P.C., should table its report publicly. We shall eagerly await the outcome and suggestions of the Commission. What will be of interest is to determine if the Jaipur lad grows and maintains his hair once again. If he does not recover from the mental and psychological trauma caused by the incident we would have lost another youth from the fold of Sikhi. That will be regrettable and tragic.

The film "*Kambdi Kalaa*", released in mid 2006, deserves to be mentioned here in the light of recent happenings\* in Jaipur, Jamshedpur, Haryana and Delhi. A pioneering work of Sikh sisters – director Ish Amitoj Kaur and producer Gagan Amitoj Kaur, both debutants, is perhaps the first such film to be made in the Sikh diaspora which principally revolves around the hair issue of Sikhs, besides touching on a host of other issues faced by the Sikhs. A must-see film of 57 minutes, having both Punjabi and English dialogues. The underlying focus of the film is : 'If you can't be true to your faith, how can you be true to someone you love?' A Sikh's commitment to his/her faith is much more important than any other issue in one's life, whether it be personal, social, political or financial.

ਦਾਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਭ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਤੇਰੀ ॥ ਬਹੁਤੁ ਸਿਆਣਪੁ ਹਉਮੈ ਮੇਰੀ ॥

[SGGS: 1251]

\* See Diary Section for news in this issue.





## Creation of the Universe as Expounded in Guru Nanak's Bani

*DR. D. P. SINGH, MSc., Ph.D.\**

### PART II

**Vastness of Universe:** The Sun, the Earth, the Moon, the stars, the satellites and the galaxies etc. form our universe. A wreath like arch of stars, stretching across the sky is the Milky Way. It is a part of our galaxy, which is an enormous system of clouds of glowing gas and 100 billion stars. Our universe contains about  $10^{11}$  galaxies. Our universe is vast. No one knows whether the universe is finite or infinite in size.

The observable universe is a few tens of billions of light years across. A light year is a distance traveled by light in one year, at the speed of 300,000 kilometers per second. It is equal to  $9.46 \times 10^{12}$  kilometers. The bright, unusual objects called quasars are the most distant objects in the universe found to date. Quasars may be as far as 16 billion light years from the earth. Even with all the latest scientific paraphernalia of radio telescopes, X-rays, observatories and space technology, our scientists are unable to find the edge of the universe. So until now, scientists could not find the limits of the creation.

There have been speculations about the extent of universe by religious persons

as well. Christianity and Islam talk of fourteen regions, seven upper and seven nether. Hinduism believes in fourteen lokas or planes; the seven upper (Bhurloka, Bhuvarloka, Swarloka, Maharloka, Janaloka, Tapaloka and Satyaloka) and the seven nether (Atala, Vitala, Nitala, Gabhastimat, Mahatala, Sutala and Patala). Sometimes it talks of three regions known as Triloka viz. Heaven, Earth and the Netherworld. The earth has been further divided into nine regions known as Nav-Khand. Though in Sri Guru Granth Sahib there is a mention of nine continents, Triloka, 14 Lokas and four Khanis (meaning different ways of being born). But all these are just examples not convictions.

Guru Nanak in his 'Jap(u) Ji' (Santanza 22) talks of lakhs (million) of upper and nether regions.

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

There are nether worlds beneath nether worlds, and hundreds of thousands of heavenly worlds above.

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

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Email: drdpsn@hotmail.com [Part I appeared in the Sept. 2006 issue]

The Vedas say that you can search and search for them all, until you grow weary.

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥

Thousands scholars, 18 Puranas and Semetic books, also establish the same One principle.

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤਾ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸ ॥

Lekha hoe ta likhi-ai, Lekhai hoe vinaas.

If He could be accounted one would write, The writers finish but not His narration.

ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੈ ਜਾਣੇ ਆਪੁ ॥ 22 ॥

Naanak vada aakhi-ai, Aa-pe jaa-nai aap.

Nanak call Him "The Greatest", He alone knows, all by Himself.

i.e. There are lakhs of nether worlds and skies. The ends were explored, the Vedas declare, but in vain. The Hindu and Muslim scriptures say the source is only One (The Creator). The creation is unaccountable. Whosoever takes account perishes. Only the creator knows the extent of his creation, says Nanak.

In 24th Santanza of 'Jap(u) Ji' Guru Nanak talks of an immeasurable expanse in the sense of 'Neti, Neti'

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਕੀਤਾ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥

The limits of the created universe cannot be perceived.

ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਪਾਰਾਵਾਰੁ ॥

Its limits here and beyond cannot be perceived.

ਅੰਤੁ ਕਾਰਣਿ ਕੇਤੇ ਬਿਲਲਾਹਿ ॥

Many struggle to know His limits,

ਤਾ ਕੇ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

but His limits cannot be found.

ਏਹੁ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

No one can know these limits.

ਬਹੁਤਾ ਕਹੀਐ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

The more you say about them, the more there still remains to be said.

Page 5

i.e. There is no limit of the created material world. There is no limit and no end. Several people wander for the knowledge of its limits. None can know this limit. The more we think of it, the more it goes farther.

Guru Nanak in his verses of *Jap(u) Ji* (Santanza 34) describe our earth as Dharam Khand (the region to do the noble things as per His command) and elaborates about the natural phenomenon that occur on it.

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥

Nights, days, weeks and seasons;

ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥

wind, water, fire and the nether regions

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ॥

in the midst of these, He established  
the earth as a home for Dharma.

ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥

Upon it, He placed the various species  
of beings.

ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥

Their names are uncounted and end-  
less.

ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥

By their deeds and their actions, they  
shall be judged.

ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥

God Himself is True, and True is His  
Court.

ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥

There, in perfect grace and ease, sit  
the self-elect, the self-realized Saints.

ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥

They receive the Mark of Grace from  
the Merciful Lord.

ਕਚ ਪਕਾਈ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

The ripe and the unripe, the good and  
the bad, shall there be judged.

ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥ 34 ॥

O Nanak, when you go home, you will  
see this. ||34|| (SGGS, Jap(u) Ji,  
Page 7)

In this bani, Guru Nanak while describ-  
ing 'Gian Khand,' tells us:

ਕੇਤੇ ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੈਸੰਤਰ ਕੇਤੇ ਕਾਨ ਮਹੇਸ ॥

So many winds, waters and fires; so many  
Krishnas and Shivas.

ਕੇਤੇ ਬਰਮੇ ਘਾੜਤਿ ਘੜੀਅਹਿ ਰੂਪ ਰੰਗ ਕੇ ਵੇਸ ॥

So many Brahmas, fashioning forms  
of great beauty, adorned and dressed  
in many colors.

Thus in the 35th Santanza of 'Japu ji'  
infinite nature of the creation becomes  
very obvious. Guru Nanak says: There are  
many airs, waters and fires, many  
Kaahans and many Maheshas. There are  
many Brahmas shaping forms of many  
colours and beauties. There are many  
earths and mountains for us to act. There  
are countless Dhruv, and their teachings.  
There are many Indras, Moons and Suns.  
Countless are the galaxies and the  
worlds.

Even scientific theories have not yet  
found the limits of the universe. Up to  
now, scientists have unvalued only a very  
small portion of the universe. The vast-  
ness of the explored (yet only a small)  
portion of the universe can be understood  
from the fact that even if we use the speed  
of light at 300 km/s, to look at all the cor-  
ners of the explored universe, it will take  
more than 16 billion years to cover this  
vastness.

In the holy SGGS, Guru Nanak has  
written about the extensive nature of the  
creation present inside the universe as :

ਖੰਡ ਪਤਾਲ ਅਸੰਖ ਮੈ ਗਣਤ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥

There are countless worlds and  
nether regions; I cannot calculate their

number.

ਤੂ ਕਰਤਾ ਗੋਵਿੰਦੁ ਤੁਧੁ ਸਿਰਜੀ ਤੁਧੈ ਗੋਈ ॥

You are the Creator, the Lord of the Universe; You create it, and You destroy it.

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ॥

The 8.4 million species of beings issued forth from You. (SGGS, Page 1283)

He does not stop there. In 37<sup>th</sup> Santanza of Jap(u) Ji Guru Nanak talks about the abode of the creator and tells us about numerous universes...

ਸਚ ਖੰਡਿ ਵਸੈ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੁ ॥

In the realm of Truth, the Formless Lord abides.

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਨਦਰਿ ਨਿਹਾਲ ॥

Having created the creation, He watches over it. By His Glance of Grace, He bestows happiness.

ਤਿਥੈ ਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਵਰਭੰਡ ॥

There are planets, solar systems and galaxies.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਕਥੈ ਤ ਅੰਤ ਨ ਅੰਤ ॥

If one speaks of them, there is no limit, no end.

ਤਿਥੈ ਲੋਅ ਲੋਅ ਆਕਾਰ ॥

There are worlds upon worlds of His Creation.

Thus Guru Nanak points out that there are spheres, universes and galaxies. If

one attempts to describe, there is no limit. There are worlds beyond worlds, creations beyond creations. Whatsoever is ordained, by the Creator happens there accordingly.

Even the present day scientists are talking about the possible existence of other universes. Such a mention is already there in several books of astronomy. It is obvious from the above discussion that the ideas of Guru Nanak (a sixteenth century mystic) are in fitness of the things of modern science.

#### ORIGIN OF LIFE

Philosophers and scientists have long attempted to learn how, when and where life originated, and the way in which the original life gave rise to the different kinds of animals and plants found in the world. Before the end of the 17<sup>th</sup> century, both scientists and philosophers held it that life originated spontaneously from non-living materials. Until the middle of the nineteenth century, life was generally thought to be created by some supernatural power, the Creator or God, out of nothing. According to Christian belief, God created the universe, plants, animals and human beings in six natural days. According to Hindu mythology, the creator created all the various kinds of plants and animals simultaneously.

According to modern science, about 10 billions years ago the 'Big Bang' occurred. About 5 billion years ago swirling clouds of cosmic dust began to condense.



Our earth was extremely hot when it came into existence. There was a great volcanic activity on land and sun gave intense heat. The release of gases, from the womb of earth, lead to the formation of gaseous envelope (containing water vapours) around it. With time clouds took their shape. Then it rained on earth for several hundred years. The rainwater flooded the earth and cooled it. In the shallower parts of the earth water took the form of seas. Life, in the form of unicellular animals (e.g. Amoeba & Protozoa) is thought to have originated in the seawater. From seawater, many organisms later invaded fresh waters and land. The present complex animals and plants have been produced in the course of ages by a process of gradual change in the earlier simpler forms of life. Darwin's theory of natural selection is today recognized as the main factor in the evolution of animal and plant life.

Guru Nanak in his hymn of '*Siri Rag*' says;

ਸਾਚੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਨਾ ਭਇਆ ਪਵਨੈ ਤੇ ਜਲੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

From the True Lord came the air, and from the air came water.

ਜਲ ਤੇ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਸਾਜਿਆ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਮੋਇ ॥

From water, He created the three worlds; in each and every heart He has infused His Light.

(SGGS, Page 19)

i.e. From the ultimate reality, air (mix-

ture of gases) was produced. From the air, water came into being. Then from water the whole world of living beings came into existence. These ideas of Guru Nanak are in good agreement with the central theme of the prevalent scientific ideas about the origin of life on earth. It is important to note that the above scientific ideas became prevalent since the second half of the eighteenth century, whereas Guru Nanak had composed his hymn in early sixteenth century.

Similarly, in His hymns Guru Nanak describes about invaluable treasures of 'Nature' and their abundance and diversity. These natural treasures comprise of unlimited types of vegetation, animals and natural resources. Their magnificence, variety and vastness are also described. The different languages spoken by different people and animals are also mentioned.

Scientists believe that on our earth there exist a variety of creatures/forms. They have wide variety of colours and species. Based on rigorous data, a modern day estimate is that there are about 10-30 million types of vegetation and animals present on our earth. But we have the exact details of about 1.4 million of them till date.

In Gurbani there is a mention of 8.4 million creatures.

ਲਖ ਚਉਰਾਸੀਹ ਮੇਦਨੀ ਤੁਝ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਹੋਈ ॥

The 8.4 million species of beings issued forth from You. (SGGS: 1283)

Bhagat Naam Dev in his hymns, which have been enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, tells us that 4.2 million creatures live on land and the rest 4.2 million live their life in the water.

### EARTH'S SUPPORT IN SPACE

Since the ancient times, people were curious to know the secret of earth's support in space. There have been several different stories in vogue from time to time. Ancient Indian believed that the world is resting on an enormous turtle floating in a huge sea of milk. Four elephants stand on the turtle's back. With their trunks raised in the air, the elephants face the four corners of the world, holding the flat, round earth on their mighty backs.

According to a tale described by David Evesevich, a mythical Russian scholar, in 'The Deep Book', the earth rests on the backs of three enormous whales, swimming in an ocean. Every thing remains alright while they were asleep, but as soon as they woke up and started moving, an earthquake begins.

Another ancient story is that the earth rests on the horns of a mythical bull. The bull is standing on the hood of a giant snake 'Sheshnag'. The Sheshnag is sitting on the back of a huge turtle. When the mythical bull changes the position of the earth from one horn to the other, earthquakes occur.

Guru Nanak, with his scientific attitude, tried to find out the cause and the rational justification of the event objec-

tively. He attempted to explain the cause-effect relationship about the earth's support in space. He wrote in 'Japu Ji':

ਧੋਲ ਧਰਮ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪੂਤੁ, ਸੰਤੋਖ ਥਾਪਿ  
ਰਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੂਤਿ ॥

'Dhaul dharam dia ka poot. Santokh  
thaap rakhia jin soot.

The mythical bull is righteousness, the off spring of mercy. Which keeps the earth balanced with the thread of patience.

ਜੇ ਕੋ ਬੁਝੈ ਹੋਵੈ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਧਵਲਿ ਉਪਰਿ  
ਕੇਤਾ ਭਾਰੁ ॥

Je ko bujhai hovai sachiar. Dhavalai  
upar keta bhaar.

If one learns this, realizes the truth,  
How much is the load on that bull.

ਧਰਤੀ ਹੋਰ ਪਰੈ ਹੋਰ ਹੋਰੁ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਤੇ ਭਾਰੁ ਤਲੈ  
ਕਵਣੁ ਜੋਰੁ ॥

Dharti hor parai hor hor. Tis te bhaar  
talai kavan jor'.

There is earth beyond the earth, more  
and more. It holds up the weight; who  
supports it beneath.

i.e. The creator's law (*hukam*) is the mythical bull to provide support to the whole creation. Proper observance of the laws leads to suitable order of the things. If one learns this, one realises the truth.

Otherwise just think of it that how much is the load on that (mythical) bull. How can a poor bull support such a huge load? Also, if the bull is supporting the earth in space then it needs the support

of something to stand on. This implies that there is earth under its feet. So under this earth again there will be a bull and so on. What will be the support for the last bull to stand on?

It is obvious that the natural laws set by the Creator are providing support to the earth in space. Guru Nanak has described these laws as *hukam* or will of the Creator. Talking about the effectiveness of the law or *hukam*, he says;

ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਹੁਕਮ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Hukam-e aandar sabh ko, bahir hukam na ko-e.

All are subject to His supreme Will,  
Nothing is outside the sphere of His

Will.

Thus Nanak says that every thing is happening according to the Will (Natural laws) of the Creator.

Even the scientists talk about the existence of natural laws (e.g. the law of gravitation etc) to provide support to the earth in space. It is obvious that Guru Nanak's viewpoint about the earth's support in space was definitely different from the contemporary prevalent concepts. Secondly, his ideas appear to be in tune with the scientifically correct viewpoints.

- End of Part II  
(Concluded)



### CELEBRATION OF SIKH HISTORY: OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2006

Oct. 02	Darbar Khalsa (Dashehra)
Oct. 09	Parkash Diwas Guru Ram Das Ji
Oct. 20	Jyoti Jyot Diwas Guru Har Rai Ji
Oct. 20	Gurgaddi Diwas Guru Harkrishan Ji
Oct. 21	Jyoti Jyot Diwas Guru Gobind Singh Ji
Oct. 21	Birthday Baba Budha Ji
Oct. 21	Bandi Chhor Diwas (Diwali)
Oct. 28	Saka Panja Sahib
Oct. 28	Sthapana Diwas Chief Khalsa Diwan
Nov. 05	Parkash Diwas Guru Nanak Dev Ji
Nov. 24	Jyoti Jyot Diwas Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji
Nov. 24	Gurgaddi Diwas Guru Gobind Singh Ji

## Relevance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for Today

DR. S. VANATHU ANTONI\*

**Introduction:** Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the youngest of the world scriptures is four hundred years young. It was compiled by the fifth Guru of the Sikhs, Guru Arjun, as Adi Granth in 1604. Four centuries have tested the authenticity of the Holy Book and it has come out successful, being recognized by more and more people all over the world as a text for harmonious living. It has attained the status of a testament of cultural refinement, spiritual upliftment and universal humanism. This essay aims to revisit the multi-storied mansion of the Sikh Scripture in order to expose its refreshing relevance for today and for the third millennium. The commemoration of the four hundredth year of its compilation invites one and all to delve deep into the depths of its eminence and bring out pearls of great value to enrich humanity towards excellence and nobility.

The Holy Book constructively engages the reader to draw upon its practical wisdom to address the issues confronting humanity. The noted historian Arnold Toynbee has this to say about the relevance of the work. 'The Guru Granth Sahib is remarkable for several reasons. Of all the known religious scriptures, this Book is the most highly venerated. The Guru Granth Sahib is the Sikh's perpetual

Guru, spiritual guide. In this coming religious debate, the Sikh religion and its scripture, the Guru Granth, will have something of special value to say to the rest of the world'.

It is proposed to examine the relevance of the holy work with reference to ten significant and most pressing areas which together constitute the problematic. The ten mega-needs, rather meta-needs which constructively engage the Sri Guru Granth are the following: (1) Need for resolving cultural polyvalence. (2) Need for re-cognizing plurality of definitions. (3) Need for relishing open-ended dialogues on the Surplus. (4) Need for respecting relationality of faiths. (5) Need for replenishing the earth with significance. (6) Need for romanticizing rootedness. (7) Need for recovering the semiotics of physical wholeness. (8) Need for re-storing value to facts. (9) Need for resonating faiths for harmony, and (10) Need for realizing the good and the beautiful. This may serve as a philosophical deca-logue or a catalogue of meta-needs and point of departure to construct the future discourse in search of relevance.

**Need for Resolving Cultural Polyvalence:** If one were to go prophetic, the destiny of the 21<sup>st</sup> century would be pre-

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sided over by the Afro-Asian woman and her aspirations. She would decide the mode of production and reproduction. As Globalization is sweeping across the world, what with culture, education and economy creating opportunities for some and depriving the chances of survival for many, the women in Asia, particularly in India and China along with their African counterparts are prepared to take up the challenge head on. They have the steely will to globalize their food, dress and aesthetic values through the type of education they accept and adopt. Their democratic aspirations for a fair share in job opportunities to their offspring and an increase in the quality of life is likely to be enhanced by the English education they embrace for them. While the mother tongue gives them a sense of identity, English empowers them towards excellence and employment. The matricentric and materialistic motif of the Afro-Asian would no longer be considered as maya but the potency or sakti to transform the world and resolve the cultural polyvalence. 'Maya is a woman with scowling face and cruel looks. Such a woman has the lord created; The whole world has she swallowed'. (SGGS.837).

It is the women's movements and the Self-Help Groups (SHG) which will serve as basic human communities (BHC) to bring about the necessary changes in approach, attitude and action patterns so that men of power and authority are converted and challenged to cultivate in the fields of their body and mind virtues of

equality and equanimity. 'Such a holy one may make of my mind and body pure fields; And with divine amrita irrigate them'. (SGGS.1460).

Wholeness which is nothing but the attainment of feminine and maternal consciousness, the natural characteristic of the woman and which a man only can attain through hard labour and *tapas* will become available to all because the joy of harvesting is a community mode of celebrating the oneness of humanity. The fundamental culture cannot be anything other than that of agriculture, a discovery of the woman, through which the world is fed and fellowship increased manifold. 'One ploughs, another sows, a third the grain harvests' (SGGS.1764).

**Need for Re-cognizing Plurality of Definitions:** While global economy has epitomized the American power and policing of the world the legitimate aspirations of smaller nations to play their role as equal partners in the remaking of the world necessitates that political and cultural multiplicities are duly recognized. This recognition fundamentally rests on the assumption that humanity is basically one and that each individual has the choice to define and design one's destiny in the way one desires. Plurality of such definitions further rests on the premise that there exists a dialectical dialogue between the one and the many within the Ultimate - He Himself is the formless and in many forms manifest; Himself the Unattributed and the attributed; Himself

is the sole and the multiple' (SGGS.509).

It is like entering into a pool wherein except for the freshness and coolness of the water no other differentiations really matter. The ocean which is home for multitudes of life forms may inspire the little fish to ask the mother; 'Yes, but where is the ocean?' 'That is where you are in'. In the ocean of the divine name every definition has a meaning and purpose. 'In the holy pool of Thy Name are contained Shastras, Smritis and Vedas' (SGGS.895).

As variety and multiplicity is the basic datum of life it is wonderful and marvelous to accept and arrange every detail on the physical and mental space to become creative and buoyant for the spontaneous fulfillment of one's desires and ambitions in the way the divine has ordained. 'Marvellous the multiplicity of creation, wonderful their distinctions; Marvellous creation's forms, wonderful its variety' (SGGS.983).

Every definition is the summary of an explanation. And every explanation is the road to expansion. Expansion has its own time and contraction has its own season. Recognizing the plurality of definitions is the necessary condition for the recognition of contraction into the One. Definitions contract into pearls of wisdom in the divine pool. 'From the One sole Reality has multiplicity appeared; The one alone in the universe operates, none other should one seek in multiplicity to view the One' (SGGS.1740).

**Need for Relishing Open-ended Dialogues on the Surplus:** Search for the sight of the cloud of unknowing, the original cloud, quest for the fragrance of the crystal clear water, longing for the taste of the morning moon on the mountain, thirst for the touch of the dew-decked blade of the grass and the pining for the melodies of the snow-covered peaks has always propelled the human spirit to crave the heavens as the fulfillment of the unfulfilled longings. The present beckons the humans not to go after the imaginary paradise but to actualize what obtains in paradise in the here and now. 'I know not where is paradise situated; Although all express the desire to reach there' (SGGS.680)

Discourse on the Surplus in human experience needs to be conducted not in the absoluteness of the unforeseeable future but in the quiet and solitude of the human heart, at the heart of the world wherein the divine throbs with density and vitality. 'While the mind after hope of paradise hankers; At the divine feet finds no repose' (SGGS.680). Creation of a joy-filled home and food-filled hearth makes a natural claim as the foretaste of the heavens. Amidst familial virtues of steadfastness, fidelity and fellowship are the seeds of bliss sown. 'In the husband's home has she realized truth; and spontaneously the spouse got to know' (SGGS.762). The world becomes one's home and the vast expanse of the sea-shore serves as the orchard in which a person is firmly rooted in the depth of

the divine but constantly looks to the farthest reach of the beacon which is the utter loftiness of God as the goal. 'Man is like a tree growing in sea –shore; Yet immortal his root can become by absorption, In god's loftiness' (SGGS.1736).

**Need for Respecting Relationality of Faiths:** Where absolutist claims for the truth of one's own faith have had a field day, the present century calls for a radical reexamination of such claims, given the nature of interface between faiths and interfaith dialogues and intrafaith musings. If the future were to really belong to the divine then the narrow boundary walls of each individual religion must get demolished and a new understanding about the relationality of faiths with no claims to superiority must be built. If God were the guardian of the world then all faiths cannot but be the outspread branches of one tree. 'Himself the Tree, with outspread branches; Of this cultivation is He Himself the guardian' (SGGS.823).

God is seen as the vessel, present and available, to everyone who would like to take shelter in it. With outstretched arms does the Divine embrace the whole humanity without any distinction or discrimination. All that has been, all that is and all that will be will find an equal share in the protective providence of God. 'Himself in each being (vessel ) immanent, Himself the hidden reality, Himself the visible forms; Attributed and Unattributed are two forms (Names) devised; Both in unison one Reality formulate' (SGGS.823).

Be it the Most Holy Trinity of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit, or the Trimurti of Brahma, Vishnu and Siva, be it the One or the Many, the divine is the most fragrant Flower of which the three aspects blend into One. Where is the need for one over the other or one under the other? Ignorance veils the transparency of the divine. 'Brahma is the petal, Vishnu the twig, Shiva is the flower' (SGGS1017).

Relationality of faiths is further emphasized by the metaphor of the cloth whose warp and woof is nothing but the divine presence all over. The concept of divine utility and God as spiritual capital at the service of the humans sends out a loud and clear message that faiths are to be understood and experienced as contiguous spiritual spaces in the geo-physical areas. 'The world's warp and woof has He woven; From Him emanating all that happens' (SGGS.1737).

**Need for Replenishing the Earth with Significance:** Metaphysical speculations both in the West and in the East have divested the earth of its intrinsic worth and significance. Excessive concern with the other world has led to the under-estimation of this world. Extremely ascetic spiritualities have further described the world as the abode of sin and evil. It is in this context the Guru Granth comes to the rescue of the moderns. It seeks to refill the earth with beauty and bounty of the divine. Divine munificence, manifestation and benediction fill the earth. 'All that is created is his manifesta-

tion; No place is of his manifestation devoid' (SGGS.10). The cool of the evening and the delectable ooze of the ambrosial nectar from the morning blossoms cannot but invade the senses and inspire the Divine itself to cherish and delight in its own making. 'All Creation Thou doest cherish' (SGGS 15).

God's love for the earth and the divine delight in creation and the infinite number of species is the paradigm for the humans to love, cherish, safeguard, sustain and steward the earth with all her riches. It becomes all the more reasonable that the humans as moral agents have an ethical and environmental responsibility to watch over the earth. 'In innumerable aspects, categories; And species has He made the creation' (SGGS.16) 'He has created the universe and watches over it' (SGGS.18). 'With Lord, all-pervasive, are all places filled' (SGGS.102).

The life of the universe, the life of the humans and the life of the divine are intimately interbounded. There cannot be a greater declaration for eco-ethic than the identity between the universe and the divine. 'The bountiful Life of the universe, By grace of the Life of the universe' (SGGS.754). 'Says the Lord, this world and I are identical' (SGGS.1446).

**Need for Romanticizing Rootedness:** Care for the earth calls for a romance of rootedness from the humans. The anyonia, interpenetrating maithuna, characteristic of the husband

and wife is the model for the relationship that must exist between the world and the humans. While firmly rooted on the earth one must romanticize the joys of the future and work to achieve them. One must dream of the dawn of the universal good and labour to make it a reality in the supreme and quiet confidence that the Lord labours alongside to bring the earth to its fruition. 'Everlasting bliss in matrimony with the Lord have I found' (SGGS.794). 'The Lord is my husband, I his wife' (SGGS.1026). In the truly Sankhya sense the first couple in this case, not the lame purusa and the blind prakrti but the healthy and hearty co-eval couple namely Nature and God are the parents of the universe. 'In the universe One sole Male, The whole creation is females' (SGGS.1249).

**Need for Recovering the Semiotics of the Physical Wholeness:** Health, Holiness and Wholeness are interconnected in the web of well being of body, mind and soul. Sanity, sanctity, and *sehaj* are the most natural human conditions. There have been attempts to compartmentalize the overall well being into body space, mind space and soul space with specialists for each domain. Physicians, counsellors and spiritual masters claim exclusive authority and competence in their respective areas and rightly so. The Guru Granth sets out to open up the implications of holiness tracing its origin to the divine. 'Thou source of all art holy, Nothing in the world is unholy' (SGGS298).



Just as the fountainhead is holy, so is the entire flow of life in the universe because within the cosmic family the human being is firmly rooted. Cosmic wholeness and human holiness are intimately integrated into one movement. 'Air is the supreme Master, water, the progenitor; The great earth mother, Day and night are nurses in whose lap plays, The entire universe' (SGGS.302). 'The world all is the divine Lord's field, Creation has He Himself set to cultivate it' (SGGS.631).

With the holiness of the universe firmly established, the intrinsic holiness of human body is attested. The human body becomes the locus and focus of all righteousness because it bears the divine light. 'This body is all seat of righteousness, Bearing the holy Eternal's light' (SGGS.642). However short-lived and ephemeral may be the human life, the bodily existence on earth is a sojourn of anticipation and expectation for the overflowing of God's presence as though life is but a movement from the parental home to the husband's home. It is movement from blessing to blessing and therefore from gratitude to gratitude. 'For a few days only in the parent's home is our life, To the husband's home must we depart' (SGGS.699).

The tantric understanding of the human body is yet another important aspect of the Sikh philosophical anthropology. It comes from Kabir who was himself a weaver and therefore aptly describes the human body in the context of cotton cul-

ture. 'The body is a sheet, forty yards in length. Of which nine are the apertures of the body, Ten the faculties of the senses and mind, Twenty one are the reeds; Its warp consisting of sixty threads and nine joints, In its woof are another seventy two threads'. (SGGS.699). Body is no longer an abode of sin and filth but a visible form of the Divine. It is also the gateway to peace and joy because the word of the Lord finds its home in the human body. 'All visible forms Thy body'. (SGGS.746). 'By the preceptor's word to the self (original, sarir, lit. body) comes joy and peace' (SGGS.770). The body is in the social space and it is the source of all ethical action. Good qualities and virtues have to flower forth from the body. 'This body is the shoot bringing forth flower of good qualities, On a string wear these' (SGGS.1645).

**Need for Re-storing Value to Facts:**

The phenomenon of science has turned a full circle by discovering the travesty of cumulative facts as explanations about the world. In search for truth, science has been riding the crest of success as human intelligence is ever expanding. The very expansion of scientific realm has tried to quell the quest for transcendence and the meaning it accords to human longings. This is exactly the context in which the knowledge maker of the present century will have to look at the vibrancy of the religious metaphors as value additives to the sheer brutality of facts. 'Holy the creation by Him raised, holy all that He sustains' ( SGGS.589).

As the Divine throbs within the mundane and the sensual it is important to realize that religions are perhaps the most beautiful creations of the human mind. In their most pristine and natural state religions can be perceived as works of great art and works of great value meant to provide joy in the midst of gloom and darkness. 'And in spontaneous poise (*sehaj*) in life's night passed joyfully' (SGGS.800). The unalloyed joy of the child at perceiving a bubble in the rainwater as something beautiful and exciting lasts for a few seconds. But those few seconds are important moments in life because it dawns on the child that the fact of being human is to know that life is a gift given free of cost and without one's asking and that it must be made beautiful as a work of art. 'The gift of human incarnation' (SGGS.804).

**Need for Resonating Faiths for Harmony:** The future of Hope and the Hope for the future lie in the hands of the youth whose religion will be the Religion of Harmony. Faith in one's heart will be expressed in contentment, compassion and perfection. Filling one's life with the contents of love results in contentment, filling one's mind with thoughts of altruism results in compassion and filling one's heart with feelings for the Lord results in perfection. 'In your mind bear contentment, Towards all creation bear compassion, The lord is sole repository of perfection' (SGGS.619).

Harmony can be achieved only with a

compassionate heart coupled with compassionate actions. Respect for all life so eminently advocated by the sage Mahavira and compassion for the whole world so eloquently preached by the enlightened Buddha are rolled into one by the Guru Granth. 'Mighty all to accomplish, compassionate to all beings; Over all His protective hand placed' (SGGS.622). In the drama of Globalization the youth move about the world as though it is their native place and make their home anywhere as the protective hand of the Lord is everywhere. Their presence and activities become the blossoming acts of worship and prayer. Harmonious living breaking all barriers of nation, race, caste and creed and removing all prejudices and discriminations will be the face of religion in the coming years. 'True and holy are Thy continents and universe, True and holy are Thy worlds and forms created by Thee' (SGGS.981). The world becomes one's home and the practice of charity therein becomes the true benchmark of humanity and the hallmark of religion. 'Better than the ascetic pose is the householder's life; Wherein is practiced charity' (SGGS.1238). 'The Lord is lake, ocean, this world a play by Him created; As the wave in ocean is absorbed, So is He in all being solely pervasive' (SGGS.1726).

**Need for Realizing the Good and the Beautiful:** Search for Timeless Beauty starts with one self. It all begins with seeing, observing, listening and laughing. Morning meditative walks be-

come musings on the ordinary and nothing prevents one from worshipping the world which is the beautiful temple of the Lord. 'The world, beautiful temple of the Lord, by the creator is made' (SGGS.120). Even if one does not believe in God, a motif which has inspired the creation of temples, cathedrals, mosques and all kinds of architecture, paintings, sculpture and music nothing gets in the way of a direct apprehension of beauty. Even though it is the soul which really registers and houses beauty it may not be necessary to believe in the soul in order to apprehend beauty. But the ordinariness of life and the immersion into it may lead to humility and a sense of reverence which may ultimately lead one to the feet of God. Beauty may be seen as the evidence and signature of God. 'Love as water; Myself! To the lord bear such love, as the lotus's for water, as the fish for water, as the chatrik's for the rain, as milk for water'(SGGS.125).

It is due to the bane of duality, be it Platonic, Cartesian or Dvaitic that the sense of the Timeless Good and timeless Beauty remains the distant shadow of humanity. But a re-turn to love, compassion, laughter and beauty can banish this curse and make duality vanish. Practice of dualism, puritanism, rationalism and utilitarianism is the cause for the present malady. Realizing the Beautiful implies a contemplative, reflective and unitive mode of being and seeing. It is like the unified moment of the player, the act of playing and the display of the play itself. 'All exist-

ence the theatre of Thy play' (SGGS.213).

Beauty production is camouflaged by much ugliness and piles of dirt heaped by the mega cities and metros, whether European, American or Asian. The delicate rhythm of the local cultures and their vernaculars are on a continuous decline. By reclaiming the mythical and the folk traditions which contain so much of wisdom and serve as an anti-dote to the mad rush of civilization, a corrective and constructive hermeneutic can be made in favour of the beautiful from myths like the age-old Garden of Eden or the Shangri-la. Creative abundance and bounteous beauty can be built as a meta narrative. 'The world is a garden plot, The Lord is the gardener, Cherishing all none neglected' (SGGS.240). 'In Thy beauty dost thou fascinate all creation' (SGGS.154). 'In all creation is the Lord's beauty, his light; The lord is close by our side' (SGGS.348). In all spots is our Lord immanent' (SGGS.843).

The present century, while foreboding gloom and doom, at the same time presents hope and bloom. Creative, affirmative and transformative action for living a life in consonance with the intimations and invitations of the good and the beautiful will be the one on-going prayer pleasing to the Lord. 'Whatever action pleases Him is the highest prayer' (SGGS.1389). As the plastic art makes the world uglier and more aggressive, the need to fall back upon restoration of the natural world as the appropriate domain of the Beautiful

becomes all the more imperative. 'Before coming of spring, the Lord ever is in bloom, He who makes everything blossom, From none does He seek the bloom' (SGGS.1646).

A clarion call is sounded by the Guru Granth to cherish the only world as the Lord cherishes the same, love the world as the Lord loves the same, partake in its blessings and wear the aspects of earthly beauty as the most fitting garment of the Lord. The longest journey of fulfillment after all, starts but with a single step. 'There where the Lord is ever devotedly cherished, The earth wears aspects of beauty, the spot full of blessing; And all objectives fulfilled' (SGGS.1697). Ultimately both *satyam* and *sivam* will become convertible categories of *sundaram*, as Beauty being the ontological manifestation of the other two.

**Conclusion:** This perspectival ap-

proach has examined the relevance of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for the present century as an ongoing engagement with its constructive contribution to the welfare of humankind. The text contains an in-built flexibility and elasticity for multiple ways of reading. It further shows that one can profitably read the scripture and benefit from the direction it indicates. The Guru Granth Sahib remains a constant companion to the seeker not only to address one's psychogenic and sociogenic needs but also to go beyond these and address transpersonal and transcendental needs. To the extent a scriptural text ennobles the human spirit towards universalism and altruism it becomes a spiritual text. The Guru Granth in this sense is truly a relevant scriptural text.

*References: All references are from the 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' in four volumes translated by Garbachan Singh Talib, Patiala, Punjab University. 1990*



### **THUS SPAKE GURU NANAK**

Make attention your service, faith in the Name your occupation. Make the restraint of evil your effort. God will look on you, O Nanak, with the eye of favour and your compensation shall brighten four-fold.

## Ratan Singh Bhangu's "*Prachin Panth Prakash*"

### Firstly, a Story of the first appearance of the Khalsa

[Guru's striving for the *Panth*]

TR. & ANALYSIS BY PROF. GURTEJ SINGH\*

#### PART VI

#### The incident at Anandpur

('Masands put to the sword')

Quatrain: Now listen to the story of Anandpur. It remained to be told and is now tending that way. If I write everything about how enmity with the hill people developed, the book will become voluminous.<sup>1</sup> The *Gurbilas* has said much about it. It is proper to state the portion neglected by it. So I will not elaborate much. Too much elaboration will make the book heavy.<sup>2</sup> He who desires to hear more can consult the *Gurbilas*. I will state a seminal part of that also, so as to connect what has been related to what is yet to come.<sup>3</sup>

Couplet: When the True Guru took up the sword as a solution to making the *panth* more powerful, he cultivated affection of the Khalsa to the neglect of all others.<sup>4</sup>

Quatrain: The True Guru developed great affection for the Khalsa. The Guru gave whatever was best to the *panth*. Wherever there were Masands and Mewras (Guru's representatives), in their places the True Guru despatched the

Singhs.<sup>5</sup>

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At the Gurdwaras and in his presence, he entrusted all communication, supplication to the Khalsa. He entrusted all estate, treasury and public relations, to the Khalsa.<sup>6</sup> Errand-runners (*mewras*) and the local heads of congregations (*masands*) were instructed to either become Singhs or shed all respectability and even life. The *masands* resented this, as a dagger struck at heart.<sup>7</sup> They went and complained to mother that the Guru had become disoriented. He was scattering everything valuable among the Singhs, desiring that they somehow come to possess the country.<sup>8</sup> 'How can lowly Jats, be made kings? He wants sheep to tear up lions. If sparrows can kill hawks, then political power can come to the lowly Jats.'<sup>9</sup>

Couplet: 'If on hearing this, the kings send their armies, the Guru will find no place to hide and all will be arrested and killed'.<sup>10</sup>

\* **NOTE:** Since *Sri Gur-Panth Prakash* (by Bhangu) is in poetic form, the numbers at the end of sentences are couplet numbers and not reference numbers.

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Quatrain: The mother accepted, 'what you have said is true.' She summoned all the financial advisors and managers and all stated that the Guru had become possessed.<sup>11</sup> Ever since he has invoked the sword, it has reacted angrily. He is supporting enmity with kings. They will lay siege and kill everybody.<sup>12</sup> Now all gathered to find a solution. Jujhar Singh was designated to succeed him. The True Guru became angry on hearing this and said, 'a sort of madness had affected them all.'<sup>13</sup> When the 'wind' struck the *masands*, they set fire to the *Guru Granth*. They had a cenotaph built on that spot. They pledged villages to the place.<sup>14</sup>

Couplet: They weaned away a large number of Guru's followers into new allegiance to this place. On hearing such things, the *masands* were eliminated.<sup>15</sup>

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Quatrain: The True Guru's order to the Khalsa was, 'put the *masands* to the sword.' Some were eliminated with weapons, some by making them pull the plough, some were dragged to death and some others were fried in oil.<sup>16</sup>

Couplet: If I write other things, the book will become bigger. Those who want to satisfy themselves may look up the *Gurbilas*.<sup>17</sup>

### The battle of Anandpur

(—'we will not let Sikhi be lost'— )

Couplet: Mata Gujri also then forbade the True Guru 'why have you entrusted

everything to the *panth* of the Khalsa'?

Quatrain: 'These quarrelsome people fight much. We will bear responsibility for their bad deeds. The ones you call your very own Khalsa in adversity they will not stand by you.'<sup>12</sup> 'You have discarded those born to you. These sons of others will be of no use'. Mother's words were not heeded to. Then the True Guru spoke,<sup>3</sup> 'Hear mother Gujri, on listening to the people's complaints, you are uttering denigration of the *panth*. This will reflect on your house. You have been misled by back-biters, pay no heed to calumny against the *panth*.'<sup>14</sup>

Couplet: Then the True Guru ordered the respected Khalsa like this: 'entertain no fear of anyone. Grab food wherever you find it.'<sup>15</sup>

Quatrain: Many times the Singhs raided the permitted territory like Kamlot and other areas. They subdued the villages of Kamlot, Jhakkhi and harassed the Doon hill areas.<sup>6</sup> People of the mountains came and initiated war. The Singhs forced the kings to retreat. They were embarrassed and went back home. The Singhs levied taxes in their territory.<sup>7</sup>

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The king of Kahlur, taking along other people of the mountains, went to Delhi to complain. These were the kings of the twenty-two ridges among them were the seven of Jalandhar ridges.<sup>8</sup> These twenty-two kings had invaded Anandpur, initiated battle, lost it and had retreated. All those

kings were embarrassed. They fell in arrears in respect of tribute to the King of Delhi.<sup>9</sup> They said, 'either you help us or we pay taxes to them. They have recruited a strong army and much money is flowing to them.'<sup>10</sup> 'He calls himself the Guru of all Hind and has the life and death power over the kings. He calls himself the True King and designates you 'a pretender.'<sup>11</sup> 'He has wealth in millions and many alchemists live in his camp.' Raja Bhim Chand of Kahlur represented. King Nauranga became worried on hearing it.<sup>12</sup> 'He may attack me some day. This unripe evil must be suppressed now.'

Couplet: The king of Delhi maintained a million strong army at the Kabul mountain pass. He wrote an order for it to fall rapidly upon the Guru.<sup>14</sup>

Quatrain: From all four sides and in a great hurry the army converged. Ordered late, it came running fast. There were Sikhs with them. They conveyed the information that they picked up in conversation.<sup>15</sup> On hearing this, an exodus took place at Anandpur. The fleeing people couldn't find a street to leave. True Guru tried hard to pacify them. 'the True Guru (God) will come and help.'<sup>16</sup> People ran without stopping to enquire. They did not stay at the respected Guru's bidding. The True Guru said, 'be brave. God will come to our help'.<sup>17</sup> Cry from all sides was, 'it is coming, it is coming', no strong measures could be taken. Twenty-two Dogra kings rushed and so also the twenty-two from Jalandhar.<sup>18</sup>

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Couplet: The forces from Sarhind and the Malerkotla blocked the Ropar road. Doaba was blocked by forces from Lahore and the hill forces blocked the mountains.<sup>19</sup>

Quatrain: They laid a siege on all four sides and did not let in either food or fodder. It was a great hardship for the people. The people then decided to run away.<sup>20</sup> Then the True Guru spoke thus to the people, 'even if you run away you will not save yourselves. God will find a way of eliminating you. It may even rain fire.'<sup>21</sup> 'We have four thousand Singhs with us and even four lakhs cannot attack us. Their lives will be dear to them. We can attack on the way out.'<sup>22</sup> The people then requested the mother (Mata) to intervene, 'make up with the rajas.' On hearing this, the True Guru replied, 'hill rajas are treacherous people, they will only loot and kill you'.<sup>23</sup>

Couplet: 'Treachery is their trait from the beginning of time, do not rely upon them. They will arrest everyone and put them in prison'.<sup>24</sup>

Quatrain: Mother replied, 'they swear by their stone gods, they will not be treacherous towards us.' The True Guru said, 'you test them using things of no value as decoy.'<sup>25</sup> Broken and valueless articles were prepared to test their behaviour. Transport convoy was loaded and despatched. 'Treasure has been despatched', the Guru publicised.<sup>26</sup> The rajas heard this

rumour. They attacked and pillaged everything. The tricksters were thus exposed by a trick. They abandoned their religious vows for the sake of worn out slippers. They snatched old mattresses and shoes. They were ashamed to find that money eluded them. Even then the mother did not agree and said, 'I will be marching off at dawn.'<sup>28</sup>

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The people had persuaded the mother and she was firm on leaving. People had persuaded the mother to say. 'I will be in the forefront of those leaving.'<sup>29</sup> The True Guru heard this and knew within him that none of the runaways would survive. 'The world will raise accusing fingers at me.'<sup>30</sup> 'What could be done the Guru did not agree! On all four sides there were enough escape roots.' So the True Guru decided, 'let them give it in writing.'<sup>31</sup>

Couplet: Give this to me in writing, 'The True Guru persuaded us much, repeated it to tiring, but we did not accept his advice'.<sup>32</sup>

Quatrain: 'And secondly, write this, that you do not accept me as your Guru and neither do you consider yourselves as my Sikhs.' The people wrote down exactly as the Guru had demanded.<sup>33</sup> Servants, employees and attendants, the whole world of them turned their backs on him. Such was the illusion created by the True Guru that the people faced the worst of times.<sup>34</sup> People repudiated their solemn commitments. Such was the effect of bad

time. More the True Guru asked them to be patient, the more readily they ran away. (35).

Couplet: When the True Guru asked the Singhs to write it, the respected Khalsa did not write it. 'By our own orders, we will not destroy the nation.'<sup>36</sup>

Quatrain: 'We are the very storehouse of commitment', said the Khalsa, 'we will not give up commitment for the sake of life. Even to save our lives a hundred times we will not throw away Sikhi.'<sup>37</sup> 'Where you order us to stay, there we will stand as long as we breathe, without even lifting a foot.' The Singhs appeared endearing to the respected True Guru. Moved to happiness the Guru spoke: <sup>38</sup> 'Blessed is the Khalsa and blessed is the *panth* of the young. They have preserved the seed of Sikhi, deeming it to be more valuable.' Then the Khalsa asked him, 'please point to us where the siege is the thickest.'<sup>39</sup> Then the True Guru ordered, 'you be wherever I am'. The Khalsa accepted the instructions. On hearing this, the people broke into a disorderly retreat.<sup>40</sup>

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Couplet: Taking all his sons with him he prepared himself. At the time of sunset he marched from Anandpur in the direction of Ropar.<sup>41</sup>

Quatrain: Of the well-known ones, the dearest ones of the Guru, some Singhs were asked to march at the rear. Similarly some were asked to march in front. Some were placed on the flanks.<sup>42</sup> To help



the families (non-combatants), the True Guru concealed them in the middle of it and despatched them. The hill people attacked them from behind but the Singhs repulsed them.<sup>43</sup> In front, water rose in the Sarsa rivulet, disaster lurked in both directions. The people lost patience. Some went elsewhere and the non-combatants somewhere else.<sup>44</sup> He who turned back was looted by the hill people. Those of them in front, who entered the river were swept off by the current and lost.<sup>45</sup>

Couplets: Water subsided at day-break and the river became passable. They lost patience and made a haphazard entry.<sup>46</sup> Only two sons remained with the True Guru. It so happened that the younger ones went with the elder (Guru's) mother.<sup>47</sup>

Quatrain: It was a time of extreme difficulty for everyone. They went in several directions. The situation there was the same as had had been faced by Sri Krishan.<sup>48</sup>

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As after the defeat at the hands of Kalyavan, the god had to take shelter in the cave of Muchkand. Pahari armies attacked in great numbers. Every foursome was separated.<sup>49</sup> Gunpowder and guns became wet and failed to fire. Nobody was left with shoes on his feet. Such was the calamity which struck everyone.<sup>50</sup> The rivulet flowing in front drowned whatever

was left. In front lay Ropar, stronghold of the Turks where many Pathans had been killed.<sup>51</sup> Most of them had joined the True Guru's service and had received countless gifts from him including horses and fine clothes. They became faithless and served no purpose.<sup>52</sup>

Couplet: The True Guru had bestowed expensive dresses on them. In their skirmishes with the hill people, the Guru had helped them.<sup>53</sup>

Quatrain: The Guru went to their houses. On being called upon, they turned their faces away. These people had built a strong mansion. The Guru wanted to give a fight from within it.<sup>54</sup> They shut the doors and did not let him enter. The river swept away this very mansion. All the Pathans and Lodhis became faithless. The True Guru had said that their houses would not remain (intact).<sup>55</sup> Then the Guru turned towards Kotla (Nihang Khan). They readily opened their doors for inspection. The Guru did not like it. It was not a mansion suitable for giving a battle.<sup>56</sup> The True Guru went further and looked in the distance. He saw minarets on high ground at Chamkaur. The True Guru rode in that direction. He reached and saw a sprawling mansion.<sup>57</sup>

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**(End of Part VI)**  
**- To be continued**



## Mata Sundri Ji : A Tale of Love & Faith

JOGINDER SINGH\*

IN THE PAGES OF HISTORY MATA Sundri's name does not find prominence, but in the people's mind she remains a symbol of dedication. Like a legend she has achieved the Sikh Community's adoration, considering the hard times in which she lived and how she guided the destiny of the Khalsa. The grateful Sangat raised in her memory a shrine on the spot where she lived half of her life. At present, beside the historic Gurudwara, a post-graduate college for women stands at the spot in India's capital New Delhi.

Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan were separated from the family while crossing flooded Sirsa rivulet on the morning of 21-12-1704. Near Parwar Vichhora in Ropar, where family assembled briefly, two Sikhs of Delhi, Bhai Jawhar Singh and Bhai Dhanna Singh contacted Guru Gobind Singh who advised them that both Matas may be taken to Delhi. Both were attired in male dress and rustic peasants and were accompanied by two maids and Bhai Mani Singh. How these seven persons reached Delhi after covering about two hundred miles in turbulent times is not known in history. They stayed in the house of Johwar Singh and Dhanna Singh in Kutcha Dilwali, Houz Qazi, near Ajmeri Gate. Two men shifted to a neighbouring house. According to last Mahant Gurcharan Singh of Sis Ganj, there ex-

isted a gurudwara which was demolished during communal strife in 1947 and a temple was raised at the place by pujari.

After battle of Khidrana (Mukatsar) Guruji stayed at Talwandi Saboki where Bhai Mani Singh and both Matas met him and stayed there for some months. Not finding her sons in the congregation, Mata Sundri enquired as to where were they? Guru Ji pointed out towards Sikhs with great emotion and said, "Over the head of these sons I have sacrificed the four." It is here in 1705 where they learnt the martyrdom of four princes and revered Mata Gujri Ji in tragic circumstances. Reply of Guru Gobind Singh was characteristic of his attitude to the attachment of the world. When Guru Gobind Singh left Talwandi, both accompanied him to Delhi. Mata Sahib Devan went with the master upto Nanded while Mata Sundri stayed at Delhi. Guruji stayed at Moti Bagh for a brief period where a Gurdwara exists. In about last week of September 1708, Mata Sahib Devan was sent to Delhi with five weapons to stay with Mata Sundri where both lived for the rest of their lives. Sangat of Delhi purchased a plot of land outside the Walled city near Turkman gate which was registered in revenue record in the name of Guru Gobind Singh son of Guru Tegh Bahadur. It was indeed, a horrific period for Sikhs who were hounded

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out and hunted down by the rulers and their cohorts from their homes. Mata Sundri showed courage and sagacity and never surrendered her trust in future which spirit ultimately triumphed.

### **Struggle for survival**

There was mass scale persecution of Sikhs, but each persecution led to resurrection till the prosecutors were themselves obliterated and ultimately the sword of virtue came out victorious. The Mughal rulers did not realize that Sikh gurus had sown the seed which was bound to sprout to a mighty tree. The character building of the people during 239 years was going to fructify and no tyrant howsoever barbaric, no storm howsoever severe could stop its steady and sturdy growth. Victory deserves the applause of the people but heroic defeat deserves the compassion. The tree of the Sikh nation was bound to blossom. The seed that was sown at Talwandi Rai Bular in 1469 grew into a strong tree which flowered in 1699 at Anandpur which spread the spirit of nationalism based on democratic principles for the first time in Indian history and it resulted in expulsion of invading hordes from central Asia in 1799. The khalsa conquered the land of 5 rivers, their native land which remained subjugated for nearly 800 years after the defeat of native ruler Anangpaul in 998 Ad. National flag (Kesari Nishan) fluttered over the ramparts of Lahore Fort and the entire land upto the end of boundaries of India upto Jamrod was brought under the sway of sons of soil. This achievement was due

to unprecedented sacrifice suffered by Sikhs. It was full of thrills of daring deeds and record of self-sacrifices exhibiting flawless character. A contemporary historian Khafi Khan writes, "Abdus Samad Khan had shed so much blood in Punjab, as if a painter sprinkles red colour on a canvas." The barbarism was so common that it was a routine to kill Sikhs whose heads were priced and cart loads of heads were presented to Zakarya Khan who surpassed his father in cruelty. Sikhs had to seek shelter in Lakhy forest, Shivalik hills and sands of Rajputana. They said that if their heads are cut off for protecting Dharma, they consider it their good fortune. They believed that if they die while fighting Turks it will be better than uneventful death. Being a Sikh was crime. Innocent men and women were merely targeted because they professed the religion of true nationalism. There scalps were removed, sawn alive, cut limb by limb, thrown in boiling cauldron, suckling children snatched from mothers and cut to pieces but none forsook their faith. This is remembered even today in daily Ardaas. During this period Mata Sundri lived in Delhi. It is appropriate, therefore, to mention briefly the ordeals through which Sikhs had passed.

After Banda Bahadur's defeat in December 1715 at Quila Gurdas Nangal, 740 Sikhs were brought as captives to Delhi in a procession from Delhi gate (Daryaganj) where mobs mocked at them. The command of the caravan was led by Zakriya Khan. Delhi was ruled by Farakh

Siyar who occupied the throne after killing his brother, a usual tradition during Mughal's rule. They were offered choice between Islam or death by torture. Not a single person agreed to forsake his religion. They were beheaded near Delhi public library in front of old railway station at the rate of 100 persons per day. A shining example of a young boy is fondly remembered who had just married and was caught on the way. His widowed mother and young bride approached authorities with a letter from provincial officers that he be let off as he was not a Sikh. They reached the scene of massacre and recognized the boy whose turn for execution was fixed the same day. He was asked to come out from the group of captives but he flatly declined saying that he did not recognize the women. He asserted that he was a Sikh and he should be executed along with his brethren. Sikhs called executioner as 'mukta' or 'deliverer'. They continued to recite 'Waheguru', 'Waheguru' and tried to outbid one another in offering themselves for sacrifice. 'Kill me first' was constantly uttered by them. How many examples one can find in the entire human history when execution was being requested for the sake of 'Dharma'. A story is prevalent in Punjab even today that a woman was asked how many sons she had? She replied that God had blessed her with 4 sons but one of them had embraced Sikhism meaning thereby that Sikh was bound to be killed.

After Banda's barbaric execution near Mehrauli, Delhi campaign of horrid sav-

agery was renewed with vigor in Punjab. Some of these Sikhs were Bhai Bota Singh (1739), Bhai Mehtab Singh (1740), Bhai Sukha Singh (1742), Bhai Taru Singh (1743), Bhai Shahbeg Singh and Sabaz Singh, father and son were crushed to death between the wheels. Bhai Mani Singh the most revered Sikh Head Granthi of Darbar Sahib was killed at Lahore by dismembering each limb in 1734. Dewan Lakhpat Rai, minister of Yahya Khan decided to erase the name of Sikh totally. In Chotta Ghalughara (holocaust) on 10 March 1746 large scale execution of Sikhs took place. About 17000 Sikhs laid down their lives in the battle at Kahnuwan and about 3000 caught alive were beheaded at Lahore. Copies of Guru Granth Sahib were thrown in wells and rivers (Khushwant Singh in history of Punjab).

#### **Example of defending faith**

Sikhs came out openly from their hide outs and were confronted by Mughals but Sikhs repulsed while fighting with *sickles* as a weapon. Farakh Siyar was greatly annoyed at such shameful defeat. He dispatched 2000 soldiers to punish them but they were also badly mauled by Sikhs who were famished for several days and were without proper weapons. Farakh Siyar ordered to place Mata Sundri Ji under surveillance even though no activity against the government was carried out in the haveli. They were pursuing the daily 'Nitnam' and providing langar to visitors. When further pressed Mata Ji replied, "*Weh Hamri Kabh Maney Baat, Bahut Fouj*

*Weh Rakhte Saath.*” It is said that Mata Ji sent a message to Banda Bahadur who informed that he was merely following the command of his Master and he would never betray the pledge taken at his feet while departing from Nanded.

In 1739, Nadar Shah king of Persia invaded India. He appeared in Delhi on 9-3-1739 and next day rumor was floated that Mohammad Shah emperor of Delhi had killed Nadar Shah. At this Mughals attacked Nadar’s army. Next day morning somebody fired at Nadar. He escaped but his bodyguard was killed. This was sufficient to announce general massacre of local people. It was estimated that nearly 1,12,000 Hindus, Muslims, women and children were killed. He was given Rs.25 crores from treasury, Kohinoor diamond, Takhat-e-Touse. Besides 2200 women were taken captives from Brindaban area, and 1000 elephants, 7000 horses, 10000 camels and a large no. of artisans. On receipt of information Sikhs pounced upon his caravan though he had selected a safe passage for return journey while crossing Chenab near Akhnoor, Jammu. All the women were liberated and he was dispossessed of some of looted treasure. It is said that these women implored not to be sent back to their homes as the invader will come next year again and their men folk would not be able to defend them. But Ahluwalia sardar who was trained by Mata Sundri from his childhood was farsighted and he returned them to their respective homes as he thought that history will not pardon them for such a step. When Nadar

learnt about this daring attack, he asked Zakriya as to who were these people who dared to attack him and where do they live? Zakriya informed him that their homes are the saddles of their horses and they occasionally go to Amritsar and after a dip in the tank they are refreshed and gain full vigor. Nadar after hearing this account cautioned Zakriya and said, “*Az Ein qaum bue Padshahi may aayad.*” (Be careful they will occupy the throne some day) This proved to be true just after twenty five years after the incident.

The brief description above has been given to acquaint the reader of the situation prevailing in Punjab and Delhi during Mata Sundri’s time.

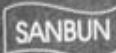
Bahadur shah had issued strict orders for extirpation of Sikhs. Once he came to pay respect to a *Peer* at Lahore where per chance Bhai Adal Shah was sitting. He enquired from *Peer* whether Adal Shah was a follower of Marhela (meaning Guru Gobind Singh). *Peer* was aware of the situation and he informed that Adal Shah was a Sikh of Baba Nanak Faqir. Bhai Adal Shah immediately retorted that he was a Sikh of Guru Gobind Singh and he did not care for his safety. Such was the spirit of Sikhs at that time who were suffused with ethos and culture.

Bahadur Shah had sought help of Guruji through Bhai Nand Lal during battle for succession between him and his brother Azam. Guruji considered Bahadur Shah as a rightful claimant and he deputed Bhai Dharam Singh with 300 men to de-

fend him. The battle was fought at Jajau near Agra where he won. He was grateful to Guruji and honored him in open darbar. But the same Bahadur Shah issued the edict, "*Nanak Prastan Har Ja Wa Band Wa Katal Rasanad.*" (Wherever there was a Sikh of Guru Nanak he should be killed).

The Haveli where Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan stayed became an oasis of peace and compassion despite hostile elements lurking around the vicinity. It was such a period when there was no constitution, no rule of law, no human rights and no public opinion but only


Quazi's Fatwa and the will of the monarch ruled supreme or his coterie' of sycophants who told him what he wanted to hear. The operating principle of monarchies is that king can do no wrong, but this has often lead to anarchy as the ruler is not accountable. It is a universal truth that a good neighbor is not one just who lives besides you but one who helps you in adverse situations. It is easier to make compromises with friends than with adversaries. Mata Sundri guided the destiny of the community from here with great courage and sagacity. □



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## Interpid Warrior Akali Baba Phoola Singh

DR. MOHINDER SINGH \*

A GREAT GENERAL AND AN architect of victory in battles, Baba Phula Singh was a rare example of self-less sacrifice and involvement in the building and defending of the Khalsa Raj. A zealous custodian of the Sikh ideals and institutions and guardian of the Sikh holy places, Phoola Singh occupies a unique place in the history of the Sikhs. He was born in 1761 A.D. at Shihan, a remote village in the present state of Haryana. Phoola Singh inherited his love and admiration for the Sikh values and Gursikh living from his father, Bhai Ishar Singh, who himself was a devout Sikh and well known in his area for his high moral and spiritual values. Along with many other Sikhs of the area, Bhai Ishar Singh also joined the heroic bands of the Sikhs who challenged the Afghan invader, Ahmad Shah Abdali, during his sixth invasion of India in 1762 A.D. Ishar Singh was seriously wounded in the battlefield and later succumbed to injuries. But before his death Ishar Singh managed to leave his young son to the affectionate care of Baba Narain Singh, popularly known as Akali Naina Singh. It was in the pious environs of the *Dera* of Baba Narain Singh that young Phoola Singh received his early instruction in Sikh scriptures and later his practical training in warfare. As a

young lad, Phoola Singh showed signs of greatness and impressed his preceptor by his brilliance and his dedication to whatever was entrusted to him.

After completing his early education and training in traditional warfare, young Phoola Singh began his career at Anandpur Sahib as a custodian of the Sikh shrines there along with other members of Baba Narain Singh's Jatha. During his stay at Anandpur, he was often sent in the Jathas to repel enemy attacks and thus he gained valuable experience in actual warfare. Because of his ability and complete dedication to his mission, Phoola Singh became very popular with his preceptor and his colleagues in the Jatha so that after the death of Akali Narain Singh, young Phoola Singh was elected leader of his Jatha. At his elevation to the position of Jathedar Phoola Singh paid attention to the holy places of the Sikhs and carried out a number of improvements in their administration and daily routine.

In 1800 A.D. Phoola Singh and other members of his *Jathas* moved to Amritsar to eliminate unhealthy and un-Sikhlike practices that had slowly crept into the Sikh holy places there. With the help of his dedicated band of followers, Akali

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Phoola Singh was able to bring about some major improvements in the administration of the Golden Temple, the Akal Takht and other important shrines in Amritsar. It was during his stay at Amritsar that Akali Phoola Singh first met Maharaja Ranjit Singh who had led an invasion against the Bhangi chief in possession of that city. Phoola Singh's love for his community did not allow him to helplessly watch this fratricidal war between the two Sikh chiefs. Accordingly, he intervened and with his influence and sagacity brought about a peaceful settlement between Ranjit Singh and the Bhangi chief. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was highly impressed by Akali Phoola Singh's love for his community and his deep involvement for the Sikh causes. Then onward, the Maharaja became a great admirer of this fearless Akali leader.

During his campaign against Qutubdin Khan, the Governor of Kasur, in 1807, Maharaja Ranjit Singh sought the assistance of Akali Phoola Singh and his *Jatha*. In the fierce battle that ensued Qutubdin Khan was defeated but pardoned and was given a *jagir* for his maintenance. During this campaign Phoola Singh impressed the Maharaja with his rare qualities of a warrior and earned the reputation of an organizer of victories. On return from this campaign Phoola Singh and his *Jatha* moved to Damdama Sahib in the winter of 1809 in order to carry out some improvements in the administration of the Sikh shrines there. While at Damdama Sahib, Akali Phoola Singh heard a rumour

about an attack on the Punjab by the British forces. In order to forestall the enemy move Phoola Singh marched with his bands of Akalis and attacked the British troops under Captain White encamped near Fatoh-ke Village near Nabha. In his anxiety to save the Khalsa Raj, which he cherished the most, Akali Phoola Singh seems to have quite ignored the political expediencies and was prepared to risk his life to defend the Sikh kingdom against the evil designs of the British rulers in India.

The growing popularity of Akali Phoola Singh along with his bold and fearless nature and frank criticism of the acts of omission and commission of the high officials at the Lahore Durbar seem to have encouraged some vested interests to combine against Phoola Singh by poisoning the ears of Maharaja Ranjit Singh against this powerful Akali chief. Thus when Phoola Singh went to Lahore to meet the Maharaja and to warn him against the intrigues of his courtiers who were trying to create a rift between him and his son and heir-apparent, Prince Kharak Singh, these selfish officials of the Maharaja managed to delay Akali Phoola Singh seeking an audience with the Maharaja. After a long wait Phoola Singh took the initiative of walking into the Maharaja's palace without waiting for a formal appointment. During his meeting with the Maharaja, Phoola Singh boldly pointed out the danger involved in Maharaja's policy of entrusting responsible positions to persons with doubtful credentials and



warned him against the intrigues of his selfish nobles, who were trying to create a rift between the father and son for selfish gains. When asked to partake food with the Maharaja, the fearless Akali refused to accept anything at his hands till the Maharaja made necessary amends.

After this incident, Akali Phoola Singh marched to Anandpur Sahib along with other members of the *Jatha*. The Maharaja, who was fully convinced of the Akali leader's genuine love for the Sikh kingdom and his uncompromising nature, brought Akali Phoola Singh back to Amritsar through the good offices of a revered Sikh sage, Baba Sahib Singh Bedi. As a token of his gratitude and love for the Akali leader, the Maharaja offered elephants, horses and other useful materials for use by the members of Phoola Singh's *Jatha*. The Maharaja also got regular barracks made at Amritsar for the lodging of his *Jatha*, which later developed as headquarters of the Nihang Singhs and came to be known as the "*Akalian-di-Chhaun*" or the Akali cantonment.

Amity being restored between the Maharaja and Akali Phoola Singh, this great general became a source of immense encouragement and help to Ranjit Singh in his major military campaigns. The fearless leadership of Akali Phoola Singh provided indispensable support to Maharaja Ranjit Singh during his military campaigns against the rulers of Multan, Bahawalpur and Sind. The important role played by Akali Phoola Singh during the Maharaja's

campaign against Multan has been thus recorded in a near contemporary account "Ranjit Singh's whole army would have been repulsed from Multan had not Phoola Singh, a mad Akali, borrowed from Bacieline the courage to lead a storming party against the breach."

During Ranjit Singh's campaign to annex Peshawar to his kingdom in 1818 when his forces had suffered heavy losses and chances of victory were very bleak, the fearless Akali Phoola Singh was sent by the Maharaja to save the situation. The timely arrival of Akali Phoola Singh on the battlefield turned this impending rout into a grand victory and the ruler of Peshawar surrendered before this great general of the Maharaja. In subsequent years, Phoola Singh and his contingent helped Maharaja Ranjit Singh in his conquest of the beautiful valley of Kashmir. Ranjit Singh was so much impressed with the rare qualities of Akali Phoola Singh that after the victory of Kashmir he requested him to stay in the constant company of the Maharaja at the Lahore Durbar. But given as he was to an independent life, away from the grandeurs of the royalty, he refused this invitation and returned to his camp at Amritsar to devote himself to the work of administration of the Sikh holy places there. In 1823, Akali Phoola Singh was called upon to join the Maharaja in his campaigns against the frontier tribes. It was during these campaigns that Akali Phoola Singh demonstrated not only his proverbial bravery and loyalty to the

Khalsa Raj but also his adherence to the Sikh prayer and died fighting rather than retreat and thus go back from the promise made in the solemn presence of the Guru Granth Sahib. In the battle of Naushehra, Akali Phoola Singh marched after saying his prayer and in spite of repeated efforts of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other high officials refused to halt till the reinforcements had arrived. In the fierce battle even after having been pierced with bullets all over his body, he continued the fight and breathed his last only after ensuring victory for the Khalsa.

Akali Phoola Singh was cremated at Pirsabak, four miles east of Naushehra, with full military honours with Maharaja Ranjit Singh and other high officials attending the funeral. To perpetuate the memory of this grand old man, the Maharaja got a Samadhi made at the place of his cremation and attached a big *jagir* for its maintenance. Another memorial, known as Burj Akali Phoola Singh, was

later erected in the sacred city of Amritsar where Akali Phoola Singh had spent most of his time when free from military campaigns. While the Samadhi of Phoola Singh has been left in Pakistan after the partition of the country, the Burj at Amritsar has developed into a sort of headquarters for the Nihangs for whom Phoola Singh remains their *beau ideal*.

Because of Akali Phoola Singh's significant contribution in almost all the important military campaigns of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and in view of his role in ensuring victories therein, Phoola Singh was honoured with the befitting title of the builder and defender of the Khalsa Raj. A rare example of selfless sacrifice, a fearless fighter and organizer of victories, a genuine lover and builder and defender of the Khalsa Raj, a devout Sikh and zealous guardian of the Sikh morals, Phoola Singh occupies a unique place in the history of the Sikhs.

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### **THUS SPAKE GURU NANAK**

Meditate on the form of the Master, take his word as gospel truth. Let the footfalls of the Master resound in the recess of your heart. The Master is the Infinite, bow to Him.

## The Miri-Piri Concept: Social Relationship of Religion & Politics

*BRIG. GURDIP SINGH GREWAL\**

**Introduction:** Historically, the relationship of politics and religion has been an overpowering concern in societies. The relationship is intricate, complex, and abiding. Not only the relationship of politics and religion but the force of these two human energies, has roots in the evolutionary biology of human beings as well as progress and development of human communities from prehistoric times. From the very beginning the *homo erectus* came to be called *homo sapiens* (man the wise) and not *homo faber* (man the technician). The self-conferred title of *homo sapiens* has not been dislodged in later history of human race by any other dominant wave of human genius which could merely be labeled as *homo religiousus* or *homo economicus*. And the “wisdom” of man is the product of “nature and nurture” in time and space. During the different phases of progress and the organization of human societies, that is, from Agricultural, Industrial to Information Age, the basic attributes of spiritual and rational in the “nature” of man and the “nurture” of ideological underpinnings of societies has been primarily determined by the political and religious ideals.

Ever since the dawn of civilization

“there have been great thinkers, philosophers and religious prophets who have made tremendous impact in shaping the political or religious structure of the society. Some outstanding personalities created movements of such significance that formed into a new wave of civilization. The prophets of “Axis Age” - a period of “higher religions” beginning with earliest Israelite apostles around eighth century BCE through Christ to the time of Prophet Muhammad in the seventh century CE - are turning points of civilization for creating societies based on religious doctrines. Each of these religious movements were insular to some extent as they accepted only the faithful of their particular religion who would adhere to the ordained regime. In the sphere of purely political philosophy the Greek philosophers of fifth and fourth centuries BCE contributed visionary thoughts in human affairs. The contributions of a revolutionary magnitude by the Reformation and Renaissance Movements and thereafter by the Enlightenment thinkers in modifying the political and religious structure of societies has been a lasting one. The present day emphasis on secular democracy, and its thrust on global scale, as a politically legitimate

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\* Distinguished Serviceman and ex-Secretary General, World Sikh Council, Brig. Grewal passed away at Chandigarh in May, 2006.

means of governance has been a cause of many a violent conflicts with religiously inspired societies. In the interest of a universal civilized society the social harmony between politics (albeit moralized one) and true religious values is not only desirable but also possible. The appropriate hermeneutics of the core values of all religions would surely support this view. While highlighting the historic progress of major religious societies in harmonizing (not so successfully at many crucial phases) the political (including scientific and other) developments, it is our intention to focus on the ideology of Sikhism which is an everlasting blend of politics and religion for an egalitarian global society.

Notwithstanding the proposed multivariate analysis of the major religious societies and their adapted political and social norms in history, there are fundamental and universal truths concerning human nature and social genetics that must be premised so as to confirm a common bond of humanity. Simultaneously, it is essential that an explication of various terms and expressions, which are generally employed in discourse covering relationship of politics and religion, is undertaken to avoid ambiguity in construction of arguments.

**Relationship and Expressions:** Firstly about politics and religion. The expression and application of politics is, commonly though restrictively, taken in the limited sense of intriguing game of

power struggle while obfuscating its wider and essential purpose of prudent social motive and good policy. In the case of religion, the term, in most cases undeservedly, is loaded overwhelmingly with tangential practices, codes and disciplines (orthodoxically tending to be strict and rigid and at the same time relegating spiritualism) which then confines it to sectarian position rather than universalistic mode. The insularity of sectarianism is directly proportional to the intensity of dogmatism. For the purpose of genuinely illuminating a diacritical ethic defining role and inducing spirituo-ethical norms in a globalizing society, no religion can lay boundaries.

The terminology of church and state as denotative of religion and politics respectively is also widely used to express the relationship. The topics of politics and religion are covered contextually in detail subsequently. However, it may be stated here that in the Sikh philosophy the terms of Miri-Piri are used in relative sense to politics and religion and these terms closely connote temporality and spirituality respectively. The dictionary (Chambers English Dictionary) meaning of temporal is "pertaining to time: pertaining to time in this life or world: worldly, secular or civil" and that of spiritual is "of the nature of, relating to, spirit, a spirit, spirits, the mind, the higher faculties, the soul: highly refined in thought and feeling, habitually or naturally looking to things of spirit: incorporeal: ecclesiastical, religious:" As such

it appears that the terms of temporality and spirituality are better qualified to comprehensively express the social expectations of human society. However, without prejudice to what has been stated here the commonly used terms of politics and religion has been mostly employed in this discussion of their relationship.

The inter-relationship of politics and religion is mostly discussed in terms of: unity; merger; integration; fusion; commingling; conjugation; balance; harmony; coalescence; concomitance; enchained not entangled; segregation; wall of separation, unrelated; and so on. It cannot be denied that anyone of the terms mentioned here are meaningful to describe the relationship between politics and religion but each of these terms can only be applied to some specific set of situation and interactivity. Therefore, there is a vital precondition of the category of activity for which any of the descriptive terms of relationship may be assigned. According to us there are, broadly, three distinct categorized fields at which politics and religion impact, that is, individual human consciousness; collective ideology; and the apparatus and instruments of society. Obviously, individual is the building block of the society and, at the conceptual level, a rational ideology is the constitutive prerequisite of an organized society. But as far as the influences and interplay of politics and religion is concerned the distinction, categorized here, is crucial and unavoidable.

Every human being is endowed with two basic natural gifts - one: religious attribute and second: political sense. This is the unchanging reality of human existence. The thoughts of eminent thinkers are mentioned below to highlight this fact:

- (a) Julien Ries in his book "The Origins of Religions" (1993 Edition) writing about the "inner religious structure" as "an essential characteristic "of our *being* human" states at the very outset . . . basic religious feeling is innate in each person. Whether that person lives in a modern city or is the hunter-gatherer of prehistoric times who decorated cave walls 15,000 to 20,000 years ago, it can be said that religious sense dates back to the very origins of humanity". In other words, spirituality is divinely endowed primal attribute of human nature.
- (b) Kenneth W. Thompson in his book "Fathers of International Thought" (1994 Edition, page 26), quoting from the famous Pericles Funeral Oration, states "We alone regard a man who takes no interest in public affairs, not as a harmless, but as a useless character; and if few of us are originators, we are all sound judges of policy". And Thompson qualifies this opinion by mentioning "Even today historians describe Pericles' Oration as the finest statement of a political ideal in any language."

Thus the individual embodies the coa-

lescence of religion and politics. His heightened moral consciousness provides ethical idealism and his will to act in social environment generates political idealism. These being derivatives of religious feelings and political causation are crucial ingredients for moral impact on political acts. The concrescence of individual's spiritual growth in metaphysical realm and his capacity for affirmative acts in mundane circumstances are personal. This category of activity cannot be compromised by external manifestations and is indissolubly wedded in individual consciousness. The individual is a self-developing agent of politics and religion. Therefore, in respect of the individual human consciousness terms like unity, merger and fusion could be used to describe the relationship of politics and religion.

Ideology is a human value creation for the collective good. It needs to be stressed that ideology is not confined to merely being articulated or defined, it is a way of life in which people act and relate to each other. Ideals, gestative of thought scheme are the life forces in human affairs and these ideals, in a society, are mutually inclusive of political and religious vitalities. Thus the collective ideology is a cooperative enterprise in more than one sense. Moral consensus and logic of political reality are the genesis of ideology. Tradition

and vision of meliorative society are the guiding principles of ideology. Individual agents, as units of political maturity and religious sense, provide the structure of ideology. Therefore, collectively ideology must find compromise between ethical idealism which tends to be purely religious and yet preserve essential values which are threatened by political exigencies. All this must evolve into a "Golden mean" through prudent mix of politics and religion (or correspondingly, reason and spirit; logos and mythos; morality and power) in favour of humanity- erasing moral ambiguity and amorphousness in social situations. It is in this sphere of activity that terms like balance, harmony and mutuality can be appropriately used for elucidating the inter-relationship of politics and religion.

Finally, for explication of the relationship of politics and religion in the category of apparatus and instruments of society, the entities of State and Church can be taken as illustrative. In this category of State and Church, each inhere three elements that of authority; institution and some form of bureaucracy. Both State and Church are important organic limbs of society, however, it is in their respective orbits of activities that the popular axiom "wall of separation" and similar expressions are correctly applicable to describe the relationship of politics and religion.

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## Electoral Pitfalls: Reflection on S.G.P.C. and Akal Takht

*DR. GURCHARAN SINGH MEHTA, M.A., PH.D.\**

THE INDIAN CONSTITUTION, after its adoption in 1950 has been amended 93 times in 53 years. Despite being quite comprehensive and based on the best tenets of world's best constitutions, it failed to provide direction in the case of some of India's post-independence problems and challenges, and proved inadequate to encompass all the Indian ethos and national aspirations. For example, the word "Secular" was added to its Preamble many years after its publication. Similarly, amendments relating to certain fundamental rights, directive principles of State, adult suffrage at 18 years of age, etc were made at different stages of its post-independence existence. Thus, every institution, organization or societal code of conduct, howsoever sound, comprehensive and based on the best traditions, principles and conventions, needs improvement, restructuring and redesigning in the light of changed and ever-changing socio-cultural changes. If it fails to change or if its upholders do not accept and acknowledge the new ground realities, it becomes stagnant, obsolete and irrelevant to the very basic purpose for which such an institution or organization was created.

The basic structure of SGPC, the "Parliament of the Sikhs" constituted under a Govt. of India act of 1925, twenty five years prior to the adoption of Indian constitution, has not been amended even once. From a purely administrative body to manage and administer the historic Sikh Shrines, it has acquired so much political flab over the years that its real and original identity and image of being a purely religious organization have been eclipsed. Its constitution, elections and management have been so much politicized and riven with factions that it has become encumbered with all kinds of irreligious, unethical malpractices associated with the run-of-the-mill Indian political parties. Some of its topmost functionaries keep on swapping positions in this august body. The political party (Shiromani Akali Dal) broadly controls its affairs. Indeed its political agenda has completely beclouded the essentially religious mission of the S.G.P.C. Moreover, its annual multi-million budget, coming from the proceeds and offerings of the devout Sikh masses has become the 'bone of contention' among unprincipled politicians. Thus, a great institution, created and built out of the great sacrifices and a long hard struggle of the Sikh

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masses to rid its shrines of the corrupt Mahants and their British collaborators, has once again fallen a victim to another set of unscrupulous politicians and power brokers. It has swerved away from its main mission of propagation of Sikh way of life, its glorious ethos and identity. The increasing incidence of apostasy among youth, drug addiction, dilution of Sikh traditions in the Sikh society and its societal functions, and rampant corruption in the Gurdwara management - all reflect the degeneration in the S.G.P.C. as an institution and organization. Besides, its relationship with another august Sikh institution, the Akal Takht and its supreme head – the Jathedar, his mode of appointment and his power of issuing “Hukamnamas” (religious edicts)- has given rise to all kinds of controversies and denigrating comments from certain Sikh organizations and individuals. Now, S.G.P.C.’s writ hardly runs outside Punjab. Hazoor Sahib, Nanded and Patna Sahib have their own state-nominated boards, while Delhi Gurudwara Prabhandak Committee is the sole custodian of Sikh Shrines in the State of Delhi. Many Sikh individuals and organizations in India and abroad have started defying the (religious edicts) Hukamnamas of the S.G.P.C. appointed Jathedar of Akal Takht. So there is chaos and anarchy all around in the whole Sikh diaspora.

This decline in the S.G.P.C. functioning and other ills that have crept into its body politic are the direct consequence

of its being constituted under the government act and its electoral process under governmental supervision. S.G.P.C., now like any other political party in power, is prone to all the ills and pressures of power politics, and its attendant evils. Opportunism, expediency, money and muscle power, casteism and electoral combinations and permutations play as dominant a role in the S.G.P.C. elections as they do in other political elections. Thus, the S.G.P.C., elected in this manner, is never a representative body of the whole Sikh community but of a particular faction. Majority of its elected members do not subscribe to the highest Sikh principles of honest living, upright conduct and service to the society. As per the established Sikh code of conduct (Rehat Maryada) initiated by the Sikh Gurus and practiced and propagated by their ancient followers, only those with a life of dedication, upright moral conduct and excellent record of service, to the Sikh faith and community were chosen as Panj Piaras or later on as Jathedars. Dedication and service were the touchstones when the Sikh Gurus chose their heir apparents. Tenth Guru’s selection of Panj Piaras at the baptismal ceremony of the Khalsa; of Banda Bahadur and his five associates, the Sikh sangats, selection of S. Kapoor Singh for the title of Nawabship in 1733, and, later on, declaration of S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as the supreme Sikh ruler of Lahore were all based on the sole criterion of devotion and service to the Sikh faith and Sikh community rather than on



any political or electoral consideration. It is in this supreme Sikh tradition that members of the S.G.P.C. should be selected rather than elected. Mode of selection rather than of election of the S.G.P.C. members should be through the age-old Sikh process of gurmatta, the broad consensus, rather than through the electoral process of a political party. For this purpose, first the S.G.P.C.'s constitution should be delinked from the government legislative Act and the governmental conduct of its elections. Once freed from this governmental interference, the S.G.P.C. should be constituted on the basis of traditional Sikh principles of "Gurmatta" (consensus) built round a person or persons with a glorious record of service and dedication to the community. Personal attributes of the highest moral and Sikh values should qualify a person for the membership of this supreme Sikh body rather than his political clout or social and financial status. Such a process will not only be in line with the Guru ordained "Panj Piara" Sikh tradition based on gurmatta (consensus) but also rid the S.G.P.C. of all the present ills and distortions. This process is not impractical either. The smallest Sikh unit, the local "Singh Sabha" of a township or a village can select a devout, service-oriented Sikh person or persons with an immaculate spotless character through a broad consensus "gurmatta" of the Sikh congregation in the presence of holy Guru Granth Sahib and send their names to the common electoral college. This process can

be duplicated ad verbatim all over the whole state, states, country and the world, wherever the Sikhs have their shrines (Gurdwara) and their Singh Sabhas. The Electoral College, thus constituted of the best Sikh representatives, can further select an apex body of the Sikhs on the same golden principle of selection of "Panj Piaras" through a "gurmatta". There is hardly any chance of an ego clash or factionalism in the Electoral College since it will consist of persons of the highest integrity. No narrow, vested interest is likely to motivate these well-chosen individuals. Where service and self-sacrifice are the main motivations, ego and vanity take a back seat. Thus, the immediate need of the times is to take the S.G.P.C. out of the govt.-controlled act and its electoral system. Its constitution, under the govt. act in 1925 has served its historical purpose of ridding the gurdwara management of the erstwhile Mahants and their foreign collaborators. Now under the changed circumstances, both in the post-independence Indian political context and the world wide Sikh diaspora, S.G.P.C. needs to be redesigned and recast on the fundamental Sikh principles of service (*sewa*) and Sikh way of life. It will, indeed, be a Herculean task, to dismantle this well-entrenched system supported by governmental patronage, but a determined campaign by well-meaning enlightened Sikhs can bring about this transformation. A public movement like the one launched by the Sikhs in 1920 needs to be launched once again. Progressive Sikh

community will surely respond to such a campaign launched through the modern electronic media and the Democratic electoral system, despite upholding the principles of equality of rights including the right to vote for all citizens, very often elects leaders of dubious character mainly on the basis of majority, even if that majority consists of the ignorant and the indiscrete. The present breed of Indian political leaders governing the nation, barring a handful of clean and upright individuals, consists of tainted, and unscrupulous politicians. This is the direct result of democratic electoral system and artificially created vote-bank politics. It is well said:

*“Jamhooryat who tarzey hakumat hai  
Jahan gina jata hai, tola nahin jata”*

It is, thus, quantity (the number of heads) rather than the quality (the intrinsic worth) that elects and, constitutes a body which governs a state. How can such a system be suitable for an organization like S.G.P.C which has to deal with the noblest concerns- the religious and the spiritual concerns of community. Only those who uphold and practise the highest standards of morality and Sikh code of conduct in their personal and public life deserve to be the members and custodians of this “Parliament of the Sikhs”. Thus, very system by which the S.G.P.C. is constituted at present is flawed. So, the need of the times is to review the present stage-managed, electoral system and make suitable amendments. Thus, constituting

the S.G.P .C. through the hierarchical system of forming an electoral college through the Sikh principles of *gurmatta*, (consensus) and “*Panj Piaras*” at every stage, through the natural process of churning (*Manthan*) and crystallization from among the best, can bring out the best dispensation for the Sikhs. Means and ends must be inseparable in religious, spiritual, and even cultural matters. There is no place for politics and manipulation in matters of faith and religion. Sikhs, throughout their glorious history, have always managed their politico-social affairs through the concept of *gurmatta*, *Panj Piaras* and representative consensus, (Sarbat Khalsa). Establishment of manjis and *Dharmals* by the Sikh Gurus, election of supreme Sikh leaders like Nawab Kapoor Singh, S. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, 65 Sikh Jathas and later on 12 missals by the Sikh Sangat in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, have vindicated the validity of these principles. Whenever the Sikhs abandoned these principles, they have come to harm. The collapse of the Sikh Empire after the demise of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was mainly due, to the abandoning of these principles by the Maharaja and his descendants. Present ills of the main Sikh institutions like the S.G.P.C, and the whole Sikh diaspora are also the product of the same structural deviation from the established Sikh principles and adoption of a political electoral system. Sooner we abandon this manipulative approach and return to the merit-based- on- service approach, the better. India being a secu-

lar state, its constitution under section 26, guarantees every religion and its followers complete freedom to manage their own religious affairs independent of the government. No other religion or religious community holds its religions elections under government management and supervision. The Sikhs should also review and revise, the functioning of their fundamental institutions like the S.G.P.C., Akal Takht and its Jathedar and his mode of issuing *Hukamnamas* (religious edits), both in the light of established Sikh Principles of *Panj Piaras*, *Gurmatta* and *Sarbat Khalsa* and the prevailing Socio-Cultural scenario. A few suggestions in this regard deserve attention:

The position, status and role of the Jathedar of Akal Takht needs to be clearly defined in the light of Sikh history and conventions. Akal Takht was established by the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib for safeguarding and monitoring the temporal and political interests of the Sikhs in the changed circumstances following Guru Arjun Dev's martyrdom. The militant power of the Khalsa was galvanised around this supreme seat of Sikh power to meet the threat of Mughal intentions of decimating the Sikh Panth and its identity. Since then, Akal Takht has been a rallying point for the Sikhs whenever their religious and temporal existence has been threatened and challenged. All the Sikh crusades, throughout the Sikh History upto the modern times, have been launched from this supreme seat of Sikh power. Thus, the role of Akal Takht as an

institution and centre of Sikh power and identity is beyond any controversy. We must preserve and strengthen its unique position, since it is a symbol of the glorious history of the Khalsa Panth.

But the role and relevance of its Jathedar and appointment of the Akal Takht Jathedar must be reviewed and clearly redefined. The process of the appointment of the Jathedar has not been codified so far. Following the demise of Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Sundri appointed Bhai Mani Singh, the custodian of both Harmandar Sahib as well as Akal Takht. During the later period, in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the various Sikh Jathedars were appointed by the five eminent Sikh personalities of the times and these appointments were ratified by the special Sikh congregation held at Amritsar or Anandpur Sahib through the process of Sarbat Khalsa. The Sarbat Khalsa was a congregation of the representative Sikhs called on special occasions to put a seal of approval on the decisions and appointments made by the Panj Piaras. The Panj Piaras were eminent Sikhs of proven track record of service and sacrifices for the Sikh Panth. The appointments of all the legendary Sikh Jathedars like S. Nawab Kapoor Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, Baba Deep Singh, Akali Phoola Singh were made through this process of Panj Piaras and Sarbat Khalsa (congregation consensus). The first deviation and distortion in this tradition was made by the British after their annexation of Punjab. Aroor Singh was the first government

appointee to the post of Jathedar, who was made to honour the main perpetrator of Jalianwale Bagh Massacre General O' Dwyer. After the British, the S.G.P.C. has been appointing the Jathedar of Akal Takht. Its appointment is almost identical to the British procedure and as such suffers from all the weaknesses of government appointed judicature. This is a clear violation of the established Sikh principles and traditions. Since S.G.P.C. in its present form, is heavily politicized and faction - ridden, its appointment of the Jathedars and their *Hukamnamas* also suffer from lack of credibility and universal acceptance. Some of these arbitrarily appointed Jathedars have been unceremoniously dismissed and their *Hukamnamas* annulled because they did not toe the official line. Some of their *Hukamnamas* have been defied both by the individuals and organizations. As a result the present status of the Jathedar, has been eroded and diminished and his *Hukamnamas* lack in credibility. There is an urgent need to codify the procedure of his appointment and his power and jurisdiction to issue *Hukamnamas* in the light of the changed circumstances in the entire Sikh Diaspora. A serious debate and discussion at the highest level is required on this issue as well as the constitution of S.G.P.C. A piecemeal solution of any one component will not do. A judicious blend of the traditional principles and the modern needs must be effected to recast these Sikh institutions. The appointment, powers and jurisdiction of the

Akal Takht Jathedar should be somewhat on the lines of those prescribed for the Chief Justice of India so that he can become a real custodian of the Sikh principles and the values enshrined by Akal Takht. Just as Chief justice of India is the custodian and upholder of India's constitution, Jathedar of Akal Takht must also fearlessly uphold the Sikh principles. His selection as Jathedar must be on the basis of his integrity and eminence in Sikh Scholarship, and service to Sikh Society. Such a person should adorn this august office by virtue of his being the tallest Sikh of his times. The Jathedars of the other four Sikh Takhts should also conform to these standards. These five Jathedars of the five Sikh Takhts should constitute the Panj Piaras and issue *Hukamnamas* after serious deliberations and proper ratification by the apex electoral college, elected hierarchically by the various organs of the Sikh Panth. This will ensure uniformity and universal acceptance of *Hukamnamas* in the entire Sikh Panth.

To sum-up, Sikh Panth must relinquish the electoral mode of their major institutions based on the election process or political parties and return to Guru-ordained way of selection of its custodians to manage their religious shrines and religio-temporal institutions. Abandoning the manipulative process of factionalised vote-banks, we must return to the merit based selection of our leaders and office bearers. Only then we can meet the modern challenges of apostasy, disintegration, personality-cult and pseudo-spiritualism

disguised as Saint-hood and phony Babaism among the Sikhs. We must review, revise, amend, and restructure our

major institutions if we wish to survive as a religion and maintain its distinct identity.



## Punjab's Shame "Faetus Blood on *Guruan di Dharti*"

Twenty years after the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques Act came into force to end sex-selective foeticide, we are confronted with horror stories of hundreds of aborted fetuses being found in Patiala district in Punjab. Efforts to tackle this social evil, in spite of amendments to the Act, do not seem to be going anywhere. According to Census 2001, India has an average sex ratio of 983 women to 1,000 men, whereas women outnumber men by 5-6 per cent in most parts of the world. **These skewed statistics are most clearly visible in Punjab, which has the country's lowest sex ratio – 874:1,000. Conventional wisdom suggests that increasing prosperity, education, industrialization and urbanisation would improve the status of women and thus the sex ratio. This is where Punjab leaves policymakers flummoxed – the state ranks second in the country's Human Development Index and has among the highest per capita income figures in the country.** There is no significant difference in the sex ratios of urban and rural areas, or industrialised and non- industrialised districts. The ratio is declining despite improved overall life ex-

pectancy, greater availability of health services and falling female mortality. Neither prosperity, nor educational levels, seem to make a difference.

So is the low status of women in Punjabi society a cultural phenomenon born out of the region's history? Its marital and agricultural traditions have led to a valorisation of the male heir, a situation exacerbated during the Eighties' militancy. Today, the increasing acceptance of the small-family norm has sharpened the preference for the male child. Counter-intuitively, scarcity of females has not meant an increase in women's status; it has only worsened the situation. Development practitioners have been seized of the need to integrate gender justice within the larger development paradigm. There is need to address the underlying cultural roots of the problem. There is scope here, perhaps, to develop gender scholarship within the evolving Indian context, and using better intellectual tools to advance the cause of gender equality.

[N.B. This appeared as Editorial in H.T. dated Aug.21.2006. Sub Title is ours – Ed. SR.]



## Mindset of Doris R. Jakobsh as a Scholar

*DR. J.S. MANN, M.D. (CALIFORNIA)*

*DR. S.S. SODHI, PH.D. (CANADA), REGISTERED PSYCHOLOGIST (NOVA SCOTIA)*

DR. DORIS R. JAKOBESH, a product of university of British Columbia is on the faculty of religion. In this article we will attempt to explain the motivation that persuaded Doris Jakobsh [who apprenticed under Dr. Harjot Oberoi, Department of Anthropology, University of British Columbia] to carry on her research with a prejudicial mindset. We shall concentrate on two of her major documents: (a) "Gender Issues in Sikh studies, Hermenentics of Affirmation or Hermenentics of Suspicion" written by her when she was a doctoral student in the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia, in 1993-2000. This 'invited' article was part of an international conference hosted by Dr. Pashaura Singh at the University of Michigan, U.S.A. in 1994. Later on, Pashaura Singh and N. Gerald Barrier edited a book based on the said conference entitled "*The Transmission of Sikh Heritage in the Diaspora*" published by Manohar Publishers [2/6 Ansari Road, Daryaganj, New Delhi 110002]. Pashaura Singh claims that this book had been "prepared under the auspices of the Sikh Studies Program, University of Michigan, U.S.A." (b) 'Relocating Gender in Sikh History, Transformation, Meaning and Identity' by

Doris R Jakobsh, Oxford University Press, [Y.M.C.A. Library Building, Jai Singh Road, New Delhi 110001]. This book is a revised version of Dr. Jakobsh's Ph.D. thesis which she finished in 1999 as a graduate student in the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia. Dr. Harjot Oberoi, who was removed from the University of British Columbia Sikh chair for his anti-Sikh research and sent to teach Anthropology was her supervisor. We do not know, at this point in time, who were on her thesis committee and her external examiner or whether an ethics committee was set up to review her thesis proposal (S.S.H.R.C. guidelines, 1991).

After carefully reading the above-mentioned sources we are constrained to conclude that Doris Jakobsh has a Eurocentric mind of a researcher who wants to bring "correctness" to the Gender issues in Sikh History, using: the western Feministic Paradigm.

She wants to look at the Gurus and Sikhism as reflected in Guru Granth Sahib much as Karl Marx looked at various European religions.

She uses empiricist, logical-positive-objective European methods to evaluate

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*Note: References to Gurus and Gurbani have been omitted in order to retain dignity of sacred lore. - Ed. SR*

---

the mystic and prophetic writings of the Sikh Gurus.

**Her motivation appears to be repression-projection mechanism. It means whatever she has been made to repress as a female growing up in North America, she wants to displace and project to Sikh ethos. She claims that it will help her in reducing contradictions in her otherwise 'meaningless' life!**

She is doubtless a scholar "in a hurry" who does an excellent "role dance" from 1993-2000 mostly around unsympathetic paradigms developed by Drs. McLeod, Grewal, Hans, Gurrinder Mann, Pashaura Singh, Fenech and her supervisor Harjot Oberoi. In her pathological desire to fit with the "Culture of the Fitters" of Sikh religion and to form an "ugly gestalt", she has attempted to demolish some of the best Khalsacentric work done on Sikh females by Dr. Nikky-Gurinder Kaur Singh in her book entitled "The Feminine Principle in Sikh Vision of the Transcendent (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993).

Jakobsh assumes she has the right to make the Sikh female "Sociological respectable" by imposing rational efficiency of logical positivism. In the process, if she has to trample over to the sacred writing of the Sikhs in Guru Granth Sahib, so it be!

She is willing to "denature the Eastern Supernature" even though her "Doors of Perception" may be still tinted with

coloured glass of western up bringing, and is willing to violate the norms of S.S.H.R.C. 1991 set by Canadian Council.

A summary of Jakobsh's writing is provided for the benefit of the readers, who can make up their own mind about the status of her research. Doris claims:

- That Guru Nanak's use of MATA as wisdom, beauty, clarity, Guru Gobind Singh's use of "Durga" not as a Goddess but a figure of myth and literature, and Bhai Vir Singh's use of Sundari and Rani Raj Kaur as wise and saintly Sikh female role models were mere "lip service".
- That in spite of the use of female imagery in Holy Gurbani by the Gurus, one can find misogynistic (anti-female) statements in Guru Granth Sahib.
- Sikh Gurus, even though they identified with the female worldview by producing (feminine bani - Mehala I, II, III, IV, V, IX) yet did not understand whether in fact "their poetic utterances were feminine."
- She agrees with the perverse conclusion of Harjot Oberoi that the holy scripture is 'male dominated' because it uses such terminology as Akal Purkah, Karta Purakh. The devotee is allegorically depicted as bride yearning for male god in the form of a bridegroom. She considers this aspect of Guru Granth Sahib as misogyn-

- nistic (anti-female), androcentric and patriarchal.
- Even though Guru Granth Sahib is replete with images of mother, bride and many metaphors of feminine roles, yet it still reflects men's perception of and stereotypes about women's ideal behaviour. In Sikh Scriptures women are told how to regulate their private life by Sikh Gurus who were all males. The Scriptures provided tools of control for what the "ideal is to be and to do!"
  - The celebration of motherhood in Sikh Scriptures where she lives with dignity and upon whom depends creation and nurturing is false. Jakobsh thinks that Guru Nanak's often quoted Shabad. (SGGS 473) does not pay due respect to woman:

"Of woman are we born, of woman conceived, to woman engaged, to woman married, it is through woman that order is maintained, then why call her inferior from whom all great ones are born? Woman is born of woman: None is born but of woman."
  - According to Doris, Guru Nanak is ambivalent and uses women only as procreators, especially valued if they produce monarchs (*Rajan*). Doris further feels that Guru Granth Sahib's view of female is one-sided and promotes subjugation and self-abnegation to the male master hidden in the form of a male Guru.
  - Jakobsh thinks that we should stop calling the language of Adi Granth Allegorical (See SGGS 371, 483, 31, 41, 182, 796, 639) but reflection of Social reality of women depicted by male Gurus. She does not agree with Dr. Nikky Singh "that Shabads of Guru Granth Sahib symbolically depict duality of body and mind, which not only splits one part of the self from the other but also has an in-built mechanism that degrades the one and exalts the other is negated."
  - Doris thinks that the language of Guru Granth Sahib has a "hidden agenda for women." To become better human beings you have to become obedient, subservient, sensual, compliant, faithful and devoted wives and mothers.
  - According to Dr. Jakobsh we should apply "Research of Suspicion" to Guru Granth Sahib. We should negate whatever is written, break the mask and reach a new Western feminine worldview of affirmation of Sikh Female through McLeodian paradigms. This research of suspicion will bring out sexist, patriarchal attitudes and practices as depicted and promoted in Guru Granth Sahib.
  - Doris is upset that Sikh Gurus ended up fighting with the Mughals rather than removing social evils of the society and emancipating women. She feels that it produced incongruity between Sikh precepts and practice in Guru period of Sikh history.



Doris Jakobsh claims that Dr. Nikky Singh is wrong when she claims that Guru Nanak received His divine revelation independently and Guru Nanak was a MASTER himself and did not follow Kabir or his Bhagti Paradigm.

- Doris thinks that McLeod's SANT synthesis with regards to the origins of Sikhism is valid. Guru Nanak, the Founder of Sikhism absorbed many SANT ideals from a variety of resources including Kabir. In other words, Guru Nanak was a SANT NANA of Bhagti movement. Dadu Dayal and Guru Nanak were definitely influenced by Kabir.
- Because Guru Gobind Singh spent a good deal of his formative years in the Sivalik Hills, the area where the Durga Cult prevailed, he incorporated the Durga myth in his poetry to please the Jat Sikhs who were Durga worshippers. (Please note that McLeod thinks that Guru Gobind borrowed the Five K's from Jat Sikhs). In doing so Guru Gobind Singh overruled the writings of Guru Granth Sahib. (SGGS 874) where females are negatively perceived but worship of Great Mother is forbidden and Sat Guru is inadvertently assumed as Male.

Jakobsh claims that Guru Gobind Singh 'became a Devi worshipper as he extolled the female Goddess'. The Durga myth helped Guru Gobind Singh mediate contradictions in Sikh

worldview. Adi Granth has shaped "One God" (Ek Onkar) psyche of the orthodox Sikh; therefore, Guru Gobind Singh brought in Durga to satisfy the yearning for the feminine images of the Khalsa Sikhs. No wonder the Durga myth of Dasam Granth was popular with Sikhs in the early nineteenth century.

- She agrees with the interpretation of Dr. Oberoi regarding 19th century Sikhism of "Sanatan" Sikhs which had nature worship, witchcraft, spirit and spirit possession, miracle saints, and goddess worship along with devotion to Sikh Gurus. She is sad that this "enchanted universe" of Panjab was destroyed by Singh Sabha leaders trained in Western ideology with linear worldview (at least she admits that that Western ideology produces linear world view!)
- Doris is upset that in the poems of Bhai Vir Singh, 'Mere Saian Jio' (O, my beloved) and 'Rani Raj Kaur', it is always a female in search of the divine and the Beloved is also a Male. (Perhaps she would like to see a male searching for a female or a female searching for a female or a male searching for a male!!)
- In relocating gender in Sikh History, Doris applies Dr. Oberoi's "Paradigm of Construction of Religious Boundaries" (1994) to explain the worldview of Sikh women during the Guru period and Singh Sabha movement.

A few of the latter references are quoted illustratively:

- Mai Bhago dressed in male attire in the battlefield. This is tantamount to suppression of her femaleness. Creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh devalued the Sikh females who were not included among initiates in 1699.
- In Jat Sikhs the British Indian rulers saw a reflection of themselves; hence they started promoting the Martial Race Concept. Khalsa Sikhs represented British ideals of masculinity and hence was not good for Sikh female images. The British aroused in the Sikhs, their religious impulse to produce in them the martial spirits which they used to rule India. So it was politics of similarity between the Sikhs and Britishers. (She ignores the fact that at least two thousand Sikh Freedom Fighters were hanged during British Raj in 1849-1947.)
- The British support the practice of *karewa* for Jat widows that curtailed the desire for power and liberty among Sikh widows.
- Britishers colonized India because Indians have depraved attitudes towards women. Christian missionaries (men and women) were invited to teach Sikh males the manners. That is why British administration supported the conversion of Panjabis to Christianity. Christian missionaries and the Singh Sabha movement liberated Sikhs from magic practices of DAINS and OJHAS.
- Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Burma because he preached open sexual morality among his Kuka adherents. "Kuka women were loose" and they did that to find a place in the male oriented society of Kukas, followers of Baba Ram Singh.
- The Sikh female name 'Kaur' came from Rajput term 'Kanwar' (Prince). This middle name for the females was taken to 'Rajputize' their identity.

**After reading Relocating Gender in Sikh History by Doris Jakobsh one is amazed to see how mystified a Theology graduate (1992) from Harvard University can become while working under a Eurocentric supervisor with linear and myopic vision.**

□

FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE, BOLD COMMENT  
READ  
THE SIKH REVIEW

## Interview with Dr. Doris Jakobsh<sup>®</sup>

JAGPAL SINGH TIWANA\*

*Dr. Doris Jakobsh is assistant professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Waterloo, Canada. Sikhism is one of the courses she teaches there. I came to learn that Dr. Doris Jakobsh, and her family, was vacationing in Halifax area. Taking advantage of this opportunity, I contacted her to interview her. She readily agreed to meet me at my place.* - JST

Jagpal S Tiwana (JST): Jakobsh? Is that an East European family name?

Doris Jakobsh (DRJ): It is a German-Czech family name. My parents moved to Canada in the early 1950s from Germany. As a matter of fact, my first language was German; my parents insisted that we speak the language at home. I was born in Alberta, and began my university education at the University of Calgary. I then had the opportunity to study in Germany for a year, then finished my undergraduate years at the University of Waterloo (where I now teach), then my Master's degree at Harvard University and PhD at the University of British Columbia.

JST: How did you get interested in Sikhism?

DRJ: I was doing my Master's in Religious Studies at Harvard....

JST: It is very difficult to get acceptance at Harvard. How did that happen?

DRJ: I went there on scholarship. I was encouraged to apply to Harvard Univer-

sity by one of my mentors at the University of Waterloo, Dr. Darrol Bryant, who had also done his Master's degree there. He felt that it was a good match for me.

JST: And back to your interest in Sikhism?

DRJ: While I was at Harvard I visited the Gurdwara at Medford. It was managed by *Gora* Sikhs of Yogi Bhajan. I found this 'marriage' of East and West fascinating and decided I needed to know more about Sikhism. At that point in time, 1990-1992, Sikhism was not a subject that was often taught at the University level. That has changed somewhat since then. It was a new field of study as a lot of work had already been done on Islam, Hinduism and other Eastern religions. No serious study had been done on gender equality in Sikhism, so I chose this subject for my PhD.

JST: How did you end up at University of British Columbia?

DRJ: Prof. Hew McLeod was at University of Toronto in 1992. I approached

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<sup>®</sup> Reference is invited to Dr Kashmir Singh's Critique of her book "Relocating Gender in Sikh History" (SR: July 2006)

him to see if he could be my supervisor. He politely declined to take me. He thought that my work would be immediately declared blasphemous by a small group of what I would call hostile Sikhs if he became my guide. Then I went to Harjot Oberoi at UBC and he accepted me.

JST: Oberoi is also controversial. Did he influence you in your findings?

DRJ: His most enduring influence was of course, in his area of his expertise, the Singh Sabha movement, and in his insistence that I leave no stone unturned in making sense of historical documents and attitudes. He is a hard task master, and not easy to please. He would reject second hand sources off hand and insist that I go deeper.

JST: Still your work is perceived as biased to the extent that you don't like the Sikh religion.

DRJ: Listen, if I had not liked the Sikh religion, I would not have spent seven years of my life writing my thesis exploring Sikhism. Remember, this was the time when I was also having my two children. My family and I even went to India and lived there at Patiala University campus for ten months as I did my research there.

JST: What is so good about Sikh tradition to you?

DRJ: **Oh so much, don't know what to begin with. Sikh Scriptures are just beautiful. It is a sheer pleasure to become engrossed in reading it, even from English translations, which of**

**course cannot capture the essence of the original script. And Japji! I feel that it captures the heart of God.**

**I also enjoy listening to Kirtan; some of what I would consider my most sacred moments have taken place sitting quietly at the Darbar Sahib in Amritsar, listening to the beautiful music as I watched the sun setting. I observed some of my students (on a trip to India in 2004), even though they are not Sikhs, be mesmerized by the same sacred music.**

**Langar, free food to all Sikhs and non-Sikhs, is wonderful institution of the Sikhs. Once I saw street people at a Gurdwara in Vancouver partaking of Langar. I think this is a profound contribution from the Sikh Gurus to humanity at large. Rich or poor, regardless of color, caste, gender – all are invited to share food together. I am also delighted to hear that wherever there is a disaster in the world, whether it is an earthquake in Gujarat or tsunami in South Asia or Katrina Hurricane in Louisiana, or a child slipped into a 60 feet hole at Kurukshetra in Haryana, Sikhs are there with free Langar food for the hungry. I remember once you put on Sikh Diaspora forum that 70,000 people partake Langar every day in Golden Temple kitchen in Amritsar. Sikhs in general are very hospitable people.**

**Here is another one I like: free board and lodging in Gurdwaras for**

travelers. It is a great tradition of this religion. This is how Bhagat Puran Singh was inspired to join Sikh faith.

And then there is the holy pudding, *Karah parshad*. My children love it. Once I took them to a Hindu temple in Chandigarh. They were given candies as parshad. "This is not that soft yummy pudding that they gave us in Sikh temple, this is too hard".

JST: Don't worry; you will have plenty of that pudding (*Karah*) today.

DRJ: But perhaps what I find most profound about Sikhism is its theology of Grace, Nadar. My favorite verse from Gurbani says that if you take just one step toward God, God will take a thousand toward you. I find that message incredibly hopeful, in a world where hopelessness and despair are often not far from the surface. It is a wonderful message to pass on to the world. Also, Sikhism's positive attitude toward humanity in general is inspiring.

JST: And now the difficult question, what you don't like about the Sikhs?

DRJ: I don't like when I see Sikhs going away from the teaching of Gurus. Punjab has a very dismal record of male to female sex ratio – perhaps the lowest on the subcontinent according to some records, this, in the region where the Sikh gurus revealed their truths - Guru Amar Das preached against female infanticide and de-

nounced purda (veil). He appointed women to Manjis, sent them out to preach Guru's message of emancipation. Now women are not allowed to do *kirtan* nor take part in the *Sukhasan* procession at Golden Temple. Whenever I hear of another lawsuit stemming from internal fighting or violence in Gurdwaras I get sad – for those of us who are trying to teach Sikhism within the University setting, these portrayals do not help to undo the stereotypes already surrounding the Sikh tradition here in the West; nor does the in-fighting do credit to the teachings of Sikh Gurus. But then again, can you point to one religious tradition that does credit to the glorious truths taught by their founders?

JST: Do you cover the whole of Sikhism in your course? Tell me something about your course.

DRJ: I cover important themes of Sikhism, like concept of Grace, God, Sikh theology, history, colonial Punjab and Singh Sabha, gender and, Diaspora issues for Sikhs,

JST: Your favorite period in Sikh history?

DRJ: Colonial Punjab and the Singh Sabha movement. I hadn't planned on studying this time frame when I began my PhD but, I became increasingly convinced it gave a definite form and shape to Sikhism as we know it today. The Singh Sabha leaders drafted the Sikh 'code of

conduct' and defined the boundaries of the Sikh faith. Their contribution is massive and praiseworthy.

JST: Do you invite any local Sikh as guest speaker to your classes?

DRJ: Yes, the late Kuldeep Singh Chhatwal came to the class and spoke to the students. He was quite knowledgeable and well respected Sikh leader in the area. I have also brought in individuals from the Sikh Students Association.

JST: Do you send your students to Sikh families in the area or to local Gurdwara to learn Sikhism in practice?

DRJ: There was no need for it. Ninety percent of my students in the class were from Sikh families.

JST: How do you keep yourself up-to-date on Sikhism?

DRJ: I order new books for my personal collection and for the university library. I read magazines covering Sikh issues. Old issues of *Punjab, Past and Present* ably edited by Ganda Singh is a mine of information. I get *Journal of Punjab Studies, Sikh Formations, The Sikh Review, Sikh Courier* etc. I am also a member of Internet discussion forums, Sikh Diaspora and Gurmat Learning Zone where current Sikh issues are debated. I also attend conferences and seminars.

JST: Have you attended any conference recently?

DRJ: Yes, I just returned from two in-

ternational conferences, one in Leiden, Netherlands, at the 19<sup>th</sup> European Conference on Modern South Asian Studies (ECMSAS) where my paper was entitled '**Representation, Mobilization and Globalization: Sikhs and Women's Seva on the WWW**' and another in Sigtuna, Sweden, at the 5<sup>th</sup> International Conference on Media, Religion and Culture, where I presented '**Who is a Sikh? Colonial and Contemporary Media constructions of Sikh Identity.**' I was fortunate to run into Dr. Shinder Thandi and Dr. Karen Leonard in Leiden, both of whom are exemplary scholars of Sikhism.

JST: Your favorite authors on Sikh Studies?

DRJ: I have tremendous respect for Dr. Harjot Oberoi, my guide for my PhD dissertation. He is brilliant, perhaps the best I have come across.

JST: This is also the view of my friend, Dr. Gurbhagat Singh. According to him Oberoi is the best among the Sikh scholars teaching abroad. Dr. Gurbhagat Singh was Professor of English and Dean of Languages at Punjabi University, Patiala. At present he is translating Sri Guru Granth Sahib into English.

DRJ: Who else?

DRJ: Of course, Hew McLeod, he is the elder statesman of scholars of Sikh Studies. Both as scholar and a human being he is remarkable. Then I also respect the works of J S Grewal, Harbans Singh, Kirpal Singh and Pashaura Singh.

And, of course, my friend Nikki Singh.

Oh gee, I almost forgot N G Barrier. He did the pioneer work on Singh Sabha, which was profound and thorough. Both Dr. Oberoi and I stand on his shoulders for information on Singh Sabha movement.

Of course, we cannot forget the 'Greats' of Sikh and Punjab history, Ganda Singh and Fauja Singh.

JST: So you firmly belong to the McLeodian School in Sikh studies.

DRJ: There is no such a thing as a McLeodian school or group. We agree and disagree on issues. Hew McLeod and Pashaura Singh differ on some issues and so do Gurinder Mann and Pashaura Singh. Nikki and I focus on aspects of the same subject, though use different approaches, but still she is my good friend. I critiqued McLeod in my works for accepting Kaur as surname for women at the 1699 Amrit ceremony at Anandpur without checking contemporary sources and J.S. Grewal for not even mentioning women at all in this regard. In fact, Kaur was added to women's name during Singh Sabha period. There is no such a thing as a McLeodian school. We respect each other's views, work and build on each others' research.

JST: And how about Khushwant Singh

DRJ: I adore Khushwant Singh. He is fiercely independent, and speaks out his mind bluntly. Another Punjabi writer I greatly respect is Amrita Pritam. She is the ultimate Punjabi poet. She had a fine

mind. Look at her poem *The Annunciation* where Mata Tripta had Guru Nanak in her womb. She focused on the hopes and dreams and bodily experiences of the pregnant Tripta. Her poem on partition "Aj Akhan Waris Shah Nu..." made her immortal. Her heart bleeds for the daughters of Punjab.

JST: Do you know Punjabi?

DRJ: When I was at Patiala in 1996 to research material for my PhD thesis I learned to read from Gurmukhi script. I could also speak *tuti-phuti* (broken) Punjabi, but since there was no practice here I almost lost it now.

JST: Any plans to write a new book?

DRJ: In fact I am working on two books. One is a book I am editing focusing on issues relating to women in Sikhism; I'm delighted that so many important scholars will be contributing to this book. I'm also hoping to publish a volume on the Internet and Sikhism. And, recently I was approached to consider being the general editor of a new two volume edition on World Religions by a major publishing company.

JST: Sikhism is a new religion. Western scholars should exercise caution in applying rigorous Western methodology in examining it, especially influence of Hinduism. Already some Hindu organizations are trying to enter the fold and Sikhs fear its absorption by Hinduism.

DRJ: Do you really believe that Sikhism will be absorbed into Hinduism?

This has been a concern for more than a hundred years, but, in my opinion, if one looks around today, Macauliffe's assertion that the Sikhs would be swallowed by the 'boa' which is the Hindu tradition within a few years was way off the mark. As for questioning, applying rigorous scholarship, first of all – that has been done by non-Sikhs and Sikhs, in the West and in Punjab universities; it certainly isn't a 'western phenomenon' in that it is only undertaken by Western scholars. In my humble opinion, Sikhism represents truth and goodness; that which is 'true' cannot be shaken by questioning and that which is 'good' is so

at its core, its essence. Sikhism has solid, beautiful foundations which cannot be shaken by questioning some of its practices based on oral tradition or even textual traditions. If I understand the Gurus' message correctly, as an outsider, their message was one of internal transformation, of becoming fully human, of constantly striving to become a *Gurmukh*, God-inspired if you will. That amazing message cannot be undermined by historical inquiry; it never has and it never will.

JST: Thank you for your time.

DRJ: It was my pleasure to meet you.



### **A Hole through the Ear can cost Much**

If you pierce any part of your body, you pierce a Meridian Point, which governs the flow of Life Force energy to that area. The effect is a numbing of that part of the body. In particular when you pierce your earlobes, and wear heavy earrings, you are putting a weight and a constant movement on the meridian point corresponding to the head. **It is just like putting a nail through your skull.** The human ear contains all the Meridian Points for the entire body; piercing any part of the ear only drives the nail into a different place.

Plucking that fuzz can pluck your comfort... Mind it!

**Our hair function as antennae for the electromagnetic field to feed *Pranic* energy to the whole cellular structure of our body.**

§ **The leg hair stimulates the electromagnetic field and balances the movement of the pituitary, glands.**

§ **The hair under our arms affect the lower spine.**

§ **The eyebrows control the depth of the analytical workings of the brain.**

Hair is made of pure protein. When the hair is cut the body diverts its total energy toward replacing the protein.

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## Remembering Yogi Harbhajan Singh

*HARBANS LAL, PHD., D.LITT. (HONS)\**

*(Excerpted from the Speech at the Yogi Bhajan Memorial Day in Espanola, October 23, 2004)*

AS MOST OF YOU KNOW, Yogi ji and I go back quite a way. We met at a time before he became Yogi and I became a cheer leader for celebrating Guru Granth. We were both Sikh youth activists in Indian sub-continent. All India Sikh Students Federation (AISSF) brought us together. I hope you will understand when I say that it was quite a daunting experience for a relatively shorter youth to encounter a tall handsome youth who was out to tear you apart, but I still remember all our encounters with pleasure.



Before I get further, let me tell you something more about AISSF that we worked together to build in Indian Sub-continent.

AISSF was organized in India in 1943 with a view to organize Sikh students in the schools and colleges of Indian Sub-Continent in order to inculcate love for Sikh heritage. Sikh students were prepared in leadership skills to carry on their responsibilities to preserve and promote their rich heritage in all walks of life in their adult years. This organization is credited to produce Sikh leaders in all walks of life

from religion to politics during the twentieth century. Present Indian Prime Minister, Manmohan Singh, was a member of AISSF during his high school days, so was Honorable Tarlochan Singh MP who is Chairman of the Indian Minority Commission today. Professor Satbir Singh who re-wrote the exegeses of Sikh theology and Sikh history was my contact colleague in AISSF, so were Sardar Manjit Singh Calcutta and Pradhar Sahib Gurcharan Singh Tohra who guided the SGPC to its present stature. Suffice to say that AISSF trainees constitute

the list of Who Is Who of the contemporary Sikh leadership in social, religious, political and educational fields.

Harbhajan Singh joined AISSF during the years of Indian partition and led the organization during his college life in Delhi. For many years he remained member of the National General Assembly of AISSF. I was the national president of the organization in 1954-55.

For your information, I towed the mainstream line and Harbhajan Singh led the rebellious group among Sikh youth. We

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both were working for bringing Sikh students back to the Sikh fold and building a school for the future Sikh leadership in India, I was building the school with available material and he stood for reforms within the organization. Thus, we found ourselves often in opposite camps but only at the time of national elections. During the remainder of the time we both worked for building the organization and kinship among the Sikh youth for a brighter Sikh future in India and abroad.

In North America the earliest meeting with Yogi ji I recall is the one in Boston in early nineteen seventies. He came to Boston on a speaking engagement. He sent for me to come and I did. I heard him speak at a public gathering. After his presentation, he invited me in and we spent time chatting on our pastime activities.

At the time of our first meeting I was building my professional career in Academia and studies needed to strengthen my skills to future writings on the Guru Granth. Yogi ji was building a yogic and tantric organization which would attract many of you towards the religion we both love and admire dearly.

The moment we met, we discovered that we shared quite similar views on the future of Sikhs in the emerging global society. Both of us knew that the Sikh future would be ensured when the locals would buy into it. He would promote technology of yoga that could attract American youth and I would continue to carve my role to promote scholarship among

Sikh Diaspora and American academia. This scholarship would be crucial in creating data bases of the Guru Granth teachings in the language of the West.

Yogi ji ended our first meeting by telling me, "we must stand together," and that's exactly what we did in the years since, as friends and as Sikh allies. He told me that he would continue to employ his newly discovered technology to open communication with American youth and I should gather a knowledgeable base on Sikh teachings so that the two of us could eventually establish a university of Sikhism in North America. Building of a university remained our dream even until his days on this earth.

Since the Boston meeting our paths began to cross often. Again, as before, we continued to compare our ambitions and views on the future of Sikhs in USA.

Yogi Bhanjan was one of the giants of our century in America. His many achievements will be appreciated more and more as time goes on and our history is written. For me, he has been a good friend, a staunch ally, my religious soul-mate, a great visionary and a dear, dear friend. His biological family and family in faith, both, gave me and my wife, Amrita, lot of love and respect throughout these years that we had together.

Whenever, we meet any of you, we think of you as the fruits of Yogi ji's accomplishments. We thank you to let us share your excitement with the Sikh Panth

as you are doing the same this morning. We would like to convey our personal kinship and appreciation to the total American Sikh community for joining the global Sikh Panth and becoming an important part of its history in the distant lands.

You and your entire International Sikh Dharma organization are doing an admirable job in keeping the American youth away from drugs and other social evils, and bringing them back to spiritual living. You are indeed preparing them for the future leadership of the faith in North America.

It is a pleasure to see so many familiar faces and those who work so hard for the grand designs of our guru, Guru Gobind Singh. Today is a historic day and the historic days often serve as the rare moments when we can pause from the hustle of our daily lives to reflect on the years that have passed, the accomplishments and people that have made them special.

As I look around this gathering, I am filled with countless warm and fond memories. Many of you go back with us as far as many decades. Others of you are more recent additions to the family. Regardless of when you came, you have been a part of Sikh lives and will continue to be our part. For that, we are so grateful and feel so blessed. At the same time, when stress and anxiety may be high, we urge to pray and we assure you to join in your prayers and aspirations.

Now, as most of you know, I'm not one for looking back. But rather what I take from the past is the inspiration for the fu-

ture. And what you accomplished during the past years in America must never be lost amid the sadness or disbeliefs in the future. You are tools of the guru's plans for the Sikh America.

When we entered America, we were in a bad dream of Sikh America. Back then, there was hardly any visible Sikhs on this continent. Also there was no literature or available information on Sikhism. It was a time when the ignorance between East and West was pathetic. It was a time of rampant discarding of religion of their forefather by the few Sikh youth who made to this new world.

Although our hopes were triumphant the signs on the horizons were scarce that Sikhism would ever survive among the rapidly expanding materialism. It was a time when youth were trampled in the name of evil and corrupt materialistic ideologies, and drug induced paranoia of evil states. All we had left with us was our belief system in *charhdi kala* and our vision that the Guru Panth was here to stay and be here to attract the attention of modern world.

We believed that for the future of our community and the free people, this pathetic state could not continue. And together, we insisted that this great nation must once again rise. In our America, most people still shared our belief of the triumphant of spirituality over materialism and in the power of a better tomorrow. Those served our inspirations well.

Your efforts succeeded in many places

to get the drug culture off the backs of the American people. You created scores of Sikh congregations and businesses to rehabilitate the new Sikh youth. You launched retreats, conferences, symposia and meditation workshops. You brought English and Spanish translations of our scriptures and offered people an alternative to the selfish ideologies foreign to human soul. You brought many American youth back to healthy, happy and holy life.

It is a time when Sikhism can serve a bright beacon of hope and freedom to the youth gone astray. The world is looking to us, not for our military might, but because of our ideas of service, love, altruism, spirituality and higher states of consciousness.

After decades of hard work, and with the guidance from the Infinite Wisdom, morality and spirituality will be winning the war. The world will watch with amazement as we sow the seed of Guru Sabd in the most dynamic nation and most powerful country in the world. And I firmly believe that history will record your contributions as those for uplift of youth and for bringing in a peace of mind.

Today the new age programs and organizations are in fashion and spreading across the globe. I'm reminded of the old axiom that imitation is the sincerest form of flattery. Only in this case, it is more than flattery, but grand larceny. It is the intellectual theft of ideas that you and I recognize as our own. But this is a hope and this is a flattery that all of you should be pleased to relish. We are grateful.

In the end, it all comes down to leadership. That is what this country is looking for now. It was leadership here at home that gave us strong American influence abroad and the collapse of imperial communism. Today's youth will be tomorrow's leaders. Great nations have responsibilities to lead and we should always be cautious of those who would lower your profile because they might just wind up lowering our flag. Hope lies in new youth and new spiritual youth.

My friends, on a serious note, I would like to end by telling you something Amrita and I have wanted to say to you for a long time. During our years together with you, as you know, things were always on the move. As with all of you, as soon as you accomplish one objective, you will be quickly on to the next. There is so much work to do that there may rarely be time to rest and reflect. Well, one of the bright side of the occasions like this one is that one gets a chance to reflect back over the years.

As you commemorate the passing away of Yogi ji, you will spend many occasions looking back at what you did and what you learnt. You will remember the extraordinary events in life that were pivotal to make you worthy of the Guru's blessings. You would be so busy in accomplishing one step after another, that you would wonder if you would ever get the chance to appreciate them. As yogi ji used to say, the hand of Guru Ram Das will always be on you and guide you at every step. □

## Dr. Harcharan Singh: A Legend in his own lifetime

THE WHOLE PUNJABI LITERARY world plunged into grief last April on hearing the news of the death of the legendary playwright and thespian, Dr Harcharan Singh, in a hospital.

An epoch-making actor who actively participated in theatre and literary activities even at the age of 91, Dr Harcharan Singh was a pioneer in the propagation of Punjabi theatre.

Born on December 10, 1914, at Chakk 576 in Sheikhpura district (Pakistan), Dr Harcharan Singh emerged on the arts arena of Punjab in 1937. With his arrival, the Punjabi theatre acquired a new dimension at a time when staging plays on contemporary themes was a nightmare.

Dr Harcharan Singh set a revolutionary trend by introducing the first female actor in his play '*Anjode*' staged at the YMCA hall, Lahore, way back in 1942. The female actor playing the protagonist on the stage for the first time was none other than his own wife, Dharam Kaur, who won three medals for her acclaimed performance later.

There was no looking back for the academician-cum-thespian. He is credited with 52 publications, mostly plays, which are known for both excellence in content and for the treatment of the subject concerned.

Almost all his plays were staged at different venues in India and abroad like 'Maharani Jindan' and 'Chamkaur di Garhi' (shot as a film, 'Sarvans Daniya'). Other notable plays are '*Puniya da Chann*', 'Hind di Chadar', '*Zafarnama*' and '*Komagatamaru*'.

His adroit skill at scripting the multimedia sight and sound panoramas like '500 years of Sikh history', 'Sher-e-Punjab', 'Guru Maneo Granth' and others and their production embellished by the directorial elegance of his illustrious filmmaker son Harbux Singh Latta and his wife Pramjit Kaur Latta had won credence for the whole family, especially from viewers in foreign countries.

Dr Harcharan Singh had a long association with Punjabi University, Patiala, from where he retired in 1975. The Punjabi Department of the university held a condolence meeting where Dr Dalip Kaur Tiwana described him as a fatherly figure, who saved Punjabi literature from '*lachchar sabyacha*'. Young director Dr Sahib Singh, who had staged most of his plays, paid rich tributes to the thespian. Actor Neelam Man Singh called him a crusader par excellence.



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\* For more information on his works, visit the website: [www.lattaproductions.com](http://www.lattaproductions.com)

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## Alcohol & other Drugs and the Young People

The following references were accidentally omitted from S. Amarjit Singh's article (SR: Aug. 06). Inconvenience is regretted. - Ed. SR

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## Knowing Oneself

SINGH SAHIB GURU FATHA SINGH KHALSA\*

WHEN A YOUNG PERSON has it in the mind that they are right and there is significant social support for their belief, parents had best beware. You cannot make a young person disown their conscience, but you can educate it at an early age, remembering that a person's basic character is fundamentally set by the time he/she is five years old.

These youngsters are not to blame. They are the outcome of a colossal failure of parenting, education and every kind of institution. There is a pall of ignorance over the land. Money and worldly gain today is more highly appraised than moral and spiritual values. It is a dark age.

A Sikh is one who inculcates Sikh values and keeps the Sikh identity. *Veechaar* has its limitations. What is needed are more people who do not just talk the truth, but actually live it. That kind of leader embodies a bright and magnanimous spirit. They need not impose anything. Followers come from nowhere, begging to follow.

I do not believe I belong to a religion in the old sense – a body of required rituals and affirmations, and a separate social class. **I have a practice.** That practice enriches my life with a profound sense

of self-awareness. It feeds my inner urge towards God. It denies my apathy. It engages my compassion. It elevates my spirit and makes me feel great.

Gursikhi is a discipline - not a theology, a culture, a body of thought, or a long-gone tradition. This discipline lives in me. It breathes in me. It gives me life.

The fruit of this discipline – the early rising, the meditation, cold baths, dressing in the Guru's likeness, and the rest is an indomitable feeling of **dwelling in God**. We call it "buoyant spirits" or *charhdee kalaa*.

To achieve it, you need to know how to still the chatter of your mind. You must meditate and engage the power of your soul. The process is called *tapas* – and it is the furthest thing from any academic's mind you could imagine. They don't teach it in universities, colleges and schools. *Tapas* is calculated inconvenience. Sometimes it is a total discomfort, but it makes you bright, intuitive and very calm inside. Together, *jap* and *tap* light the way.

Cultural values are nice. Sikh culture is no less charming than French or Japanese or any other culture. I appreciate the *bhangra*, the *samosas*, the amazing

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hospitality, Lohri, the *saag*, festive gaudily-coloured turbans, the *mehndi*, the *gulab jamans*, *kabadi*... It is marvelous, but it is not what we need right now.

What the world really needs is more saint-soldiers, more fiercely passionate

critics, more leaders who lead by following the Guru's *rehit*. Regrettably, you cannot legislate them into being or create them by moralizing alone. First, you must become one.

□

## Cricketing Hero: Now a biography of Monty Singh

According to Press Trust of India, with cricketers' popularity again surging after last years Ashes (and footballers's mediocre display in the World Cup), British publishers are showing interest in still just nine-Test young Panesar's autobiography.

Panesar, the first Sikh to play for England, after his stellar role in his team's series victory against Pakistan this summer, is likely to sign a book deal worth \$250,000 to write his memoirs. More than 15



British publishers have shown interest in Panesar, who has a substantial following among England fans since his spin bowling achievements, *The Sunday Times* reported recently.

News of the book deal highlights a growing commercial interest in cricket by publishers and others. The winning of the Ashes last summer, the dramatic rise of Twenty20 cricket and the defeat of Pakistan this summer have all helped to make the game popular again.

□



## Prayer's Universality

HARCHAND SINGH (CANADA)

*O God, give us the wisdom to discern between what is good and evil.  
God, give the people the wisdom and the will to obey Your commandments.  
Our Father who art in heaven,  
Hallowed be Thy name.  
Thy Kingdom come,  
Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. .... Bible  
Lord, guide us along the straight path  
Lord, overlook our defaults, grant us forgiveness and have mercy on us.  
..... Quran  
God, lead me from darkness to light and from ignorance to knowledge.....  
Gita  
My Lord, make me to perform those deeds that make my countenance shine here  
and hereafter.  
O Beneficent, let me not forget you, 'I remember You and sing Your praises  
ever', this is my earnest desire. .... Guru Granth Sahib*

□



## Guideposts for Youth

For quite some time I have been on the look out for a person who is good at mass communications and also is a devout Sikh, I think my search ended when I read your article "S.G.G.S. a guide post for Human Integration" in **The Sikh Review** of July 06.

The reason for my anxiety is the question on every one's mind, i.e. what are our youngsters headed for and naturally what can be done about it.

Every member of a Gurdwara committee in the land, every Granthi Sahib, every Sikh with an iota of Sikhism left in him is today worried about the pace of increasing apostasy among the youth in our rural and our urban population in Punjab and elsewhere. If you look back, you will be able to see that the rise of apostasy has concurred with the increase in the numbers of Deras and their Babas, and the increasing exposure of the kids to stimulating world wide programs on the idiot box.

One wonders as to what has led to this curse in our short life of comparative peace and prosperity, a period of rising of Sikh institutions like Chief Khalsa Dewan, Singh Sabhas, SGPC, etc, since 1925.

Well in my humble opinion the causes for the rising apostasy are as under:

a. The British policy of divide and rule in their last days.

b. The adverse reaction of the Brahmins to the route of their VARUN theory due to the *Chardi Kala* of the Khalsa Panth, instead of decreasing with time the intensity of reaction has increased many folds, resulting in the rise of Arya Samaj in Punjab and ultimately leading to the Sikhs being branded as CRIMINAL TRIBES (Sachi Sakhi by S. Kapur Singh I.C.S.). Ironically terrorism in Punjab was goaded by its own police force and some misguided and misused people who responded to divide and rule policy of the govt. in power.

The Brahmins are worried that they shall be deprived of their livelihood and sustenance and power if the Khalsa thinking is adopted by the people on a large scale.

Basically, the govt. functions through the Brahmin lobby (57% of the top posts in India are being held by the Brahmins whereas their population is only about 4%) because of their intellect and intrigue. They have reduced our strength in the armed forces and sponsored the Rashtrya Sikh Sangat to back-stab us whenever a chance arises. They have managed RI-OTS in Punjab. The Blue Star incident and the gruesome Ghalughara of the twentieth century when thousands of people were mercilessly murdered just because they happened to be SIKHS. Not a single person has been punished for the same even after half a dozen commissions of enquiry.

The result is that young parents who today have young children, have been adversely affected by fear and intimidation and have given to thinking of life in brahminical terms and to say that Sikhs and Hindus are the same and come from the same stock and should be counted among Hindus. It is only recently that our separate identity has been reaffirmed by law. (Sikh Review April 2005, Page 66).

In parenting the most important thing to ensure good children is for the parents to set a good example. For reasons outlined above our young and middle aged parents have unfortunately not been able to do, thus resulting in wholesale apostasy.

Next we come to the contribution of the Gurdwaras for the decline of Sikhi in Sikhs. Mostly the managing committees are elected by the votes garnered by every thing expect suitability for the job. We know that there are many committee members who may be *amritdharis* but hardly are they regular in their *nitnem*, and what is the percentage of the *nitnemis* who care to know as to what they are reciting. Who is bothered about the effect their evening neat peg or on the rocks has on their kids. They don't understand the meaning of what they recite twice a day. The granthis are sailing in the same boat. People like me who can't write their names in gurmukhi often are appointed granthis in most places. Their only qualification is that they are "*Penthi Akhri*" literate. They hardly know anything about

the grammar of the SGGs, or the philosophy of the SGGs or the meaning of the text and they are supposed to lead us towards "JYOTI JOT MILLI SAMPOORAN THIA RAM" (SGGS page 846). They don't like the kids asking them any questions because poor chaps they are not capable sometimes of even understanding the question leave aside answering it.

The kids in Gurdwara service are usually encouraged to handle *Jorahs*, do manual or sometimes what we call menial work only.

Inspite of the fact that some youngsters are well educated (not just qualified) they are not allowed to participate in the decision making processes of the Gurdwara. The Kids, observing democracy all around (though sometimes sham democracy) want to participate in the making of decisions they are expected to obey, and when they can't do it, the disgust for the system is natural and obvious.

Your see you can't educate your kids and then ask them not to think.

So what I have been thinking is that if only we could survey the youth in the schools and colleges as to what kind of activities they would like to see in the gurdwaras and other Sikh religious institutions. In my humble opinion a survey of the institutions affiliated to your University could give us statistically reliable results. Anyway you are the best judge of these nitty gritty details of the proposal.

Thus we will be able to know the mind of our young people. The survey should be done scientifically and in a very professional manner by sincere and qualified people like yourself or some dedicated institution. We will thus have a fair idea of what we want to see being done in our Gurdwaras and other institutions.

Once we have finalised the list of youth requirements which are feasible we can start working on enlightening our Gurdwaras and the public at large.

The enlightening campaign will have to be sustained over a few years before we can get Gurdwaras to respond suitably by coming out with customized programs with our youngsters kept in mind and managements to respond to and change the mind set of our youngsters. I strongly feel that if our youngsters are going astray we are squarely to be blamed.

If only you could do the spade work then we should be able to garner support from the two or three Gurmat Colleges and Guru Gobind Singh study circles in Punjab and elsewhere for the holy task.

**N.R.HOOGHAN**

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### **Canada Journal: The Gursikh**

The Management of the Gursikh Sabha Canada (Scarborough Gurdwara)

is really grateful for your letter appreciating our efforts for the publication of “**The Gursikh**” Monthly Magazine. As a matter of fact this achievement has only been possible due to the blessings of Satguru and guidance/support of our friends like you.

We are going to give wide publicity to your letter in our own Magazine as well as in some other Punjabi Newspapers. We are requesting the Sikh masses to acquire its copy every month, read it themselves and pass it on to their children. In addition, we are also encouraging them to subscribe towards “**The Sikh Review**” monthly English Magazine, as its subscription rates are very reasonable considering the wealth of information that every ‘Sikh Review’ issue carries about Sikhism.

**HARBANS SINGH KAHLON**

Production Manager  
Gursikh Sabha Canada  
(Scarborough Gurdwara Canada)  
905 Middlefield Road, Scarborough  
Ontario M1V 4X1  
Canada

\* \* \* \* \*

### **A Matter of Calories**

The manner in which you have advocated vegetarianism, supported by holy hymns, is indeed interesting. Avoid meat and rely more on vegetables. Food is essential for living and survival. However, the Parsees even today, follow the old custom of leaving their dead bodies on a high

tower or at great heights, for the birds and the bees to eat them, as their food, for survival. However the old times have gone, except for odd trace of old customs. Let us talk of the present.

Scientifically, it is the amount of calories intake through a balanced diet that a body needs for healthy living. Calories are related to one's age, height, weight and the physical exertion. Varying from person to person. It is immaterial, whether these calories come from a vegetarian or non-vegetarian diet. It is a personal choice as you commented at the end.

No one will dispute, to go beyond our desires and to live a simple life, quoting Guru Nanak. Desires vary from individual to individual and the conception of simple life is not one unified code. Here we have to distinguish between materialistic and spiritualistic simplicity. Guru Nanak has combined both, in the shape of body survival through eating something and achieving NIRVANA through BHAGTI at home. No need to go to jungles for prayers.

This editorial is a commendable effort, to give a modern touch to an old conception. Congratulations.

**SWARANJIT SINGH**  
15, Ajnala Road  
Cantonment  
Amritsar 143 001

\* \* \* \* \*

## The Vegetarian Cult ?

Sir: The August month's editorial by S. Dimpay Gurbinder Singh, "Compassion and Sensitivity towards all living Beings is the essence of spirituality" was difficult to digest as an editorial of **The Sikh Review**.

The views in the article seemed rather narrow minded since **The Sikh Review** is a universal magazine read by people of different religions.

Evidently, the editorial represents a personal view of the Associate Editor and not the views of **The Sikh Review**. Kindly clarify. Are Muslims, Christians and other meat-eating communities not spiritual? Do only vegetarians have this monopoly?

It pains me to point out that even the meaning of the "quotes" from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji have been used in support without understanding the essence of the entire shabad.

The first reference ਇਕਿ ਮਾਸਹਾਰੀ ਇਕਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਖਾਹਿ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪਾਹਿ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਟੀਆ ਮਹਿ ਮਿਟੀਆ ਖਾਹਿ ॥ [SGGS: 144] When the full *shabad* is read, it clearly indicates: **firstly**, that different type of food is eaten by different people, for some "Yoga", and for others *Naam* is "food." But those who have trust in God are never let down.

The third ref. shabad, ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥... [SGGS: 16] when the four Rahaos

are read with care, indicate that word ਹੋਰ ਖਾਣਾ means 'eating more than required' (excess) and does not mean any "other food".

Guru Nanak's shabad ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪੁ ਸਮਾਣੈ ॥...[SGGS: 1289] rightly resolves this issue: ਏਤੇ ਰਸ means delicacies and not non-veg.

Such articles can be controversial as an editorial.

**JASMIT SINGH**  
P-13, CIT Road  
Kolkata 700014

**N.B. - We broadly agree with Sr. Jasmit Singh's viewpoint. - Ed. SR**

\* \* \* \* \*

### **"Dasam Granth" & its Historicity**

Prof. Chhanda Chatterjee (SR: July 2006) mentions on page 20 that "Guru Gobind Singh at Ponta Sahib..... "atlast

came out with Classic: The Dasam Granth of the Tenth Guru which can be called a treatise on the art of governance in the use of Weapons." This is not correct historically.

It is agreed among almost all scholars of Sikhism that "Dasam Granth" or (anything like this) did not exist up to the time of death of Guru Gobind Singh ji. Some 17 years *after* the death of Guru Gobind Singh ji an anthology was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh ji, which was named "*Bachitter Natak*". The existing edition of that compilation is now called "*Dasam Granth*". Most scholars - and even the SGPC agree that all the writing in it are not of Guru Gobind Singh ji, but mostly contain the writings of other court poets. About 15 years ago SGPC agreed to organise a committee of learned scholars to sort out these writings to separate gold from chaff. So far they have not brought out any "authorized version".

**DR. GURCHARAN SINGH THIND**  
Email:gsthind@tpg.com.au



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- Publisher, **The Sikh Review**

## Sikh Museum 'made in Calcutta'

Granted it's not science, but it was a challenge to our technological expertise. The government had entrusted us with the job because we best knew how to do it, as-  
 rector-  
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The permanent visual documentation on the 'Lion of Punjab' was conceptualised and designed in Salt Lake by the NCSM. The two storeyed cylindrical museum, 39 m in diameter has been installed near Maharaja Ranjit Singh's summer palace, at Rambagh Heritage Garden in Amritsar. The Centre provided Rs. 5 Crore for the project.

The shape of the museum is meant to accentuate the effect of the exhibits. The same techniques had been used for the Kurukshetra Panorama Science Centre near Delhi. The NCSM also designed and installed the museum in 2001.

"The focus of the Kurukshetra facility

is on science, while Maharaja Ranjit Singh Panorama recreates different historical episodes. In a way, this was more difficult because there were fewer finites or givens," pointed out Mukherjee.

The prime attraction of the panorama is the 100x12 m painting depicting the six major battles fought by the Maharaja. A 13-m platform on the first floor serves as the viewing deck.

The master drawings were made on a 60x6 ft canvas by a group of 10 artists over 15 months. Singh's victories in Lahore, Kangra, Attock, Multan, Kashmir and Naushera are shown. The image was digitally enlarged about seven times and printed on vinyl sheets before installation.

"The entire work, including digital printing, was done in Calcutta," stated Mukherjee. "Twenty sculptors worked on the diorama display and fiberglass models for 16 months."

On the ground floor of the museum, there are more paintings and dioramas on episodes from the life of the Lion of Punjab.

[Courtesy: *The Telegraph*]

\* \* \* \* \*

## Pakistan to recruit Sikhs in Police!

After the Pakistan army got its first Sikh officer, the Pakistani Punjab government has decided in principle to recruit

Sikh youths in police.

This was disclosed by Mr. Harwinder Singh Sarna, president, Delhi Sikh Gurdwara Management Committee (DSGMC) who recently visited Pakistan.

Earlier, a Pakistani Sikh, Harcharan Singh (19), hailing from Nankana Sahib, had hit the headlines when he was commissioned in the army as an officer.

So much so that the Jathedar, Akal Takht, Giani Joginder Singh Vedanti, had congratulated Harcharan Singh for his commissioning in the Pakistan army and asked him to serve his country with dedication.

On paper, there is no bar on the minorities in Pakistan from joining the military or police but neither a Hindu nor a Sikh could get selected for the army, paramilitary forces or police services since 1947. According to the Inter-Services Public Relations, many Christians have served in the army.

Mr. Saran said the commitment to recruit Sikh youths in Pakistan's Punjab Police was given by Mr. Pervez Elahi, chief minister, during his meeting with him in Lahore.

[Courtesy: *The Statesman*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Respect The Turban A Plea to the Asian Age**

Sir, - I am an avid reader of The Asian

age and I think Sudhir Tilang's cartoons are generally superb. However, I must protest his representation of Prime Minister, Dr. Manmohan Singh. While as a cartoonist he is free to play with the Prime Minister's face, why does he have to show the Prime minister as a bald man in every cartoon? Also he persists in drawing Dr. Singh's turban in a manner that it seems like a woman's *Jooda* (hairdo). As a Sikh I strongly feel about this. The turban is our religious attire and due respect should be given to it.

**DALJIT SINGH**  
CC/30-A Hari Nagar  
New Delhi 110 064

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Sikh protests spread beyond Jaipur**

Hundreds of Sikhs went on the rampage in Jaipur on Wednesday to protest the trimming of a Sikh boy's hair by a group of students. Enraged Sikhs pelted stones, ransacked the Gandhinagar police station and damaged police vehicles in Jaipur, while in Punjab, Sikh groups forced a shutdown in several towns.

Indrapreet Singh, a student of Class XII, was abducted on Monday, 21st August, allegedly by a group of boys jealous of his affair with a girl.

"Indrapreet was stopped by two motorcyclists and then abducted in a Maruti car. He was severely beaten up and his



hair was trimmed by the students. He was then dropped in front of his school gate," police said.

Demanding arrest of the culprits, Sikhs held demonstrations at various points in the Pink City. A senior police official said, "In the afternoon, a group of people was marching towards Transport Nagar to forcibly close shops, and we tried to stop them. They started pelting stones at us and in the process some of our vehicles were damaged," a police source said. The protesters damaged some hand-drawn carts and forced traders to shut their shops, the source added.

The investigating officer in the case said station house officer Ramdeo and sub-inspector Rajkumar of Gandhinagar police station were withdrawn from active duty and sent to the police lines for negligence in dealing with the case.

"So far, no arrests have been made and we are still looking for the culprits," an officer said, adding, "The situation as of now is under control and we have deputed additional forces to ward off any untoward incident."

[Courtesy: *Times of India*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Storm in Parliament over forced haircut**

Both Houses of Parliament witnessed an uproar today over the forced haircut of a Sikh boy in Jaipur, with members cut-

ting across party lines expressing concern over the incident. The home minister, Mr. Shivraj Patil, assured agitated members in the Rajya Sabha that government would take note of the incident, which had hurt religious sentiments.

Raising the issue during Zero Hour, the BJP leader, Mr. HS Ahluwalia, said the incident was an insult to the entire Sikh community and sought immediate action. As members joined Mr. Ahluwalia in condemning the incident, Mr. Patil appealed to people not to fall prey to the nefarious designs of some quarters to divide society by whipping up religious passions. He assured that strict action was being taken and expressed confidence in Rajasthan state government to deal with the issue.

In the Lok Sabha, the incident triggered a clash between the BJP-Akali Dal and the Congress with the two sides charging each other of "poor" record on the issue of protection of minorities. Both the Congress and the BJP attacked each other for being "communalist".

[Courtesy: *The Statesman*]

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Main accused held**

Arjun Meena, main accused in the trimming of a Sikh student's hair, was arrested from Delhi airport on Thursday morning. He was nabbed by a team of Rajasthan police soon after his arrival from Mumbai," Vishal Bansal, Jaipur south SP said.

Six cases are pending against Arjun in the Sanganer police station, he added.

A love triangle was reportedly behind the abduction of the Sikh youth, Indrapreet. The Class XII student had been threatened by Arjun, who is a commerce graduate and the son of a prop-



erty dealer, in June. Indrapreet's father had reported this to the Gandhinagar police. However, police failed to take the matter seriously.

During his interrogation, Arjun denied his involvement and said he ran away because his name figured in the FIR and the Sikh community was looking to punish him.

The forcible haircut issue was raised in both Houses of Parliament on Thursday, with home minister Shivraj Patil assuring agitated Rajya Sabha members that the government would take note of such incidents hurting religious sentiments.

In the Lok Sabha, the issue triggered a clash between BJP-Akali Dal and Con-

gress. Both sides targeted each other over their "poor" record on the issue of protection of minorities. The matter was raised by Congress' Madhusudan Mistry, who said BJP-ruled states had a poor track record in protecting minorities. BJP members rose in protest and the Speaker asked for the remarks to be expunged. The issue finally forced two adjournments in the Lower House.

Meanwhile, Sikh groups continued their protests across Punjab and also in Delhi and Mumbai. Protesters forced a shutdown in Amritsar and brought parts of Ludhiana to a standstill.

\* \* \* \* \*

### **Hockey Star Sandeep Singh shot at**

The Indian hockey team last August, suffered a serious setback ahead of their World Cup preparation, when penalty corner specialist Sandeep Singh was "accidentally" shot in the back today on board the Delhi bound Shatabdi Express.

The ace drag flicker was on his way to Delhi from Chandigarh when the pistol of an ASI of railway Protection Force went off accidentally near the Kurukshetra railway station.

Sandeep was rushed to the LNJP Hospital in Kurukshetra, before being transferred to the PGIMER Hospital in Chandigarh where he underwent a surgery to remove the bullet. He was out of danger after surgery.



## ARTICLES OF FAITH

By Major Singh

Published by S. Harbhajan Singh, Gurmat Pustak Centre,  
369-R, Model Town Ludhiana

Price: Rs. 60/- Pages: 66

*Reviewed by Dr. Ranjit Singh\**

'Articles of faith' is a collection of six articles written by prominent Sikh scholars highlighting the significance and importance of five *kakars* of the Sikhs. Tenth Master of Sikhs Guru Gobind Singh created Khalsa to fulfil the divine mission of establishing righteousness dharma. Beside keeping uncut hair, and wear turban the other four *K<sup>s</sup>* obligatory for a member of the Khalsa Brotherhood to keep are, a sword (*Kirpan*), a comb (*Kanga*), short drawers (*Kachh*) and an iron bangle (*Kara*) on the right wrist. The five Sikh symbols (*Panj Kakars*) are in no way symbols of identification but Articles of Faith for which the Sikhs had to face persecution, martyrdom and humiliation throughout the eighteenth century, and the Sikhs protected their Articles of Faith by sacrificing their lives. Even at present Sikhs has to face discrimination and has to fight legal battles for protecting their rights to wear their turban and keeping their Articles of Faith.

It is, therefore essential to educate the people about the significance and impor-

tance of Articles of Faith for a Sikh. Present book is a good attempt in this direction. This knowledge is also essential for the new generation of Sikhs specially those living abroad. Dr. Trilochan Singh in his paper, "The hair, the comb and the turban of the Sikhs" has very ably described the need of hair on the head by citing references from the scripture of all the major religions of the world. He has proved that hair of the head is a symbol of faith, intuition of truth, or the highest qualities of the mind. A human being must preserve all their hair on his head and face as an essential part of his body. Just as the skull performs the protection function of the brain, the hair as an inseparable part of the skull performs the function of the preservation of the-vital of a human being. Sardar Kapur Singh has elaborated the role of each symbol for a Sikh in his article, "Five *K<sup>s</sup>*"; Articles of Faith. "Prof. Puran Singh has clarified the need to bear kirpan (Sword) by a Sikh in his paper, "The Sword of Guru Gobind Singh". Kirpan is a gift from the Guru. It is not an instrument of offence or defense, it is mind

\* Former Dean College of Agriculture, Punjab. Agricultural University of Ludhiana

made intense by the love of the Guru. The Sikh is to have a sword like mind. It is the visible sign of an intensely sensitive soul. According to Dr. Shamsheer Singh the concept of five symbols of an ideal Khalsa was not only to create the spirit of distinctiveness, but also meant to indicate a corporal life of nation. Rather, a disciple of Guru Gobind Singh must keep up the disciplinary uniform to create the sense of a panthic organization. In his article, 'let us stand up and be counted' (SR: Jan. 2006) Dr. I. J. Singh stated that in Sikhism, the Guru gave us the gift and the courage to stand out, and so to belong to a rich powerful and eloquent tradition. The five symbols of our religion, including the long unshorn hair, become Articles of Faith only when their magic and historical impact become integrated into our lives and embedded in our psyche such that they define us.

Five symbols have held the Sikhs in

united brotherhood. They serve to make a Sikh and act a Sikh. They endow him with a courage to accomplish feats, which otherwise would be impossible for an average man. This small book contains very useful and essential information. Dr. Major Singh has made a good selection of articles. The publisher of the book S. Harbhajan Singh needs special complements. After his retirement as an officer from the Indian Railways he is doing all the possible efforts to spread the message of Sikh Gurus through his Gurmat Pustak Centre. Even at the age of eighty six dedication to his mission is remarkable. All his resources are being spent for free distribution of books. He is getting full support from his family members which is equally appreciable. I recommend the book to all who want to know about the articles of Faith of the Sikhs. In fact this book must be kept in the homes of all the Sikhs.

□

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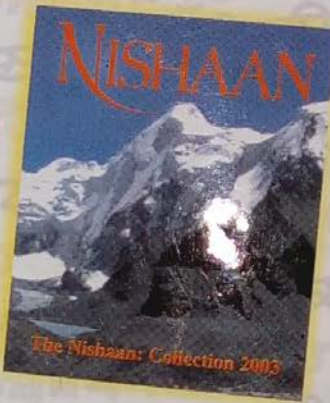
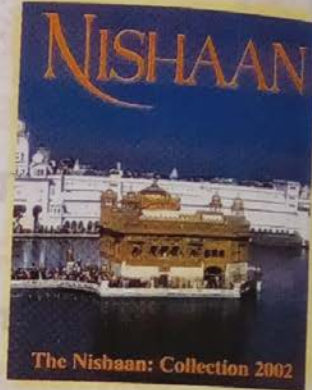
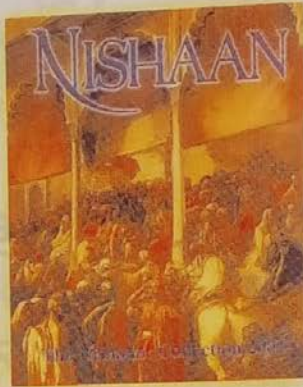
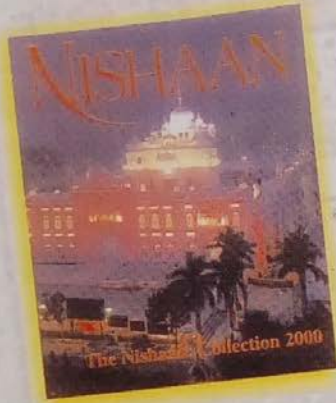
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