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EDITORIAL

GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY A MISNOMER

During the Guru period, we in the Punjab were largely illiterate and ignorant. Sadly, even in the 21st century the same is partially true; we are largely literate but still ignorant, except for a few brave souls. Even our universities are being used to suppress the true meaning of Guru Nanak's message. **Punjabi University Patiala Professors Jodh Singh, Harbhajan Singh (Dehradunwale) Harpal Singh Pannu, and Gurmukh Singh are actively engaged in promoting the so called Dasam Granth as the composition of Guru Gobind Singh;** the latter now appointed as acting Vice-Chancellor of the Sri Guru Granth Sahib World University, Fatehgarh Sahib.

Guru Nanak Dev University is not far behind. In March 2001 upon learning that this university was going to confer an honorary degree on Bhajan Yogi I chose to call Dr. Harbhajan Singh Soch, the Vice-Chancellor of the University, to dissuade him from doing so. He asked me to put my objections in writing. In my letter dated March 21, 2001 I attached 36 exhibits, among them legal documents pertaining to alleged sexual improprieties by Bhajan Yogi himself, drug dealings by people in his inner circle and evidence of his 'Sikh Dharma' being a cult than a center for propagation of Sikhi. One such document was Bhajan Yogi's Letter Head banner: "IN GOD I DWELL".

I wrote, "I was encouraged to hear from you that you would like me to send to you the material that supports my contention that your university should not confer this or any other degree on this person. It is bad enough that a centre of leaning named after the greatest religious teacher, thinker, philosopher, and prophet that the world has ever known succumbed to the political pressures and offended the sensitivities of the entire Sikh Qaum by creating "Satguru' Ram Singh Chair, but to compound it by another affront by honouring this man with an honorary degree will further lower the image and the prestige of the university. We hope and pray that one day when

SGPC and SAD come once again under the control of Gursikhs, 'Satguru Ram Singh' Chair will be abolished and replaced by a chair honouring a true modern day Gursikh exponent of Nanak's teachings".

It is to the credit of Dr. Soch that during his tenure no such degree was awarded to Bhajan Yogi but this despicable act was performed by his successor.

In the University named **Guru Nanak**, a chair in the name of an imposter '**Satguru Ram Singh**', a namdhari, has been established. The book 'Purakh Guru', published by the Sarb Hind Namdhari Darbar, Bhaini Sahib, questions the general sikh belief that tenth guru Gobind Singh passed on the 'Guruship' to the sikh holy scripture 'Guru Granth Sahib' and claimed that no Granth or 'Panth' can ever be the guru and only an individual can be termed a guru. The Namdhari sect is led by a leader described by its white habit and white turban sporting followers as 'Satguru'.

We present two more instances of the negative role being played by this University about the teachings of the Guru in whose name the university was founded.

1. Between February 23-25, 2011 this university held an International Conference on '**Uniqueness of Guru Nanak's Philosophy**'. One of the invited speakers was Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu of Malaysia. This university has a system of suppressing full expression of scholars through coercive suggestions. This conference was no different. This is what Dr. Sidhu wrote to me:

"Dear S Shergill Ji, Attached are 2 versions of the Paper I presented at the Amritsar Conference. The 1st version file is entitled "Original Version..." The 2nd version is the paper that was finally presented at the Conference **as the original was considered controversial in some areas**. You can choose to print either version. However please enter the following note depending on the version you choose: If you choose to publish the Original version please add this note: [See the note in the beginning of his article.] We chose to publish the version Dr. Sidhu intended to present. First editing appears in the very first paragraph. In the version that was presented, '**This paper attempts to show why his teachings are more a philosophy than**

revelation' is replaced by 'this paper attempts to show why his philosophy is unique'.

When it came to truth speak Guru Nanak did not mince words. "**Nanak, those are real asses, who have no virtues but are filled with egotistical pride. GGS P. 1246.**" Would it not be appropriate for a university named after him to emulate him?

2. Soon after learning of Dr. Sarjeet Singh Sidhu's experience at the GNU I received an email from Prof. Gurtej Singh titled:

**"CONTEMPORARY HISTORY
of burqa-clad historians,
puerile approaches,
sycophantic opinions and
the destruction of Sikh ethos."**

It narrated his experience with GNU's attempt to modify his article that he had written at the specific request of the university; his refusal to do so lead to its non-publication in the *Journal of Sikh Studies*.

Intrigued, I asked him to send me the unpublished article. He did, with the following comments:

"Dear S. Hardev Singh ji, thank you for writing. I intended to show in that article that the University named after Guru Nanak is working on an agenda to misrepresent the Guru. **Certain trusted persons, who appear to constitute a behind the scene censor board have been apparently appointed to see that the authentic teachings of the Sikh faith do not filter through to university publications and to teaching departments. If my calculation makes sense, this is an alarming situation. Must not the Sikh people investigate further to reach at the truth? It has further far reaching implications that appear to jeopardise the very existence of the authentic ideals of the Sikh faith in India**". Regards, Gurtej Singh.

These are our institutions of higher learning and such are our role model educators!

Prof. Gurtej Singh's comments that piqued our interest begin on page 12 of this issue and the article in question begins on page 19.

Hardev Singh Shergill

UNIQUENESS OF GURU NANAK'S PHILOSOPHY: REVELATION OR PHILOSOPHY?

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[This article is the original that was to be presented at the *International Conference on Uniqueness of Guru Nanak's Philosophy* held at Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU) Amritsar, Punjab, India from 23-25 Feb 2011 and jointly organised by the **Institute for Understanding Sikhism** and the **Department of Sikh Studies of GNDU**. It was considered controversial and so a watered-down version was presented. But the general substance is essentially the same. The version presented at the Conference is scheduled to appear in the *Understanding Sikhism, The Research Journal* published from Canada by the **Institute for Understanding Sikhism. SSS.**]

ABSTRACT

Guru Nanak's Philosophy is best gleaned from a study of his writings and from his actions such as can be ascertained to be true by historically verifiable documents. He took a comprehensive view of life: an approach best encapsulated in the aphorism "*Kirt Karo, Naam Japo, Vand Shakko*". **This paper attempts to show why his teachings are more a philosophy than revelation.** Whilst open to the idea, if sufficient evidence is adduced, that there is every possibility that Guru Nanak's philosophy was totally new, and hence its uniqueness, it is suggested that no philosophy can be independent of existing philosophies. It is contended that the trend of interpreting Gurbani in Vedantic terms is wrong, **and that Dhur ki Bani does not imply a direct revelation as is frequently suggested.** Despite the discomfort these suggestions will likely cause amongst the faithful, it is hoped that any disagreement will be met with reasoned rebuttals.

Introduction

This Conference is set to deal with the uniqueness of Guru Nanak's philosophy as evinced from his writings, embodied in the AGGS [1], as well as from his life story. I assume that most, if not all, speakers will delve on this. I will not, therefore, fixate on this, not the least reason being that I am not sufficiently, much less authoritatively, conversant with the scriptures.

Uniqueness

Unique means '*...being without a like or equal*' [3]; something that is '*...distinctively characteristic.*' [3] It has to be kept in mind that it is possible for an idea or ideology to be unique without necessarily being any good. This surely is not the uniqueness that the title implies, and therefore, the uniqueness, if any, must be good or at the very least neutral when compared to other faiths.

To say that Guru Nanak's philosophy is unique is to say that that his philosophy "*...has distinctive characteristics, that there is no other [philosophy] like it and that it has no equal.* However, the last portion of the... proposition, 'that it has no equal', is likely to be perceived as presumptuous, if not out rightly arrogant, and therefore not likely to sit well with non-Sikhs. A more toned-down proposition would be: "***In key areas, [Guru Nanak's philosophy] is so distinctively different from other religions in its approach to Deity and Mankind, that it can justifiably lay claim to uniqueness without making claims of being the only answer.***" [6] This latter proposition is actually not just reasonable but the appropriate way to go.

To justify the claim of 'uniqueness of Guru Nanak's philosophy' it has to be shown, through the verses in the AGGS [1], the key areas wherein the philosophy has distinctive characteristics when contrasted with other faiths, especially Hinduism and Islam, which were the predominant religions of Guru Nanak's time. Guru Nanak took a comprehensive view of life, of society and of the need of the individual to have a positive relationship with the Divine. Keeping in mind the historical fact that Indian society at that time was manacled by caste, and the ruling Muslim class considered all non-Muslims as subordinates, any attempt at rocking these false foundations was met with harsh criticism and treatment. But Guru Nanak was a charismatic religious teacher who took on the establishment by introducing simple, life-affirming principles. This approach is best encapsulated in the aphorism "*Kirt Karo, Naam Japo, Vand Shakko*" introduced by him and encouraged and emphasised by all the succeeding Gurus.

Kirt Karo or honest labour appears a simple and self-evident exhortation to the Sikhs, but it has deep-seated implications for society at large. The application of this principle necessitates that a Sikh has to act

truthfully and to be honest in all his business dealings, and this, by necessary extension, means subscribing to good governance, transparency and even-handed treatment of all with whom one comes in contact during such dealings. This is a universal principle directed at all mankind and not just at Sikhs.

Having earned an honest living (wage), a person is expected to share (*Vand Shakko*) with his less fortunate fellow beings and with his Community. Aligned to this is the Sikh institution of "*Langgar*" (more accurately "*Guru ka Langgar*"), a Community kitchen or the Guru's Refectory where all-comers are fed for free. At such kitchens Sikhs sit in *pangat* (row/s) without distinction of caste or social status to share a common meal prepared in the *langgar*. This, now rather obviously simple idea, has to be seen in the context of the history of the Punjab, and India in general, during Guru Nanak's time when people of certain (low) castes were not allowed to join the others in a meal. This belief in a caste-based social structure has profoundly affected Indian history and even today it presents significant challenges to modern development on that subcontinent. Guru Nanak broke these shackles of caste and social standing and he opposed established gender bias, thereby declaring the equality of all men and women.

This principle of sharing, *Vand Shakko*, is further demonstrated in the Sikh concept of "*Dasvandh*" wherein every Sikh is expected to contribute at least one-tenth of his honestly-earned income to help alleviate the sufferings of the needy or to contribute to any similarly worthy cause.

All this amounts to a significant demand of a good person, on that is not easily met, but one that in Guru Nanak's philosophy is a necessary requirement of a just society; and even this is not quite enough: one is also expected to do *seva*, (serve). *Seva* means 'Selfless Service', i.e. serving the Community without prospect of recognition or expectation of reward. Many Sikhs do their *seva* by washing dishes, cleaning the floors, serving food, etc. in Gurdwaras. Whilst this is commendable, *seva* does not mean just that, and includes, as it does for many Sikh individuals and Organisations, performance of *seva* in hospitals, homes for the aged, provision of monthly rations to poor families, helping single mothers to fend for themselves and other such community services. It should, by now,

be apparent to many that this will not be an easy maxim to adopt and fulfil. What sort of individual will be able to meet these requirements, totally or in part? The answer lies in "*Naam Japo*".

The phrase is well known to all students of Sikhism. It calls for meditating on the Divine, on remembering God. Thus, it would be expected that a person whose mind is on God and His Goodness, will remain in equipoise, and will (should) thus be a peace-loving and useful citizen of society. This requirement of a Sikh ensures that such a person, with the love of God on his mind and ever remembering Him, will serve Him by being a good and productive citizen of civil society. And so this simple sounding aphorism, "*Kirt Karo, Naam Japo, Vand Shakko*", has a very profound effect on man in making him good. On **Page 189** of the AGGS it is stated:

`With my hands I do His work;
with my tongue I sing His Glorious Praises.
With my feet,
I walk on the Path of my Lord and Master.
It is a good time,
when I remember Him in meditation.

During Guru Nanak's time (15th – 16th Century) religious men (women were hardly considered) were expected to pursue their religious quests as ascetics, abandoning family and society but nevertheless living off it. Guru Nanak castigated those who took such an approach and expected his followers to be just as religious whilst remaining householders and functioning as full, productive citizens of society. Such an approach, now taken for granted, when seen in the context of the time and the environs in which Guru Nanak promulgated his philosophy, was bold and far-sighted, even if one disputes its uniqueness.

Effectively, Guru Nanak:

- broke the chains of the established caste system (refusing the *janeu*, establishing *langar* in *pangat*), as well as
- treated women as equal partners in the worship and service of the Faith and the Community.

Undeniably, Guru Nanak's philosophy is unique.

Interpretation

In the past, and even now, much of Sikh scripture has been interpreted in Vedantic terms and ideas. Not the least of the reasons is that the verses are written using Vedantic terminology. But does this mean that the interpretation has to be in consonance with Vedantic ideology? If this were true then Sikh teachings / scriptures cannot really be unique. They can at best be modifications of existing ideology. This in essence is what Sikh writers like Devinder Singh Chahal [2] mean when they insist that Gurbani cannot be interpreted in Vedantic terms. Chahal says “*Guru Nanak promulgated a unique philosophy that is scientifically and logically very sound and thus has universal acceptability. His philosophy is termed as Nanakian Philosophy*”. [2].

Given that Guru Nanak’s audience at that time was mainly Hindu, conversant and familiar with Vedic teachings, the use of Vedantic terms and imagery must have been a necessary means for him to explicate his message to them. Indeed the writings of Guru Nanak when read in their entirety will confirm that the Guru was not making any Vedantic assertions; if anything he was preaching quite the contrary. Thus, the use of such terminology does not imply that the interpretation of these verses must be literal and in consonance with Vedic teachings. The persistence with which the Bani continues to be interpreted in Vedantic terms is, in my opinion, in large measure due to the fact that in the immediate post-Gurus period up till the early 20th Century our Gurdwaras were under the mahants who had introduced Hindu practices into the faith. The infamous Fareedkote wala Teeka (an exegesis on the AGGS) was the first such major work and it is entirely (so I am told) Vedantic in its interpretation; it continues to be used by so many preachers as the basis of their sermons. Such interpretations cannot ever appeal to reason, and no thinking person can countenance such interpretations and yet claim intellectual fidelity. [See Footnote 1].

Philosophy vs. Revelation / Religion

From the start it is necessary to clarify two issues: What is philosophy in contrast to religion/revelation and whether Guru Nanak’s philosophy is different from the philosophy of the other Gurus and that of the other contributors.

Without getting into any protracted debate about the varied definitions of religion/revelation and philosophy

I will define the differences as are commonly understood by lay persons. Granted that both religion and philosophy have much in common and sometimes overlap, so much so we speak easily of “religious philosophies”, likely because they often wrestle with the same questions, like the meaning and purpose of life, or of our origins, there are nevertheless clear differences which mark them as two separate systems. The key differences between the two that are recognisable by most are:

1. Religions have rituals whilst philosophies do not.
2. Philosophy employs reason and critical thinking, promoting its ideas based on rational arguments, whilst religion relies on faith, sometimes exclusively, even if occasionally it too appeals to or tries to appeal to reason. Philosophers do not accept any authority but that of their own reason.

The word philosophy is of Greek origin, and means “*Love and pursuit of wisdom by intellectual means and moral self-discipline*” as well as “*Investigation of the nature, causes, or principles of reality, knowledge, or values, based on logical reasoning rather than empirical methods*” [9] (emphasis added).

The perception of lay persons is illustrated by the following, taken from a Pakistani forum [11]: A girl asked “*What do you think is Philosophy and Religion? and what is the difference between them or they just same*”. The response generally tended to be akin to this one: “*Source of religion is divine while the source of philosophy is the human brain*”. And that in essence is how most people see the difference between the two: that Philosophy is the consequence of human reason and thus explains why philosophers do not accept any authority but that of their own reason, whilst revelation, for believers, involves a near dictation-like transmission of the message by Deity. This makes the two, revelation and philosophy, as alike as chalk and cheese. Even without elaboration, the discerning mind will begin to visualise the pitfalls of asserting either: whether Bani is philosophy or revelation. So is there a resolution to this conundrum?

Revelation

This brings us to the next question that has to be resolved: whether Guru Nanak’s writings constitute a

philosophy or are they revelation. Those who consider Sikhism to be a revealed religion often point to the verse:

Jaise meh aave khasam ki bani taisra karun gyaan ve Laalo which is translated as “*As the Word of the Lord comes to me so do I proclaim its knowledge, O Lalo!*” (AGGS, M 1, 722 [1])

Dhur ki Bani is perhaps the most commonly used phrase to justify that all Bani, as incorporated in the AGGS, is Divine revelation. “*In a discussion on ‘Dhur Ki Bani’ on the Yahoo Groups ‘Gurmat Learning Zone’ (GLZ) several experts / scholars were at odds with one another as to what the phrase means, and some were accused of denying the special status of Gurbani (AGGS)... having been transmitted directly from the Divine*”[7] by denying that the phrase is proof of revelation.

I have given my views on this and presented my arguments in some detail in my paper, published in *Understanding Sikhism – The Research journal in 2009* [7] but deem it pertinent to reproduce the following from it:

“Quoting from his work, *Life and Work of Guru Arjan: History, Memory and Biography*, Pashaura Singh (GLZ Message #44242) says that “*Dhur Ki Bani*” means “...the divine utterance from the beginning... the bani is portrayed as existing prior to the revelation, since the beginning of creation...” He says that this “popular expression”, *Dhur ki Bani*, was introduced by Guru Arjan (AGGS, M 5, p 628) [1]:

He also quotes Guru Arjan again in the following verse:

*Miharvan maula tuhin ek,
Pir paikambar sheikh
Dilan ka malak kare hak,
Qur'an kateb te pak*
AGGS, M 5, p 897 [1]

Referring to the word “hak” in the above mentioned verse, Pashaura Singh says “*In Punjabi culture, the word ‘hak’ refers to a ‘direct call’ made by a person at the time of summoning somebody. It faithfully describes the mode of direct communication in which Vahiguru reveals himself by uttering the divine Word in the heart,*

mind and soul of the Guru.” Singh says that “*Guru Arjan made the claim to the exclusive status of Sikh revelation in response to the challenge of contemporary religious pluralism*”. This is submitted by Pashaura Singh as evidence of the originality of Sikhism and, presumably, as opposing the contention of some scholars that Sikhism is a “syncretistic” faith. He further states: “To underline the distinctive Sikh notion of revelation through direct communication, Guru Arjan proclaimed:

*“I myself do not know how to speak;
I have only conveyed the order of the Lord.”*
AGGS, M 5, p 763.

This is in line with Guru Nanak's self-understanding of revelation:

*“As the Word of the Lord comes to me
so do I proclaim its knowledge, O Lalo!”*
AGGS, M 1, 722 [1].

In any case, the inference drawn from Pashaura Singh's view is that “*Dhur Ki Bani*” was already in existence since the beginning of creation, is word for word transmitted by the Guru as “spoken” by God to him, without an intermediary. This is in contrast to the case of Islam wherein their tradition says that the text of revelation was dictated / communicated through an intermediary, the angel Gabriel.”

This in essence is what one means when one declares any scripture a revelation.

The verse from page 722 of the AGGS, quoted above, on the face of it does appear to support the idea that Guru Nanak says that he proclaims the Bani as it is “transmitted” to him by God. However the verse is a part of a long Sabd which appears to be an eyewitness's description of the scene after the havoc wreaked by the invader Babar in 1521. The entire verse appears to suggest that Guru Nanak was an eyewitness to the atrocities committed by Babar, to the inequities visited upon the population by the invader. Clearly this Sabd cannot be one that was communicated to Guru Nanak by God; it is his eyewitness account of the destruction. The verse should not be read out of context and therefore cannot be ascribed the meaning that is so often given to that verse.

Effectively, therefore, revelation means that God “TALKS” to the person to whom God reveals something. Whilst such a concept would have been easily accepted in the distant past, it cannot sit easy with any rational being today. So, if Bani is not In the article [7], based on the discussions on the Yahoo Forums (Gurmat Learning Zone, GLZ, and Sikh Diaspora, SD), **3 different views were expressed:**

The first view was the one best expressed by Pashaura Singh (described above) which states that *Dhur ki Bani* means that the Bani is an exact copy (the use of Gurmukhi notwithstanding) of a pre-existing Bani that is with the Divine.

The second view was that some changes to the “received” Bani were made by the Gurus, especially by Guru Arjan to the Bani of the Bhagats and others when he chose to incorporate some of their writings in the Granth Sahib. The logical implication of this view is that the Bani (the entire corpus) we now have cannot be an “exact copy” of the original (whatever that can mean) as asserted by the Pashaura Singh view. This second view accepts that some changes did take place, but insist that these do not take away the status of the Bani being *Dhur ki Bani*.

A third view taken is illustrated by the view of Dr V S Grewal, where in the Sikh Diaspora Message # 46404 [7] he says: “...with a little common sense one can imagine that God does not communicate through any language per se... It simply means that Guru Nanak in his fourth state of *Sehj* had some kind of spiritual experiences... which later on he put in to his own words and wrote with the addition of his daily practical experiences of interaction with others like his dialogue with *Sidhas*. It is also true with others, whose writings are included in AGGS.”[7]. [See Footnote 2]

The third view that revelation is not word-for-word but, in the form of concepts appears to be, in my opinion, more realistic. It more easily fits into the proposition that the person “receiving” the Divine message (Guru Nanak in this case) is merely expressing what he felt when he had “contact” with the Divine. This expression of the message, together with his exposure to Nature and to his environs, complemented by his deportment in life, constitutes his Philosophy.

So is Bani revelation? All faiths refer to their own scriptures as God’s Word or Divine Revelation; religion is based on revelation. What exactly does this mean or imply? A conveniently available definition/explanation, though it’s in reference to Christianity, applies to other faiths: “*Revelation is supernatural communication from God to man, either oral or written, though usually restricted to its written aspect, that is, to the whole contents of Holy Scripture... All Scripture is revelation...*” [10]

When assigning the label ‘Revelation’ to any writing it is important to remember what exactly it implies: “*A revelation is not something man could know on his own. It is not something man could arrive at by logically studying the facts.*” [5]. It implies that revelation can only be made known by something beyond Man, and here religion posits God.

Pitfalls of calling it Revelation

Given that the Divine is declared to be the Perfect Being, not admitting to error, to call any scripture a result of revelation is to declare that it is immutable, valid for all time, accurate even in its scientific declarations or references, devoid of any contradictions, and so on. The pitfalls of such a declaration are just too many, and to fall into the trap is to invite doubt at every stage. What sort of Divinity would it be, given its attributes as expressed by religion, that cannot express itself unambiguously, without the need for interpreters, or One that cannot accurately employ verifiable scientific fact? To explain away all this, as is so often done, by saying that God makes revelations according to the understanding of man in the context of his time and maturity, is simply to invite more questions. Notwithstanding the obvious insult to God’s favoured and best creation, Man, it clearly invites ridicule when the followers of the faith so adamantly claim that such revelation is final and for all time, not to mention that the Perfect Creator appears to have started with an imperfect construct (Man) in the first place. The suggestion that scripture is revelation, as generally understood, is untenable. An unbiased analysis of any of the revealed scriptures, even by people who think that their religious truths are derived from such divine revelation, will easily demonstrate that the ultimate message as articulated is substantially based on the experience, observations and reasoning power of the prophet.

It is thus more reasonable to accept the proposition that the scripture (AGGS in our case) is a “religious philosophy” with emphasis on the latter word. According to traditional Sikhism Guru Nanak, and the other Gurus, were beings touched by or inspired by God; the Gurus uttered the commands of the Divine. If it is a Philosophy, in contradistinction to Revelation, how does one, then, import the Divine into this, and still leave room for a reasonable explanation of the now obvious errors of scientific fact, without resorting to some convoluted proposition?

Philosophy

It cannot be that God literally speaks to the recipients of revelation, whether directly or through a conduit (angel). In each case the founders of religions will have had some kind of mystical experience, sometimes described as a feeling of being in the presence of a Divine Being, and so felt inspired by this Being, and thereafter made pronouncements which they must have felt were necessary to either ‘commune’ with that Being or necessary to the forging of good society.

If we accept that revelation (scripture) constitutes the utterances of a Divinely-inspired individual, as opposed to a dictation by the Divine, the possibility of error of fact can be entertained. This is especially so in relation to scientific “facts” in scripture. Such an “inspired” person, here conveniently called a prophet, may well have apprehended some profound truths, including scientific “facts”, but these would have to be communicated to others through the language, idiom and metaphor of his time. He would thus be limited by the available vocabulary, and would have to make the most of it in expressing his idea or transmitting the received message; a great deal would necessarily have to be metaphorical or allegorical, and certainly literal in many cases. Even if such a prophet was not limited by what must certainly have been an inadequate vocabulary, and that he employed the language of his time with great proficiency to transmit his message and may have been clearly understood in his time, one cannot escape the fact that with the passage of time, owing to evolution of the language itself, the scriptural verses eventually fall to “interpretation”. This in turn gives rise to new problems and much controversy within the community of the faithful.

In relation to spiritual matters believers will have no difficulty in accepting that the founder’s message is not

just exceptional but is perfect in its content, for he has been ‘touched’ by the Divine. Such is the nature of spiritual matters, being based on faith, that any debate on the veracity of the claims is futile. But where the scriptural statements make references to physical phenomena (science), i.e. where verses allude to certain “facts” which can now be scientifically verified, and are now proven to be inaccurate, believers are hard put to accept the role of the Divine in the transmission of the message. This is usually circumvented by allowing for some allegorical analogy. However, having allowed that this is a philosophy, with its limitations as outlined above, it is easy to accept that such pronouncements by the prophet must have been limited by the available scientific knowledge and by the (scientifically) inadequate vocabulary of his time. Such scientific references in scripture are in most cases either given as examples of the greatness of the Creator or to explain some awesome natural phenomenon. Given the limitations of their place in time, such pronouncements fall to “interpretation” and “re-interpretation” in order to bring the scriptural scientific ‘fact’ into line with current knowledge. This, it is submitted, is neither appropriate nor necessary. Any accurate reference to scientific fact in scripture is purely incidental. Attempts at fitting in scientific facts into revelation, via reinterpretations, even if plausible, cannot have been intended as such when the scriptural verse was first uttered or written.

Pros and Cons of calling it Philosophy

From the point of view of a believer, who accepts everything on faith alone, calling the writings of Guru Nanak a philosophy invites problems. This, of course, is spot on: it does invite some problems.

There are pros and cons to taking such an approach. The most obvious plus-point is that it makes more sense and is thus easier to digest as opposed to a “talking” God. It also allows for plausible explanations for possible contradictions, or obvious errors, in relation to what has been seen as scientific fact in scripture. Further, it makes it easier to accept that much of what is written may be metaphorical or allegorical. In fact most scientists actually interpret scriptural verses keeping this consideration in mind. Such an approach may be seen by some as intellectual dishonesty, but is far preferred by many a believer than a literal interpretation. [7]

The downside to this is that the Scripture (AGGS in this case) may not be infallible, and thus certainly not immutable, as we have been brought up to believe. Once this infallibility is admitted to, a whole series of problems will arise; it cannot be God's Word, for God or Its Word cannot admit to error. [7]

There will always be some who will see the AGGS as the immutable Word (Sabd) of God, revelation, which humans should not question. Others will see it as a book which contains God's message, one written by divinely inspired humans, but nevertheless flawless, much the way many Christians see the Bible. Still others have accepted, or sooner or later will, that the Word is inspired as in the latter case, but will entertain the possibility that it may on account of the human writers and their limitations have flaws. The first two groups will hold their divergent views and will consistently and completely disagree over the interpretations of the holy verses, but will nevertheless be able to sit together. The third group, should it even try to present its thoughts as no more than an intellectual exercise, will be mercilessly flayed: such is the stranglehold of religion on free thought [7]. This seminar and this paper may well be a test.

When any philosophy is discussed, especially amongst academicians, the strengths and shortcomings of the ideas expounded by the philosophy are openly debated. Once scripture is accepted as a philosophy (as opposed to revelation) it must invite similar scrutiny. The most obvious downside of this, from the point of view of one who believes in its perfection by faith alone, is that the philosophy, like any other, will be open to logical discussion and debate, and that will not sit well with such believers. But should the possibility of identifying weaknesses in any philosophy be a deterrent to a discussion?

A Separate Study of Guru Nanak's Writings

The need to study Guru Nanak's verses (philosophy) separately, Nanakian Philosophy as Prof Devinder Singh Chahal calls it, is necessary in order to ascertain if all other sacred writings are in consonance with the spiritual theme of the philosophy; for starters it has to be assumed that the founder's religious philosophy was flawless. This allows, even if for purely academic purposes, the other writings to be gauged. The obvious follow-on question that will be raised is: Are you suggesting that the Bani of the other Gurus, and that of

the other contributors, as in the AGGS, is different in its theme? The answer is "No". Sikh tradition is clear that Gurus were of similar mind. It is as Daljeet Singh says: "*Guru Granth Sahib stresses that all the Gurus express a single unified thesis, representing the same spirit. Guru Gobind Singh has stated that they are all a unity, and express the same spiritual ideology*". [8] This means that the philosophy of the other Gurus, as incorporated in the AGGS, is exactly the same as Guru Nanak's philosophy. The same has to hold true for the rest of the Banis, no matter who the contributors. It CANNOT be otherwise, not for a true believer, for to be otherwise will create a whole lot of other problems. That being the case no one, certainly not the true believers whose faith in the thematic consistency of all contributors to the AGGS should stand them in good stead, can (or should) have any objection to put this thesis to test.

This study of just Guru Nanak's writings has another use to it. Let us assume that after much deliberation / discussion of just these writings we finally reach an agreement as to what the philosophy is, and exactly how each verse written by Guru Nanak is to be interpreted. Once this is accepted any interpretation thereafter of all the other Banis, whether by the other Gurus or other contributors to the AGGS, will have to be in harmony with Guru Nanak's philosophy. Again it cannot be otherwise. Should someone then interpret the non-Guru Nanak verses in any way that contradicts his philosophy, such interpretation can be identified as inaccurate, the error pointed out and he can reinterpret the verses, using the Guru Nanak's philosophy as a touchstone.

But, and here I tread into dangerous territory, what if, after having understood Guru Nanak's philosophy and having accepted the consensus / true interpretation, there is cause to find that some of the other writings contradict Guru Nanak's philosophy? Members of the other faiths have had to face such dilemmas where one part of their scripture contradicts another and so on. Such contradictions have been found by scholars from within those faiths themselves, by true believers so to speak. What if we are faced with the same problem? Should we be afraid of this? Could this be the reason some believers object to studying Guru Nanak's philosophy in isolation, and then attempting to make comparisons? If so, that would be a poor demonstration of faith and, worse, a serious fear of the

truth, to the search of which all men of religion have committed their lives.

Sikhism: Original or Syncretistic?

Calling Sikhism a syncretistic religion has made Sikhs bristle, but the statement continues to pop up with annoying frequency. With some minor variations to the actual wording, these assertions, in general tend to say *“Historians and specialists in Eastern religions generally believe that Sikhism is a syncretistic religion, originally related to the Bhakti movement within Hinduism and the Sufi branch of Islam, to which many independent beliefs and practices were added.”* [Footnote 3 a]

In essence they imply that Guru Nanak's philosophy was not original, that *“Nanak attempted to integrate the best in Hinduism and Islam into a new inclusive religion”* [Footnote 3 b]

No philosophy can be entirely independent of existing philosophies. One is almost always influenced to some degree by what one is exposed to. Thus Guru Nanak will definitely have been affected by the prevailing religious philosophies, the main two being Hinduism and Islam. But is that enough to label Sikhism (Guru Nanak's philosophy) syncretistic?

It has also been stated earlier that when Guru Nanak, after his mystical experience, went on to speak and write about spiritual matters he was obliged to use the language that the people were familiar with and the terminology that was well known to them: that of Hinduism and Islam. The use of such terminology, coupled with the fact that Hinduism and Islam were the two main religions of the region, may have led some scholars to erroneously label Sikhism as syncretistic.

A dispassionate, objective review of any religion will show that each was influenced by and built upon the foundations of others that were known to its founder. And yet no one refers to them as syncretistic? Why? Because, as has been stated above, when in key areas, a religion (philosophy) becomes so distinctively different from other religions, in its approach to Deity and Mankind, it can justifiably lay claim to uniqueness, and to a separate identity. Such is the case with Sikhism. Such building-up on or being influenced by existing scripture is evident even in the three Abrahamic faiths, the Judaeo-Christian-Islamic traditions. Islam, for

example, recognises the Old Testament prophets, as well as the central figure of the New Testament, Jesus, as its own. This does not make it a syncretistic religion. There is, of course, the difference that in the case of Islam it simply says that it is the final, correct revelation which its two predecessors also received but which was allowed to become corrupted or lost. Such claim cannot fall into the syncretistic trap, but it does open up a whole set of other problems associated with claims of revelation.

Having said that a Philosopher is influenced by his environs and his exposure to other philosophies, one other question remains: Did Guru Nanak undertake a conscious effort to devise the modifications according to his intellect, or did he write those verses under some divine influence, almost as an automaton? The answer to that can perhaps be derived from the two phrases quoted above (*Jaise meh aave khasam ki bani taisra karun gyaan ve Laalo and Dhur ki Bani aayee...*).

Whilst acknowledging that they are not word-for-word dictations in the sense meant by 'revelation', these phrases clearly show that the Guru was compelled to utter (write) them following his mystical experience, almost like a Divine command. It was not a conscious effort to force any modification so as to integrate the best in Hinduism and Islam into a new inclusive religion.

In the case of Guru Nanak's philosophy there is still another possibility: this could be an entirely new philosophy, independent of the old ones, one which may give a superficial appearance of having been, in some areas, built upon the old, but with new meanings so far removed from the old as to be new. Guru Nanak was an astute observer of Nature; could he have been a Natural Philosopher? [Footnote 4]

He was a contemporary of Galileo Galilei, a Natural Philosopher, who said *"Philosophy is written in this grand book, the universe, which stands continually open to our gaze. But the book cannot be understood unless one first learns to comprehend the language and read the letters in which it is composed..."* [4]

Galileo was of course referring to mathematics as the language. But could Guru Nanak, amazed by the awesomeness of the universe, and attributing it all to God, have incorporated his mystical experience into

this new philosophy?

This, however, is an area that can only be explored by those who have a deep understanding of the AGGS, an equally deep understanding of Hindu and Islamic scriptures, and of Natural Philosophy. That, unfortunately, is not my strength and so I must pass on drawing any conclusions regarding the issue of a totally new philosophy, even if I have raised the possibility.

Conclusion

Having markedly different aspects to it, Guru Nanak's philosophy is definitely unique when compared with other religious philosophies. To call it a philosophy as opposed to calling it revelation not only makes more sense but is the more likely proposition. This does not necessarily obviate the influence of the Divine on the writings.

Sikhism is not a syncretistic faith and Guru Nanak did not attempt to integrate the best of Hinduism and Islam to found a new religion. In key areas, Sikhism is substantially and critically different from the others and stands out as a separate religious philosophy.

This paper may well raise some issue which will cause some discomfort amongst those who would accept everything passed down by tradition even when it flies in the face of reason. But that is not the intention of the paper; it is intended to bring out into the open questions that must arise in the minds of many. As a consequence of traditional views and interpretations of scripture, in which the antiquity of the tradition is supposed to lend it unimpeachable credence, certain dogmas become elevated to the level of absolute truths and are rigidly enforced by the zealots of the faith. Any divergent view or practice is then seen by them as a distortion of the truth.

Given that this seminar is being held at Guru Nanak Dev University, and given that Guru Nanak himself encouraged the use of discriminatory intellect (bibaek budhi), one has cause to hope that every view will be intellectually discussed with emotions taking a back seat.

Footnotes:

1. I am dependant on the views of others, those familiar with the AGGS, when expressing such sentiments. Where possible, I have taken it

upon myself to check out the verses and with the help of translations verified those views. They make sense. The same process when employed on the quoted verses using Vedantic interpretations make logically unacceptable reading.

2. It is evident that there is no single, clear or consistent concept amongst Sikhs themselves as to what precisely *Dhur ki Bani* entails.
3. Sources of quotes on Syncretistic Religion:
 - a. <http://www.indiaprofile.com/religion-culture/sikhism.htm>
 - b. http://urantiabook.org/archive/readers/601_sikhism.htm
4. Natural Philosophy is a term applied to the study of nature and the physical universe that was dominant before the development of modern science; it involves the study of nature in all its various dimensions

References:

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3. Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary <http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary?book=Dictionary&va=faith>
4. Mohammad Gill, *Pitfalls of Metaphysics and Chimera of Divine Revelation* (2003); http://www.infidels.org/library/modern/mohammad_gill/pitfalls.shtml
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8. Singh, Daljeet. 'Sikh Theory of Evolution: Haumain and the Problem of Hermeneutics' in Sikhism: Its Philosophy and History. Editors: Daljeet Singh, Kharak Singh. Publishers: Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, India, 1997: p 78.
9. The Free Dictionary: <http://www.thefreedictionary.com/philosophy>
10. Truth for Today: <http://www.tecmalta.org/tft102.htm>
11. Whats The Difference Between Philosophy And

Religion?
 From "A Pakistani Forum : Online Discussion
 Community",
<http://www.muzaipakistan.com/board/index.php?showtopic=78064>

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CONTEMPORARY HISTORY

Of burqa-clad historians, puerile approaches, sycophantic opinions
 and the destruction of Sikh ethos
 Gurtej Singh, Chandigarh

Recently I was invited to the **Guru Nanak Dev University**. I was to present my views to the seminarians trying to understand Guru Nanak's teachings. It was a very gracious invitation by the head of the department that could not have been refused.

Just before the seminar began, some students sang the poem '*deh shiva bar mohe ihe*'. Those who revere it as the composition of the Tenth Guru believe (against all available evidence) that *Shiva* in the verse alludes to Akalpurakh. Those who know the context and the meaning explicitly assigned to it in the composition know that it is another name of Parbati, the consort of Lord Shiva of Hindu trinity. They, who understand this much, cannot be seen praying to a mythical being as worship of *Akalpurakh* alone is permissible in the Sikh faith.

I stood up in the worshipful mode as I did not want to create a scene by walking out or by remaining seated. Had I known that this would be sung, I would have come in a little late and saved myself the embarrassment. Now it became necessary for me to disassociate myself from the homage to Parbati.

Before beginning my presentation I said words to the effect: '*now that the students have started the proceedings by worship of Parbati, I shall be looking forward also to a cup of hashish (bhang), Shiva's favourite drink.*' It was natural to expect a stimulating cup as without drinking it no worship of Shiva is complete.

Then I remembered what the department had done to my article. I had written an original article on a hitherto little touched upon theme, namely "**Sikh war ethics:**

spiritual inspiration and impact on history." I also saw Prof. Shashi Bala Julka, who had been corresponding with me in connection with that article written on her invitation. Initially she had liked the article and had promised several times to publish it. Eventually some change came about in her attitude and it was decided that the article in that form should not be published. Her argument against publishing the article was that it was 'controversial'. The argument was unacceptable as it is the university's business to deal with controversies in rational manner.

She had told me that the article had been referred to a 'Sikh historian' and that the referee had found it 'controversial'. She had not named the 'Sikh historian' or the sick historian.

My plea was that the article must be published as it was and the 'sick historian' may write to point out the nature of controversy it raises. I will try to counter the argument. Thereafter, we must leave it to the scholars to judge who is right and who is wrong. This according to me was the only method of resolving academic controversies.

The 'sick historian' perhaps refused to shed his veil (burqa) of anonymity and the article remained unpublished—so it remains up to now.

So, seeing Dr. Julka sitting in front of me, I remarked that I may not pursue Parbati issue further as it may erupt into a 'controversy' which the learned Doctor disapproves of. According to me, I had settled the five year old issue in a light-hearted and meaningful manner. As an aggrieved party, I had the right to say more, but I did not do so. I found that even this much could not be tolerated in an academic gathering which should have been geared to accommodate all kinds of viewpoints. Dr. Jaswinder Kaur made some sarcastic mention of it in her presentation. I interpreted those as mild though fully and wholly unwarranted but said nothing about it to maintain the decorum.

During the recess I discovered out that the 'Sikh historian' who had given puerile comments about my article being controversial was none other than Dr. Kirpal Singh. I also came to know that the decision to withhold the article was taken by the entire department of Guru Nanak Studies and not by Dr. Shashi Bala Julka alone.

I reproduce the entire correspondence on the subject below and leave it to the scholars and lay people to make what they will of it. A few words about **Dr. Kirpal Singh**, whom I have known and have closely observed for several decades, will be found to be in order by the reader. According to me **he is the hatchet man of the forces inimical to Sikh culture, his function is to confuse Sikh point of view, to destroy Sikh ethos and to dismantle the Sikh identity by challenging all expressions of it based on authentic Sikh values.** He does not pit a rational opinion against a thesis but an emotional one based on his own warped understanding of patriotism. **He hopes that the support of the permanent cultural majority will lend dignity to his feather weight musings.** Do we need enemies when we have such friends!

I may also mention here that I wrote to **Dr. Jairup Singh, the Vice-Chancellor of the University** to bring the matter to his notice. My communication remained unacknowledged. **It has often been observed in academic circles that our universities were being controlled by forces that had other interests at heart.** They were understood to be operating under the influence of dwarfed and amorphous concept of national interest. Consequently they were making an all out effort to obliterate the Sikh culture and to ascribe new meaning to the Sikh scripture in their quest for uniformity. This perception was based on observation. Now there appears to be even more tangible evidence on the subject.

Next week, I will put the article in question on this blog-spot so that the reader may judge whether it was worth publishing or not.

DEPARTMENT OF GURU NANAK STUDIES
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR-143005

Dr. Shashi Bala
Head

No.221-272/DGNS
Date 30-1-06

Respected Prof. Sahib,

As you are aware, the Department of Guru Nanak Studies has been publishing a bi-annual *Journal of Sikh Studies* since 1974. It covers a wide range of areas pertaining to Sikhism viz. religion, philosophy, history, sociology, art, music and hermeneutics. The journal has wide circulation and has acquired encouraging

recognition not only in India but at the international level also. Besides articles, the journal also includes book reviews relating to Sikhism and other allied fields.

You are an eminent scholar in the field of Sikh studies. Therefore, on behalf of the department of Guru Nanak Studies, I feel honoured to request you to oblige us by contributing an article in your specialization for publication in our journal.

It is requested that the article should be unpublished before, and references should be placed at the end of the manuscript. A brief bio-data may also be enclosed along with your article.

I will feel obliged if you could send your paper through e-mail or floppy/ CD on MS Word, by the end of March, 2006.

With regards,
Yours Sincerely
-sd-
(Shashi Bala)

Tue, 7 Feb 2006 03:16:46 -0800 (PST)

Ref. No. 221-272/DGNS dated 30.1.06

Dear Dr Shashi Bala ji,

Thank you for the invitation to write for your esteemed Journal of Sikh Studies.

I will be sending my article by about the end of March on e-mail as required by you.

Regards,
Yours sincerely,
Gurtej Singh
Chandigarh

Fri, 7 Apr 2006 12:03:17 +0100 (BST)

Respected Sir,
Sat Siri Akal!

I am waiting for your article for publication in the Journal of Sikh Studies as you have promised earlier. Please send it as early as possible.

Thanks,
With deep regards,
Yours Sincerely,
Shashi Bala

Tue, 11 Apr 2006 05:26:57 -0700 (PDT)

Dear Ms. Shashi Bala Julka,

I am sorry for the delay. I was really very busy.
I hope you will like the article. This subject has not been paid much attention to. It may be of interest to scholars.

Regards,
Yours Sincerely,
Gurtej Singh

 **Sikh_War_Code.doc** (100k) [[Preview](#)]

Tue, 11 Apr 2006 05:57:45 -0700 (PDT)

Please ignore the earlier attachment as it contains the rough draft which was inadvertently attached due to operational error.

Sikh_War_Code.doc (70k) [[Preview](#)]

Thu, 11 May 2006 11:26:29 +0100 (BST)

Respected Sir,

I am sorry I could not reply you earlier due to internet problem at my home as well as at office. Now I have seen and download the attachment. I am very grateful to you for your positive response to my letter and hope to get the similar cooperation from you in future also. Your valuable research paper is preserved for the next issue of the journal i.e. in Aug. as the previous one has already been sent in the press. I deeply regret for the delay due to the failure of internet system.

Thanks and with profound regards. Shashi, Dept of Guru Nanak Studies, GNDU, As

Wed, 10 Jan 2007 19:04:47 -0800 (PST)

Dear Dr. Shashi Bala ji,

I am interested in knowing whether you could publish my article on Sikh War Ethics. If it is published, could you please let me know the details of the publication?

Regards,

Gurtej Singh
Chandigarh

Thu, 18 Jan 2007 00:14:15 +0000 (GMT)

Respected Sir,

I am sorry to say that your article on Sikh War Ethics is still in the process of publication. I could not include it in the second volume of the Journal of Sikh Studies as this volume was special issue relating to the life and martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev.

I would like to seek your permission for publishing it in the next issue i.e. 2007.

With Profound Regards,
Yours Sincerely,
Shashi Bala, G.N.D.U.

Fri, 9 Feb 2007 01:37:44 +0000 (GMT)

Respected Sir,

I replied to your e-mail earlier but got no reply from your side. Regarding your article, I may submit that it is in the process and I was waiting for your reply and consent to include it in the Journal of Sikh Studies, 2007.

With due apology, I already replied that in the first issue of the journal, we could not include it as the journal was already sent to the press. The second issue was special issue on 'Guru Arjan Dev' Life and Martyrdom and another Journal Perspectives on Guru Granth Sahib includes articles relating to the themes of The Scripture.

Due to the above stated reasons, the article could not be published so far. As the theme of your article is most relevant, I would like to seek your permission to include it in the next issue, if you have not sent it for publication anywhere. I used to read your articles in the Sikh Review.

Hoping to get your cooperation for the dissemination of Sikh perspective of philosophy and religion, and waiting for your consent.

With deep regards,

Shashi Bala, G.N.D.U. Amritsar.

Fri, 9 Feb 2007 01:54:01 -0800 (PST)

Dear Dr. Shashi Bala ji,

The article was written for your journal. It has not been sent to anyone else. The Sikh Review is publishing my translation of Panth Parkash. You may publish the article sent to you in the Journal.

Regards,
Gurtej Singh

**DEPARTMENT OF GURU NANAK STUDIES
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR-143005
No.361/G.N.S**

Dr. Shashi Bala
Head

Date 9-4-07

Respected Sir,
As you know, the Journal of Sikh Studies is a referred Journal. Your article entitled 'Sikh War Codes: Spiritual Inspiration and Impact on history' was sent to the referee approved by the Vice Chancellor and the details for modification as suggested are attached herewith. I hope you won't mind to change the article accordingly.

With regards
Yours Sincerely
-sd-
(Shashi Bala)

Gurtej Singh
742, Sector-8
Chandigarh-160008

**DEPARTMENT OF GURU NANAK STUDIES
GURU NANAK DEV UNIVERSITY, AMRITSAR**

Report of referee regarding publication of research paper in the Journal *Journal of Sikh Studies*

1. Name of the Paper: SIKH WAR CODES: SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION AND IMPACT ON HISTORY
2. Whether accepted/rejected/revised: SHOULD BE REVISED BEFORE PUBLICATION
3. If accepted:
 - a) to be published in original form: NO

- b) to be published in modified form: YES
- c) Details for the modification: SEPERAE SHEET ATTACHED
(attach sheet if necessary)
- d) Broad comment about the paper: SEPERAE SHEET ATTACHED
(attach sheet if necessary)

1. DETAILS FOR THE MODIFICATION

The first para of the article as cited above either be deleted or reconstructed. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism inculcated in his followers the spirit of fight against tyranny and injustice and defend the weak and downtrodden. He is considered Prophet of Peace who wanted reconciliation between the warring Hindus and Muslims. It would be inadvisable to associate Guru Nanak with War Code whatsoever. Similarly, Guru Arjan's hymn quoted in the first para referred to above, is a description of struggle against five evils in our body viz Kaam, Krodh, Lobh etc. He does not refer to any external enemy because he says 'Sagal Sang Humko Ban Ayee...' Association of war code with his hymns is not proper.

On pages 4, 7 and 8 there are references to Operation Blue Star and Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala. His role in the Operation Blue Star is controversial so it would be better to avoid it.

On page 7, it has been stated that Indian Govt. claimed that they have burnt the Sikh reference Library which is not correct. The Govt. has never claimed to have burnt the library. There is no question of deliberate burning of the library. The library was burnt no doubt but why—is not known. It would thus be better to delete all these references from the article.

Wed, 18 Apr 2007 05:07:46 -0700 (PDT)

From: Gurtej Singh,
742 Sector 8,
Chandigarh- 160009

To: Dr. Shashi Bala
Head
Department of Guru Nanak Studies,
Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.
April 18, 2007

Dear Dr. Shashi Bala ji,

Many thanks for your letter No. 361/GNS dated April 9, 2007. I am very glad that you have finally decided to spell out your objections to my article written on your kind invitation. I am not sure the objections raised by the anonymous referee whose opinion you sought, are valid or precise. **I propose to deal with them as follows:**

1A). The referee says, ‘Guru Nanak was a prophet of peace and he cannot be said to have had political concerns.’ Politics is very much a part of human life and the situation has been that way since the dawn of civilization. Humankind is moved through politics and for that reason many momentous social and economic changes have come about through the instrumentality of politics. Destinies of nations have been profoundly affected by politics. Every prophet and incarnation including our own Buddha, Ram and Krishna have been preoccupied with politics. The same is true of Sumerian, Semitic and Graeco-Roman gods, prophets and figures of eminence all over the world. If any change has to be brought about in the ways of humans and if an attempt to establish permanent peace has to be made, it has to be done through politics. A prophet who wishes to establish ‘Ramrajya’ has of necessity to resort to war. Sri Ram, the incarnation of Vishnu had started fighting wars in his childhood and continued doing so till the very end of his human existence. The same is true of Sri Krishna. The same is true of Brahma, Vishnu, Shiva, Durga and Indra. They are known to be armed (some to the teeth); they promoted conflict, took sides in the battles and adorned battlefields as warriors. All the time they had the idea of establishing peace nearest to their hearts. Prophet Muhammad’s religion is all about peace as the very name Islam suggests; yet he fought wars and made Jihad compulsory for believers. Moses not only led his flock in war but is on record as claiming that God Himself fought for his army. All the time he was leading the Jews to peace and prosperity. Jesus Christ the ‘prince of peace’ as his followers call him, had deep-rooted social and political concerns. The scholars are now piercing the wall of propaganda built around him by twenty centuries of all out effort by the Church, to discover that he was perhaps the leader of a local sect engaged in resisting the Roman Empire by violent means (see the *Dead Sea Scrolls*). It is recorded that he overturned the tables of the money changers thus resorting to reform by violence. All his

companions at the Last Supper were armed and one is reported to have cut off the earlobe of the governor’s minion with his sword. His statement that he had come to promote conflict and to bring about warlike conditions in every family he came in contact with, is a part of the New Bible. His authentic image takes care of his social concerns which are reconcilable with his image as a prince of peace as in the case of almost every other prophet or incarnation in human history.

Why does your University think that such reconciliation, in the case of Guru Nanak, is impossible?

1B). By pretending to promote Guru Nanak exclusively as prophet of peace, your University is trying to defame his successors who organized the Sikhs to resist tyranny. The Sikhs, the *Guru Granth*, and all Sikh theologians believe that all the Gurus were one and preached the same doctrine. To this school of thought all the Gurus remain ‘princes of peace’ and their resistance to violence remains till today the only method of establishing peace. Bertrand Russell and M. K. Gandhi had no peaceful answer to the violence unleashed by Hitler. Gandhi even contemplated suicide on seeing that his hollow notions about non-violence were not adequate to meet everyday problems arising in the world. Lord Wavell has recorded that he was for establishing peace in Kashmir by sending in the Indian army to counter occupation by forces loyal to Pakistan. He also did not care if human blood flowed in rivers provided the British made an immediate retreat from India. Anyone who does not believe that superior violence is required to meet aggression and assault on human dignity, would be running the risk of being called ‘intellectually challenged.’ This is the lesson of all history.

1C). Rabindranath Tagore was awarded the Nobel Prize in return for his help in curbing the Punjabi and Bengali violent resistance to the British rule in India. He travelled all the way to San Francisco to tell the Ghadarites to stop violence against the British colonial power. He was severely and effectively chastised by the freedom fighters. It was in an attempt to deflect the Sikh movement from its true moorings that he invented the theory of one or two Gurus having broken off from the peaceful path of Nanak. True patriots (though I disapprove of earth bound patriotism) and

genuine scholars have all along considered this to be no more than a lap dog performance by an imperialist stooge. It constitutes a low grade attack on another culture. Gandhi adopted Tagore's thesis and went ahead to preach hatred of the Sikhs and their Gurus. **To the best of my knowledge, this is not the ideology that the Guru Nanak University was founded to preach.**

1D). Guru's faith is not about 'interiority,' in spite of what McLeod and his anthropologist followers have to say on the subject. There are many scholars, including historians and theologians whose books your university and other universities have published, who are clear that Guru Nanak had deep-rooted social, economic and political concerns. Some of them got together to propound the 'Guru's Miri-piri system' as Daljit Singh called it. Noel Q. King is asking 'how did interiority lead to the promulgation of the Order of the Khalsa and how did their teachings inspire people to become the makers of history?' This is the position today and the Sikhs are making history even at present. **Dr. J. S. Grewal (your own erstwhile head of the History Department and the ex-Vice Chancellor) is aware that the Kabirpanthis, Ravidasis, followers of Mirabai and host of other sects and denominations never intervened in history and remain confined to their 'interiority' and oblivion.** Guru Arjan was not talking about enemies inside the self alone. He was also preparing his people to challenge the tyrant in the mundane world. His asking his followers to get familiar with horses was not about 'interiority,' but had something to do with cavalry. His asking his son and the successor Gurus to maintain a permanent force of 2200 horses was not about muttering the name of God but was about meeting the tyrant on the field of battle. **It is preposterous to hold that social and political concerns were not an integral part of Guru Nanak's thought. The Department of Guru Nanak Studies is distorting Sikhi if it is teaching such stuff.** My own formulation on the subject ("Political ideas of Guru Nanak," pp.61-72) is a part of a book published by the Punjabi University (*Recent Researches in Sikhism*, (Ed. Jasbir Singh Mann *et. al*, 1992).

1E). Your referee's interpretation of the hymn of Guru Arjan is by no means final. For one, Jehangir did not accept it and the Guru faced martyrdom. That should be proof enough of its true nature. The historian Ganda Singh and the theologian Teja Singh in their *A Short History of the Sikhs* also differ with your referee.

There are others too, some of whom are mentioned in the previous paragraph. Recently, I read a keynote address at the Punjabi University where some scholars from your university were also present. It was regarding the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and I propounded my thesis more cogently. It has been deemed worth a consideration by several eminent historians and interpreters of the scripture.

2A). I hope your referee is talking about Sant Jarnail Singh in his second paragraph. Sant Jarnail Singh is a well known personality and a person accepted as one of the greatest martyrs of the Sikh faith, by many Sikh and non-Sikh scholars. It is not proper to use his name without the epithet 'Sant.' Your referee should get it clear that he was not the only Sant in human history to have defied the might of an empire on the battlefield. I have been watching the recent happenings in the Punjab from close quarters. I have enough inside knowledge about what transpired. For the sake of truth, I must write what I have witnessed and known through eyewitnesses. There is nothing controversial about what I have written about the Sant. It is an eye witness account that has to be recorded for posterity. If, however, someone considers it 'controversial' let him present what s/he considers to be his or her side of the controversy. That will provide the future historians with material to formulate their own views. Why should a university want to avoid mention of recent events and why should it dub them as controversial? Contemporary history is a very respectable discipline and countless books appear on the subject every day in today's world. The Iraq war has been discussed in hundreds of books all over though it is still happening. Besides, the thesis I am proposing in my article, must of necessity mention the Sant to show that a certain ancient tradition is current in the contemporary Sikhs society. It is an integral part of my thesis.

3A). Your referee has not understood the relevant paragraph on page 7 of my article in proper perspective or I have not been able to make myself very clear to him. There are two views about the Sikh Reference Library, one is that it was burnt up and the second is that it was carried away by the invading forces. The government claims that it was burnt. There is no doubt about that. I have discussed the matter with more than one Prime Ministers of India. I know the official government position as well as the factual. Mr. Chandra Shekhar offered to return to the Sikhs the

contents carried away by the army. The remark quoted by your referee is to be read in that context.

3B). There is little doubt that a portion of the Sikh Reference Library was burnt by the invading army. It was burnt much after neutralizing resistance from the Darbar Complex. There was an army man in every square inch of the Darbar Complex when it was burnt. The library was in the ground occupied by the Indian army and anyone who has been to a field of battle knows how the occupying forces behave in such a situation; that the invader's desire to destroy the culture of the (temporarily) disadvantaged people is also well known. **You know what Shankracharya did to Buddhist universities, libraries and shrines. You also know what Aurangzeb and his kind do to Hindu cultural monuments when their turn came.** The lies that such people later invent to cover up their brutality and barbarity are also well known. In the case of attack on the Darbar, such behaviour has been well documented and analysed. Many lies have been nailed by other departments of the government itself. **What I have written in this context is based on facts as I best know them.**

Lastly, for many weighty doctrinal stances of universal validity connected with the Sikh faith and for many reasons rooted in the most considered philosophical premises known to all societies, I do not subscribe to the theory that your referee is asking me to comply with. Universities all over the world constitute forums where thought flows free and unchecked. Your University wants me to subscribe to a thought that all reason and understanding beckon me to repel with all the force at my command. I am not a party to those at your University who are carrying on relentless propaganda to denigrate Sikhi, to defame the Sikh Gurus and to detract from the thesis presented in the *Guru Granth*. I resisted, Piar Singh, the earlier spokesman of such evil forces and a stooge of the Euro-centric foreign scholars. I write only to share the truth as I have known it and not to take sides with a people forming this or that gang constituted with the intention of imposing its views on others. How on earth, can I change my views, just to suit the requirements of your *Journal*; just to see my name in print?

The people of the Punjab are paying through their nose to sustain the University you teach at. They are also paying for the *Journal* that you publish. They

do so in the hope that you will promote their culture and not undermine it at the behest of long dead perverted poets and political leaders completely disoriented from reality. The people's interest and that of the truth is best served if many differing thoughts interact allowing the student to examine the worth of each and to support either one or more of them. That interest is paramount. I therefore request you to publish the article as it is and let others, who wish to do so, contest its formulations. I will defend my thesis on the basis of the truth as I perceive it. It is not a matter of using this or that word here or of replacing a sentence with another more palatable to the referee appointed by you. Much more is involved.

I must also remind you that I wrote the article for you on your very graciously worded invitation. I would not have sent it for publication in the *Journal of Sikh Studies* but for you asking me to do so. My views are well known in the small circle of my friends. **No one has ever asked me to change them to suit the designs of a rival culture and the political needs of a ruthless group of neo-imperialists.**

With kindest regards and all good wishes
Yours sincerely,
(Gurtej Singh)

Copy to the Vice chancellor Guru Nanak Dev University with a request to intervene and to see that the professor does not intimidate scholars in future in the manner she is doing now.

Thu, 21 Jun 2007 07:23:12 +0100 (BST)

Respected Sir,
The copy of the *Journal of Sikh Studies* Vol.xxxi, 2007 is ready for publication in the press. As I mentioned earlier, your article needs a little modification as suggested by the external referee who himself is a Sikh historian and retired Prof of Sikh History. Your article is really appreciative being a detailed exposition of Sikh War Code and its spiritual inspiration and its impact on History. I sincerely wish to include it in the *Journal* but with due apology, again request you to allow a minor modification in the article as we cannot ignore the suggestions of the referee.

Hope to get a positive reply from your side.
With profound regards,

Yours Sincerely,
Shashi
Prof. & Head,
Deptt of Guru Nanak Studies
G.N.D.U, Amritsar.

THE SIKH WAR CODE, ITS SPIRITUAL INSPIRATION AND IMPACT ON HISTORY

Gurtej Singh, Chandigarh

[This paper was presented to the Guru Nanak University for publication in response to their invitation. It was not published because the University did not accept that Guru Nanak had political concerns. This was the primary objection. My view, strengthened by this episode, is that certain people in our universities are succumbing to the diktat of the permanent cultural majority to bring Sikhi within the ambit of previously prevailing culture. In my opinion this cultural aggression needs to be resisted]

1. It was Guru Nanak who laid down the basic rules that must govern the waging of war by his disciples. Besides pointing out the code of conduct in conflicts, he also spoke about the mental equipment, spiritual training and self discipline of a soldier. He is again the one who defines what makes conflict legitimate, the extent to which it is to be pursued by individual soldiers and armies and the purpose to be achieved by waging war. He talks of brave knights and martyrs being honoured at Akalpurakh's Court (*ti the jodh mahabal soor*). Bhai Gurdas, one of his earliest biographers, calls the Guru a 'roaring lion' and a 'conquering hero.' He goes on to commemorate him in a ballad composed in the form of a *Vaar* that is normally employed to eulogise knights and to immortalise battles and victories. The ideal human of Guru Arjun's concept is 'Akalpurakh's champion.' (*haun gosain ka pehalwanra*) The mental and physical training required of a spiritually developed person is aimed at imbibing the attributes of God which the Guru has revealed. The incessant striving to acquire these virtues and making them a part of individual character is defined as salvation. Thereafter, always standing up for the implementation of the Divine Will, as revealed in the Guru's word, is all that remains to make salvation an eternal reality. Of the greatest importance, perhaps, is also the method by which salvation is to be achieved as well as the

nature of evil that was to be overcome in the process. It is possible to trace all this in the utterances of Guru Nanak. Succeeding Gurus and other holy persons (*bhagta*), whose word was accepted as part of the final Sikh scripture, appear to be in accord with the Guru's thought. Therefore it is pertinent to recall the conduct of Sikh armies and soldiers engaged in actual warfare, with a view to knowing the extent to which the rules, so meticulously codified, were followed.

2. In the opening verse of *Guru Granth*, Guru Nanak lays down, amongst others, the three most important attributes of the Creator that went a long way in motivating his followers' conduct during war. These are: 'The Ultimate Reality is 1,' S/He is fearless and has no enmity.' The use of the numeral is deliberate and is meant to convey absolute oneness. **'It is not my one God' that the Guru believed in but the only One for all creation.** The effect of this belief translates into fearless combat in battlefield and humane treatment of the defeated. Guru Nanak's ideal devotee of the Divine is one who is so 'enthusiastic' about playing the 'game of love' that he is prepared to stake his life in the venture (to 'carry his head on the palm of his hand.') A person must think nothing of making the ultimate sacrifice while walking on the spiritual path. (*je tau prem khelan ka chaou sir dhar tali gali mori aao*).

3. The Guru expects his followers not to shirk battle for a worthy cause. The cause has been defined clearly. It is the Creator's Will that absolute justice should pervade all human institutions, that everyone must enjoy the freedom of worship and to preserve one's human dignity. This is the basis of the Sikh political thought in *Guru Granth*. Akalpurakh disapproves of oppression (*har jio hankar naa bhaaviee*) born of impulse of aggression. In his *Babarvani* verses, Guru Nanak expounds the theory that it is necessary for a spiritually oriented person to physically resist evil-doers. He denounces the Lodhis who failed to protect the women of Hind and its culture. The conclusion is that the devotees who strive for spiritual progress must resist oppression to express their love for Him. Physical resistance to evil is therefore necessary for a person having spiritual aspirations. This is the 'righteous cause' that must be pursued 'to the point of courting martyrdom (*mar se mansa sooria hak hai je hoe marahe parvano*).'

Defining the righteous cause more explicitly, Guru Arjun told Adit Soini, 'while engaged in battle, contemplate on Akalpurakh, Who destroys evil-doers; fight an ethical battle on behalf of the oppressed poor.'¹ The same idea is contained in the verses of Kabir included in the scripture. 'Truly brave is one who fights for the deprived,' says the Bhagat. (*soora so pehchanie jo lare deen ke het*). While engaged in this pious duty, the battlefield must never be abandoned. (*purja purja kat marai kbhun na chhade khet*).

4. We learn from literature other than the scripture that the succeeding Gurus blessed professional soldiers and encouraged them to develop the right kind of attitude towards warlike engagements. Guru Angad, the second Nanak, for instance, laid down an important rule of warfare when he told a military-man Mallu Shahi, 'do not initiate a quarrel with any one. If a battle is imposed upon you, do not give thought to whether you are well or ill equipped, enter the fray.'² While wanton aggression is never justified, it is immoral to avoid war 'at any cost.' But even when engaged in battle, the all-important discipline to conform to is that there should be no violence at heart. Guru Arjun advised Tiloka Suhar, who was a soldier in the Mughal army, 'do not be violent at heart but remain steadfast in your profession of a soldier'.³ Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Nanak, fighting a 'to the finish duel' with the Mughal commander Painda Khan on the battlefield, would not strike first or in anger. Mohsin Fani recalls an incident in which the Guru ward off an attacker and while dealing him a fatal blow calmly observed, 'this is how the sword is wielded.' He did not forget his primary duty of a teacher even in those grim circumstances. The related injunction is also derived from the famous letter *Zafarnamah* (in Persian), supposedly written by the Tenth Guru to Aurangzeb. The oft quoted couplet is to the effect, that 'when all peaceful strivings is of no avail, righteousness it is then to grasp the sword'. These sermons, prescriptions and acts became the basis of the firm stipulation that weapons were not to be taken up in anger or with aggressive intent and only in the last resort. They are reflected in the *Rehatnamas* put together by devoted Sikhs much later.⁴ In the Guru's eyes nothing makes the cause more worthy than the taking up of weapons only when every other possibility of getting justice is exhausted.

5. This attitude to war also implies humane treatment of prisoners of war, the injured, those who give up confrontation, non-combatants and the slain. The Tenth

Nanak, Gobind Singh specifically forbade the massacre of fleeing enemy. This injunction is based on the Sikh doctrine, that there is no 'other' among humans, as all derive origin from the same divine entity, the common Father/Mother of all. (*na ko bairi nahi begana sagal sang ham ko ban aiee: sab ko meet ham apna keena ham sabhna ke sajan*). It further says that evil is the result of misconception and wrong orientation of the human mind. People are intrinsically good, not bad. Once they abandon evil ways or cease to support evil causes, they must not be molested. Qazi Nur Muhammad records, 'they never kill a retreating foe.'⁵ Karl Marx thinks that the Sikhs failed to consolidate their victory over the British at Mudki on December 21, 1945 because they would not attack a defeated foe.⁶

6. An application of the rule relating to prisoners of war is documented again and again. George Forester records that the Afghan Prisoners of War were compelled to clean the mess they created at the shrine at Amritsar. But, "the Sikhs – set bounds to impulse of revenge and though the Afghan massacre and persecution must have been deeply imprinted on their minds, they did not, -- destroy one prisoner in cold blood."⁷ Rattan Singh Bhangu's father Rai Singh participated in a battle against Jahan Khan, the Afghan Governor of Sarhind, 'in the middle of November 1763 CE.' Rattan Singh has constructed the incidents that happened on the battlefields on the information received from his father. He says, 'the Singhs did not attack the enemy soldiers who abandoned their weapons. They sought no revenge for they were the personification of mercy.'⁸ When, after a duel with Guru Hagobind, Painda Khan, who was lying mortally wounded, repented, the merciful Guru took his head upon his lap and shielded the sun from his eyes saying, 'Painda it is time to repeat the '*kalmia*.' Painda Khan was overwhelmed by the gesture. His last words were, 'now Guru, your sword has become my *kalmia*.' In a battle against the King of Kahlur in about 1711 CE, the Sikh commander in chief Banda Singh Bahadur, issued a military order, 'do not pursue a retreating soldier.' At the conclusion of the same battle, Sikh soldiers dug graves and buried the thirteen hundred dead since now they were beyond enmity.⁹ This tradition dates at least from the time of Guru Gobind Singh who ordered a decent burial for the dead enemy after the battle of Mukatsar. The Sikh Commonwealth

faced the greatest danger from Maulvi Sayyid Ahmed Brailvi who, with the British support, led a Jihad against it (1831CE). His head was cut off by a Sikh soldier who presented it to Kanwar Sher Singh. He searched for the Sayyid's body, retrieved it from the battlefield, wrapped it in an expensive shawl and called a Maulvi to perform the last rites according to the Islamic custom. All his dead companions were honourably buried. Their leader received state honours.¹⁰

7. Guru Gobind Singh, encouraged medical treatment of the injured enemy, even in the field of battle. He went to the extent of organising a volunteer force headed by Bhai Kanheyia, in the closing years of the 17th century to pursue this injunction. A section of the Sikhs who continue with Bhai Kanheyia's work of serving others, are organised today as *Sewapanthis*.

8. In the above mentioned battle "Jahan Khan himself took to flight. All his camp equipage, relatives and dependants fell into the hands of the Sikhs. 'But as the Sikhs of old would not lay their hands on women,' says Ali-ud-Din, 'they sent them safely to Jammu.'¹¹ The wife of Jahan Khan was amongst the captured and it was on her wish that safe journey to Jammu was arranged. A little later, Sarbuland Khan the military commander of Rohtas was defeated and captured by Sardar Charhat Singh. "He was – treated with respect—as a highly placed Afghan official and as an uncle of Ahmed Shah. He was so pleased with the kindness he received at the hands of the Sardar, that he offered to serve under him as a governor if Charhat Singh were to proclaim himself a king. [Charat Singh informed him] 'kingship is already bestowed upon us by the Guru.' [The prisoner was] allowed to return to his country."¹²

9. Ideally from the Sikh point of view, warfare is a voluntary activity born of intense personal conviction. It is in this context that the war cry of '*jo bole so nhal, sat siri akal*,' ('every felicity is to him who volunteers to join up on hearing the cry of battle being waged for the cause of the Deathless') becomes meaningful. Nothing illustrates this point better than the history of celebrated martyrs like Bhai Tara Singh Wan, Gurbaksh Singh Nihang and others. According to Rattan Singh Bhangu, before the final battle in which death was assured, Tara Singh told his companions that those who wanted to escape could do so. Several went away. He also wrote to those who had promised to share with him

their last moments on earth of which, at least three came, joined him and eventually died along with him the next day. Shah Muhammad, recording the happenings relating to a crucial battle of the Anglo-Sikh war, recalls the resolve of the Khalsa army to the effect, 'now it is the privilege of the Khalsa to lead a frontal attack. Let not the poor (those who have joined the army for earning livelihood,) be pushed to the front.' (*kalghidhar de khalse hun hon moohre, agge hor garib na dhakkanai jee*). In many other situations similar conduct of the Sikh soldiers has been noted. In his last battle with the Indian army, Sant Jarnail Singh Khalsa in his characteristically humorous way, told those around him, 'it appears that at dawn we must make the last sortie. Death is assured. Those who desire to live are welcome to escape. Don't say afterwards that this *saadh* propelled us into the jaws of death (*pher na akhio es saadh ne sanoo marva ditta*).' Those who wanted to go were allowed to depart amicably. The writer of these lines has met at least four persons who had escaped after this pronouncement.

10. 'Totally devoted ones boldly face battle but the uninitiated run away from conflict,' says the *Guru Granth*. (*daage hoe so ran meh joojhai bin dage bhag jae*). This sentiment is echoed in the *Rehatnamas*, is prominent in the conduct of Sikh soldiers and has been mentioned by historians throughout the ages.¹³ That the Sikh soldier took his spiritual commitment seriously is also borne out by accounts of the Anglo—Sikh wars.¹⁴

11. Steadfastness in battle became the hallmark of the Sikh soldier. Sikh religious discipline prescribes that when he is fighting for Truth as he knows it, there is not an inch of the field that he can yield. (*purja purja kat marai kabhoon na chhade khet*). This was the tradition. Gurbaksh Singh Nihang faced the whole army of Ahmed Shah Abdali with just thirty companions. Of him and his companions, Bhangu says that they all died while advancing towards the enemy. He says the same of the forty martyrs of Muktsar who all fell while advancing in defence of the Guru. After the battle, the Guru assigned them honour after counting the steps that they had advanced from the central point of battle. Karl Marx instinctively knew that in the Khalsa armies, the British people were facing a different kind of a soldier. He thinks the British commander-in-chief's "asinine stupidity" was

responsible for the defeat of the British forces at Pherushahar. "Gough imagined he could do anything to the Sikhs, in the same way as to the easily frightened Hindus of the South, by charging them with bayonets."¹⁵ J. D. Cunningham who was present on the battlefield during the Anglo-Sikh wars observed about the British cavalry charge, "nor was it until the mass had been three times ridden through that the Sikhs dispersed. The charge was timely and bold; but the ground was more thickly strewn with the bodies of victorious horsemen than of the beaten infantry. The true Sikh was not easily cowed."¹⁶

12. The earliest time to which the existence of a fully developed Sikh war code is traceable is the time of Guru Gobind Singh. Bhai Santokh Singh, who did a considerable amount of research to write his popularly known *Suraj Prakash*, is certain that there existed a written code of conduct for the Sikhs participating in war. He refers to it as *gurshastra*. He specifically refers to one of its provisions, namely, that women were not to be molested under any circumstances. In this context, and as a measure particularly relevant to wartime situation, members of the Order of the Khalsa were forbidden to have intercourse with Muslim women as Muslims were the main enemies they were fighting at that time and their women were most likely to fall into the hands of the Khalsa. A conversation on the question of the ban is reported to have taken place between Guru Gobind Singh and a group of Sikhs. 'All the Sikhs assembled together to ask the 'source of all values'. Their question was: 'the Turks routinely rape women of Hind. Sikhs would be doing well to avenge this. Why does the Guru's code (*gurshastra*) prohibit molestation of women? Then, at that time, the True Guru spoke thus; I want the *panth* to scale (new moral) heights. I will not condemn it to depths of degradation.' It appears that these precepts were duly formally codified and strict adherence to them was stipulated as the Guru's wish – the strongest of all sanctions for a believing Sikh. Bhangu mentions that Banda Bahadur, appointed commander-in-chief of the Sikh forces by the Guru, used to repeat his general orders on the battlefield by the beat of drums everyday. One order that was repeated daily was, 'nobody is to touch ornaments on the person of a woman. Similarly, no man is to be divested of the clothes worn by him. More particularly, a person's turban was not to be removed.'¹⁷ Of course, it all started with Guru Nanak's deep anguish and distress over the rape of the women of Hind by the

invading armies of the Mughal Babur as depicted in the *babarvani* verses. (*paap ki janj lai kabulon dhaiya jori mange daan ve Lalo*).

13. There is another reference, which in spite of scepticism, suggests that a compendium of the Sikh war code perhaps existed at the time of Ranjit Singh. "—The Darbar under the guidance of Ranjit Singh framed certain regulations for the army. What these regulations were we cannot surmise; they have not outlived their authors, nor is it probable that they were ever recorded; but judging from the discipline of the Khalsa we may be inclined to think favourably of them."¹⁸

14. There are several independent observers who have noticed the strict code of warfare followed by the Sikhs throughout the centuries. Qazi Nur Muhammad notes of the Sikhs that 'they do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave-girl. Adultery also does not exist among—.'¹⁹ Griffin noted in his *Rajas of the Punjab*, "There are few stories in Sikh History of outrage to women and torture to men such as stain the pages of South Indian History with cruelty and blood."²⁰

15. Inspired by the Guru's injunctions, the Sikh soldiers were always moved by the plight of women and recorded incidents depict them as travelling hundreds of miles, courting danger and fighting bloody battles to rescue women in distress. Baghel Singh once rode to Lohari with his army on such a mission. Lohari was within an arms length of Delhi where the Mughal king still ruled. He rescued the woman, punished her tormentors and had her rehabilitated with the consent of her clan. His entire army donated cash to give her a parting present because she had by the act of being rescued by them, become the 'daughter of the entire *panth*.'

16. The most spectacular example of this chivalrous conduct at the mass level is the rescue of thousands of Maratha women being carried captive by Ahmed Shah Abdali after the Third Battle of Panipat in January 1761. The earliest historians who recorded it include Ram Sukh Rao the official historian of the ruling Ahluwalia family. It is mentioned by James Brown in his *History of the Origin and Progress of the Sikhs*, published in 1881.²¹ After their rescue, they were escorted to their homes in Maharashtra and restored to

their families in a soul stirring gesture depicting rare moral grandeur of monumental magnitude.

17. In the recent (1971) war against Pakistan for the liberation of Bangladesh, the Sikh soldiers came across women kept as sex slaves by Yahya Khan's army. They were often found without clothes (a measure to deter escape?). It is recorded that the Sikh soldiers of the invading victorious army, took off their turbans in a befitting tribute to human dignity, to cover the naked women. The tradition launched by the *gurshastra* has come down to the present day.

18. Sikh conventions appear also to have contained a provision that other non-combatants besides women were to be considered inviolable. "On December 10, 1710, (the Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah 1707-12) issued a royal edict to all the *faujdar*s (military commanders) of Shahjahanabad (Delhi) and its neighbourhood to put to the sword the worshippers of Nanak –the Sikhs- where ever found." (Nanak-prastan ra har ja kih ba-aband, ba-qatl rasanad)²² The Sikh reply to this order of general massacre of Sikhs is recorded by the royal news-writer who informed the Emperor on April 28, 1711, "that Banda Singh – - encamped at Kalanaur – had declared that he was in no way opposed to the Muslims and that they had the fullest liberty to recite their sermons and prayers – *khutba-o-namaz*. – The result of this was, the report continued, that as many as five thousand Muslims had joined the Sikh army."²³

19. Sikhs appear to have been instructed by the Guru to have a measure of reverence for the places considered holy by any tradition. They meticulously followed the instructions, although the Afghans and the Mughals had often destroyed Sikh shrines during the period of their political ascendancy. The holiest Sikh shrine at Amritsar was pulled down twice and defiled many times more. Yet when the first great Sikh upheaval under Banda Bahadur took place in around 1710 CE the Sikhs destroyed no place of worship. The Sikh armies gathered at Fatehgarh Sahib, the place where the younger sons of Guru Gobind Singh had been bricked alive, for the final assault on Sirhind. They were within a few hundred yards of the mausoleum of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhandi who had been the implacable foe of the Sikhs. Ideology emanating with him was responsible for the execution of two Gurus, the persecution of four and the execution of the

Guru's sons.²⁴ Shaikh Ahmed called himself the 'prophet of the second millennium' and received homage as such. Many princes of Afghanistan lie buried at the graveyard attached to his shrine. The Sikhs never thought of destroying or even despoiling his grave or the graves of their sworn enemies whom they knew to be despoilers of their land. Sirhind was destroyed totally and the land on which it stood was ploughed in revenge for the execution of little princes, the sons of Guru Gobind Singh, aged seven and nine years. It was considered to have forfeited the right to exist. The Shaikh's mausoleum stands fully intact even today.

20. It is also pretty clear that the destruction of common heritage of humankind, such as libraries, is not sanctioned by the Sikh war code. **In 1834, the Sikh forces were poised to attack Peshawar. Ranjit Singh gave emphatic written instructions to the invading General Hari Singh Nalwa that the famous library of the Akhunzadas of Chamkani was to be meticulously saved from harm.²⁵ The position may be contrasted with that of the Romans the most civilised of the ancient world, who burnt the priceless manuscripts at Alexandria, or with that of the Medieval Muslims who destroyed the rich library at Constantinople in 1453 and with that of the modern Indian state that burnt the Sikh Reference Library at Amritsar in 1984.**

Conclusion

Much has been written about the exploits of Sikh warriors. Historical accounts of battles and wars are abundant but there is woefully little research by way of discovering the war code which Sikhs followed. There are similarities in the conduct of Sikh soldiers throughout the centuries of warfare, that tell us that there existed a body of injunctions having the effect of law on the minds of soldiers who took their faith seriously. It is possible to say that it had spiritual discipline for its basis and was eventually derived from the *Guru Granth*. From Qazi Nur Muhammad to the press reporters chronicling the war for Bangladesh, a similarity of conduct on certain basic issues is noticed. It is challenging to trace the origin of instructions which are universally respected and have commanded spontaneous adherence in all ages.

The ultimate sanction behind exemplary conduct, expected of a soldier, was spiritual. A Sikh soldier was

consciously playing the role of Akalpurakh in human affairs. For that he had to be imbued with the qualities which the *gurbani* reveals to be His attributes. A Sikh's salvation depended upon implementing the Divine Will in the world. Its operative part dealt with removing human suffering by seeking to establish justice and by banishing oppression from human affairs. This is the meaning of the assertion that 'he is to be considered a brave knight who fights for the downtrodden' (*deen*). (*Guru Granth*, 1356).

The very opening verse of the *Guru Granth* states that the Ultimate Reality is 'fearless' and is 'without enmity.' While a soldier expected himself to be attuned to these concepts in daily life, he knew that in adversity and in war, the only measure of his conduct was living up to them. That was especially important for his spiritual self esteem. It constituted salvation itself. Until the coming into existence of the Sikh states, the Sikh armies were totally voluntary forces. Even after that a significant part of the army remained voluntary and unpaid. That had something to do with the war code voluntarily observed as a part of the strict spiritual discipline.

Most of original Sikh literature and history books written by the Sikhs have been destroyed. It was the first target of all their proselytising enemies. The process was started by Lakhpat Rai a satrap of Shah Nawaz, the Mughal Governor of Lahore in mid eighteenth century. He is reputed to have filled up wells with books on Sikh theology and history. The latest example of such wanton destruction was in 1984 when the invading Indian armies set fire to the Sikh Reference Library and burnt up thousands of invaluable manuscripts, some dating back to the early seventeenth century. **It is noteworthy that the library in the Darbar Sahib complex was burnt deliberately after the conflict with the militant defenders had come to a close with the death of all of them on June 6, 1984.**

Any study of the Sikh War Code will be incomplete without an in depth study of the Guru's concept of 'open diplomacy.' Of Helvetians, Julius Caesar observed, "The tradition in which they had been schooled by their forebears was to fight like men and not to rely on cunning or stratagem."²⁶ The same appears to have been true of the Sikhs and squares with the concept of 'open diplomacy' strictly enjoined upon the Khalsa by the Guru. The British were perceived to

be morally degraded deceiving strategists. Several accounts of the Anglo-Sikh wars depict that the ordinary Sikh soldier was full of contempt for their unethical behaviour. Earlier Ranjit Singh had told reverend Wolff, a German missionary, who said he had brought civilising tidings to the Punjab, 'why don't you go and preach in Calcutta? The Governor General and his cohorts are the only uncivilised people in India.'

Engaging in warfare is not the only activity the Khalsa is created for. The war without is to take place as a last resort measure. It is the war within that is to occupy a person most of his life. It is as unrelenting as the physical warfare. The five vices, desire, anger, greed, attachment and arrogance are to be completely subdued. It is a total war – to the very finish. Human birth is a rare opportunity. (*manas janam dulambh hai hoe na baram bar*). It cannot be wasted (*is pauri te jo nar chookai aai jai dukh paida*). Just, like the battle without, there is a code of conduct for the battle within.

There is also the discipline which is basically symbolised by the five symbols of faith bestowed upon the Khalsa by the compassionate Guru. With such equipment, the Khalsa must contend within and renew themselves like the bird of paradise with the help of the Guru's transforming touch. (*pasu prethon dev kare poorai satgut ki vadiai*). It is this that the *Rehatnamas* advocate while prescribing 'he alone is Khalsa who mounts a charger (in this case the human body) and is ever engaged in warfare.' (*Khalsa sou jo charhe turang, Khalsa sou jo kare nit jang*). At that plane, the only other worthwhile activity recommended to a seeker is *sewa* or selfless service to humankind in its myriad forms.

Notes

¹ Bhai Mani Singh, *Sikhan di Bhagatmala*, (circa 1730 CE) Khalsa Samachar, Amritsar, 1955, 136.

² *Bhagatmala*, 67

³ *Bhagatmala*, 84.

⁴ See for instance, Randhir Singh, *Prem Sumarg Granth*, (circa 1730 CE) New Book Company, Jalandhar, 1965, 90.

⁵ *Karam Singh Historian di Itihasik Khoj*, Hira Singh Darad (ed.), Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Amritsar, 1964, 97-99, 455-508.

⁶ See, *Notes on Indian History*, Foreign Languages Publishing House, Moscow, Undated, 144.

⁷ *A Journey from Bengal to England*, (First Published 1808) Reprint, Languages Department Punjab, 1970, 321

⁸ See *Prachin Panth Parkash*, Sikh Itihas Research Board,

Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Sri Amritsar, 1984, 501.

⁹ Bhangu, 164.

¹⁰ Shamsheer Singh Ashok, Veer Nayak Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, p.76.

¹¹ Ganda Singh, (quoting *Ibrat Namah*, 274-275 in) *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959.290. and Hari Ram Gupta, 198.

¹² Ganda Singh, 295. In the same work, Ganda Singh also quotes Abdali as writing to Amir Naseer Khan his Bloach ally to goad him into holy war against the Sikhs, "how can you think of going to Mecca while this depraved sect is wreaking havoc? Jihad on these idolators -- is more meritorious than Hajj. --- come so that we may destroy this faithless sect and enslave their women and children --- fatwa of the Ulema has already been issued --." *Ahmed Shah Durrani*, p. 296.

¹³ *Rehatnama Bhai Nandlal*, for instance, has the instructions: 1) A Sikh, "should never run away from the battlefield and steadfastly stick to his Dharma." 2) He should never forsake the discipline and should always face the enemy in the battlefield and should never turn his back." Surinder Singh Kohli, *Sikh Ethics*, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., New Delhi, 1975, 71 and 72.

¹⁴ "—Yet, although assailed on either side by squadrons of horse and battalions of foot, no Sikh offered to submit, and no disciple of Gobind asked for quarter. They everywhere showed a front to their victors, and stalked slowly and sullenly away, while many rushed singly forth to meet assured death by contending with a multitude. The victors looked with stolid wonderment upon the indomitable courage of the vanquished, --." Joseph Davy Cunningham, *A History of the Sikhs*, (1849), S. Chand & Co., Delhi, 1966, 284-285.

¹⁵ *Notes on Indian History*, 144.

¹⁶ *History of The Sikhs*, 277, 276.

¹⁷ Bhangu, 166.

¹⁸ See Dewan Amarnath, *Memoirs of the Reign of Ranjit Singh*, reproduced in *Rare Documents on Sikhs and their rule in the Punjab*, (Ed. H. S. Bhatia), Deep & Deep Publications, New Delhi, 1981, p.151.

¹⁹ Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs*, vol. II, (4th edition), Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 1992, 266.

²⁰ Quoted by Gupta, 271.

²¹ See, Ganda Singh, *Ahmed Shah Durrani- Father of Modern Afghanistan*, Asia Publishing House, Bombay, 1959, p. 264; see also, Hari Ram Gupta, *History of the Sikhs* Vol.II, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt Ltd, 1992, 168.

²² Ganda Singh (Ed.), *The Punjab Past and Present* October 1984, Punjabi University, Patiala, 6.

²³ Ganda Singh, "Sirhind in the eighteenth century", in *Sirhind Through the Ages*, Fauja Singh (ed.), Punjabi University, Patiala, September 1972, 104-105.

²⁴ Kapur Singh, *Sachi Sakhi*, Navyug Publishers, Delhi, 1979, 30-37. See also S. M. Ikram and S. A. Rashid's *History of Muslim Civilisation in India & Pakistan*, quoted in Fauja Singh's, *Sirhind Through the Ages*, 60. "The rhetoric and appeal of Shaikh Ahmed's letters kindled religious fervour and resulted in a religious revival -- which completely altered the history of the sub-continent".

²⁵ Prem Singh Hoti, *Khalsa Raj de Usraiye*, (3rd ed.) Lahore Book Shop, Lahore, 1942, 36.

²⁶ *Gallic Wars And Other Writings*, Random House Inc., New York, 1957, 8.

THE CONCEPT OF WELFARE OF ALL IN GURBANI

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Religion teaches love and sympathy for the welfare of mankind, still the world today is torn by enmity and religious hatred. A lasting and peaceful society is impossible unless we follow the path shown by our holy scriptures. SGGS, a model for inter- religious understanding teaches mutual respect , toleration and harmony. It guides us not only in spiritual matters but also teaches us to work for the welfare of all so that a balanced society may develop. The Sikh Gurus aimed at the uplift of humanity without any discrimination. Many sacred hymns advise us to try for the welfare of all. Guru Nanak Dev traveled far and wide for 24 years for the welfare of all and started the practice of common kitchen (*Langar*) keeping in view the welfare of all. **Gurbani lovers pray for the welfare of all in their daily prayers.** In one of his hymns Guru Amar Dass jee also begs God to save all:

ਜਗਤੁ ਜਲੰਦਾ ਰਖਿ ਲੈ ਆਪਣੀ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਧਾਰਿ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੫੩)

"The world is going up in flames - shower it with Your Mercy, and save it!"

According to the teachings of SGGS, we all are the creation of One God. Sikh Gurus preached the philosophy of one God. So teaching of Gurbani induces us to act for the welfare of all. We must not treat anybody as a stranger when we are so closely related and we should always work for the welfare of others without thinking of caste or creed of others. Guru Nanak Dev treated all human beings as his relatives and created an atmosphere for world-reconciliation. All the Sikh Gurus were large hearted and not narrow minded. Guru Arjan Dev's egalitarian approach is evident from the fact that he incorporated the compositions of all men of God, who believed in one God and welfare of all, in the SGGS. He did not mind their caste, creed, profession or religion and treated all equally. Among them Kabir was a weaver, Sadhna was a butcher, Namdev a tailor, Dhana a farmer, Sain a barber, Ravidas a cobbler, Farid a Muslim Sufi ...:

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ॥ਤਿਸ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ॥(ਪੰਨਾ੧੩)

"Amongst all is the Light-You are that Light. By this

Illumination, that Light is radiant within all.”

ਤੂੰ ਸਾਝਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਬਾਪੁ ਹਮਾਰਾ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੯੭)

“You are the Universal Father of all, O my Lord and Master.”

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਤੂ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰ ਹਾਈ ।।(ਪੰਨਾ ੬੧੧)

“The One God is our father; we are the children of the One God. We have the same Guru”

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਕਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਏਕ ।।(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੫੮)

“Hindus and Muslims have the same One Lord and Master.”

ਏਕ ਨੂਰ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਕਉਨ ਭਲੇ ਕੋ ਮੰਦੇ ।।(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੪੯)

“From the One Light, the entire universe welled up. So who is good, and who is bad?”

Gurbani teaches us to get rid of greed, share with the needy and do selfless service for the welfare of all. Greed makes us selfish and spoils our social life. We see many persons who act upon the teachings of Gurbani rendering selfless service to the people who suffered due to earthquake, flood and other calamities in different countries. Selfless service gives us piece of mind and comfort in both the worlds:

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੨੬)

“In the midst of this world, do seva, and you shall be given a place of honor in the Court of the Lord.”

ਖਾਵਹਿ ਖਰਚਹਿ ਰਲਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਭਾਈ ॥ਤੋਟਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਵਧਦੇ ਜਾਈ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੮੬)

“The Siblings of Destiny meet together, and eat and spend, but these resources do not diminish; they continue to increase.”

ਲਬੁ ਵਿਣਾਹੇ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਣੀ ਬੂਰੁ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੯੬੭)

“Greed ruins mankind, like the green algae in the water.”

ਲਬੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਤਜਿ ਹੋਹੁ ਨਿਚਿੰਦਾ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੪੧)

“Renounce greed and possessiveness, and become carefree.”

Welfare of all is possible only if we love others and do not entertain ill feeling towards anybody. Gurbani directs us not to do or even think ill of others so that the society may develop evenly. Enmity and ill feelings spoil our peace of mind also:

ਪਰ ਕਾ ਬੁਰਾ ਨ ਰਾਖਹੁ ਚੀਤ ।।ਤੁਮ ਕਉ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਮੀਤ ।।(ਪੰਨਾ ੩੮੬)

“Do not harbor evil intentions against others in your mind, and you shall not be troubled, O Siblings of Destiny, O friends.”

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਮੇਰਾ ਦੁਸਮਨੁ ਰਹਿਆ ਨਾ ਹਮ ਕਿਸ ਕੇ ਬੈਰਾਈ ।।(ਪੰਨਾ ੬੭੧)

“No one is my enemy, and I am no one's enemy.”

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ।।ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੯੯

“No one is my enemy, and no one is a stranger. I get along with everyone”.

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਬੁਰੇ ਦਾ ਭਲਾ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਸਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਹਢਾਇ ॥

ਦੇਹੀ ਰੋਗੁ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਪਲੈ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇ ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੮੧)

“Fareed, answer evil with goodness; do not fill your mind with anger. Your body shall not suffer from any disease, and you shall obtain everything.”

Gurbani does not teach discrimination on the basis of religion, color, caste or creed. According to the teachings of SGGS, it is a sin to be proud of caste, color creed or religion. Guru Nanak did not believe in the false barriers of religions and rigidities of caste. He belonged to a high caste, but he calls himself low in the hymns uttered by him and loves those who belong to backward classes. Teachings of Gurbani are meant for all. Gurbani strongly pleads for an egalitarian society where all people could be regarded as equals. Quotations given below show that **Gurbani teaches equality:**

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੫)

“Nanak seeks the company of the lowest of the low class, the very lowest of the low. Why should he try to compete with the great?”

ਜਾਤੀ ਦੈ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਸਚੁ ਪਰਖੀਐ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੨)

“What good is social class and status? Truthfulness is measured within.”

ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਸੂਦ ਵੈਸ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ਚਹੁ ਵਰਨਾ ਕਉ ਸਾਝਾ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੭੪੭)

“The four castes - the Kh'shaatriyas, Brahmins, Soodras and Vaishyas - are equal in respect to the teachings.” ਸਾ ਜਾਤਿ ਸਾ ਪਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੇਹੇ ਕਰਮ ਕਮਾਇ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੩੦)

“That is your social class and that is your status - the karma of what you have done.”

Equal treatment of both the sexes is also needed for

the welfare of human beings. Gurbani directs us to treat both male and female equally. Guru Nanak Dev is the only religious guide who has raised his voice and written many sacred hymns to protect the rights of women. SGGS is the only holy scripture that contains many hymns in favor of women. Guru Amar Daas also condemns the cruel custom of *Satee*, a widow burning herself alive on her husband's funeral pyre, as it is against the equal rights of women:

ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥ਪੰਨਾ੪੭੩

“When his woman dies, her husband seeks another woman; to woman he is bound. So why call her bad? From her, kings are born. From woman, woman is born; without woman, there would be no one at all. O Nanak, only the True Lord is without a woman.”

ਸਤੀਆ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਜੋ ਮਤਿਆ ਲਗਿ ਜਲੰਨਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤੀਆ ਜਾਣੀਅਨਿ ਜਿ ਬਿਰਹੇ ਚੋਟ ਮਰੰਨਿ ॥ਪੰਨਾ੭੮੭

“Do not call them 'satee', who burn themselves along with their husbands' corpses. O Nanak, they alone are known as 'satee', who die from the shock of separation.”

Gurbani lays great stress on high character as it is required for the welfare of all. A characterless and selfish man will usurp the rights of others to become rich and will not care for the welfare of others. One who believes in the teachings of SGGS will never tell a lie or take what does not belong to him. He will never do injustice to others:

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੬੨)

“Truth is higher than everything; but higher still is truthful living.”

ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥ ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੧)

“To take what rightfully belongs to another, is like a Muslim eating pork, or a Hindu eating beef. Our Guru, our Spiritual Guide, stands by us if we do not usurp the rights of others”

Gurbani teaches us to have the virtues of patience, humility and sweet tongue. These qualities are badly needed for the welfare of all human beings. Our harsh words hurt others and also spoil our peace of

mind. Ego and impatience do not allow us to treat others equally and think of welfare of others:

ਨਾਨਕ ਫਿਕੈ ਬੋਲਿਐ ਤਨੁ ਮਨੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਹੋਇ ॥ਫਿਕੈ ਫਿਕਾ ਸਦੀਐ ਫਿਕੈ ਫਿਕੀ ਸੋਇ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ੪੭੩)

“O Nanak, speaking insipid words, the body and mind become insipid. He is called the most insipid of the insipid; the most insipid of the insipid is his reputation.”

ਆਪੁ ਗਵਾਇ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੇ ਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਏ ਮਾਨੁ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੪੭੪)

“But if he eliminates his self-conceit and then performs service, he shall be honored.”

ਫਰੀਦਾ ਜੋ ਤੈ ਮਾਰਨਿ ਮੁਕੀਆ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਨ ਮਾਰੇ ਘੁੰਮਿ ॥

ਆਪਨੜੈ ਘਰਿ ਜਾਈਐ ਪੈਰ ਤਿਨ੍ਹਾ ਦੇ ਚੁੰਮਿ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੩੭੮)

“Fareed, do not turn around and strike those who strike you with their fists. Kiss their feet, and return to your own home.”

ਇਕੁ ਫਿਕਾ ਨ ਗਲਾਇ ਸਭਨਾ ਮੈ ਸਚਾ ਧਣੀ ॥ਹਿਆਉ ਨ ਕੈਰੀ ਠਾਹਿ ਮਾਣਕ ਸਭ ਅਮੋਲਵੇ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ੧੩੮੪)

“Do not utter even a single harsh word; your True Lord and Master abides in all. Do not break anyone's heart; these are all priceless jewels.”

It does not mean that we should lose our self respect for the sake of welfare of others. Guru Tegh Bahadar has rightly said that we should neither frighten anyone nor be afraid of any body. If we follow this principle, it will lead us to the welfare of human beings:

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੪੨੭)

“One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else - says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise.”

But there are very few human beings in this world who follow the teachings of Gurbani and try sincerely for the noble mission of welfare of all. They make their lives worth living:

ਐਸੇ ਜਨ ਵਿਰਲੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੇ ॥ਗੁਰ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਹਿ ਰਹਹਿ ਨਿਚਾਰੇ ॥

ਆਪਿ ਤਰਹਿ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕੁਲ ਤਾਰਹਿ ਤਿਨ ਸਫਲ ਜਨਮੁ ਜਗਿ ਆਇਆ ॥(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੩੬)

“Rare are those beings in this world, who contemplate the Word of the Guru's Shabad, and remain detached. They save themselves, and save all their associates and ancestors; fruitful is their birth and coming into this world.”

DR. AMBEDKAR: MY HERO CAN WE RESURRECT HIM?

G.B. Singh

How should we celebrate Dr. Ambedkar considering that he passed away about 55 years ago and would have been 120 years old if alive today? Should we dance and distribute sweets just as we celebrate our children's birthdays? Or just get drunk to set up the mood for more carnival. Or should we recite prayers and meditate just as we carry out these protocols in a religious function? Or should we raise slogans, which often are meaningless, just as we attend any given political rally? The choice is yours and you are ingenious enough to come up with more ways. I believe, Dr. Ambedkar deserves something far better---and that is, a true reflection on his life and the great lessons we learn from this great person. My lecture is geared in this direction.

How was I introduced to Dr. Ambedkar? I was barely two years old when Dr. Ambedkar passed away in 1956. To the best of my memory, it was in high school that my teacher mentioned the name of Dr. Ambedkar and that too in quick passing reference to "*Bharat ka Swidhan*," meaning the Constitution of India.

The second time Dr. Ambedkar's name touched my ears was in 1987. At this time I was stationed at a U.S. military post located adjoining Augusta, Georgia. I befriended a local Sikh family who were kind enough to share with me their family history to include the story of their grandfather named Master Sujan Singh originally of village Sirhali in Punjab. I learned that in 1936-37, Master Sujan Singh was the point person to lead arrangements to initiate Dr. Ambedkar and his close followers into the Sikh faith. Mind you this event was arranged at the behest of Dr. Ambedkar. Aside from those few associates, Dr. Ambedkar did not arrive at the pre-arranged agreed upon location. Once Master Sujan Singh contacted Dr. Ambedkar, he was himself shocked to learn what Ambedkar told him: Mahatma Gandhi did not approve of this attempt to conversion and had forbidden Dr. Ambedkar to embrace Sikhism. Wow!

Mind you by this time in 1987, I was well into in my fourth year of critically researching M.K. Gandhi. I must acknowledge this relatively unknown story of Dr. Ambedkar's past transformed the "unknown

Ambedkar" to the forefronts in my consciousness with grounds for continuing research.

Moving fast forward, my Dalit brother, Dr. Velu Annamalai autographed me a copy of "*The Buddha & His Dhamma*" in January 1997. Reading this book, frankly speaking, stunned me, and I intend to share with you a bit later as to why?

Honorable members of the Ambedkar Foundation,
And Ladies & Gentlemen, Welcome

Let us commemorate the 120th birth anniversary of Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, my hero, your hero, and therefore our hero---lovingly called as "BHIM" a term equivalent to a Western figure better known as "Hercules."

Today we assemble here to celebrate this great man---a man born and raised as Untouchable who rose to the mountain top acquiring higher education.

Today we get together here to seek inspiration. This man continues to challenge us to fight for the social causes that we hold so dear!

Today we assemble here to honor this great being and to embark on a learning experience about Babasaheb's Legacy of Activism.

Today, it's also our day to reflect back and search for something of value that we have so stubbornly ignored and addressed in order for us to avert the "mistakes" that our great Babasaheb fell into.

Today it's also our day that we take concrete measures; we organize ourselves with pinpointed objectives in mind and pursue our activisms to bring freedom to the Dalits of India and undo the "collaborative mistakes" that Dr. Ambedkar's name is closely associated with. This is a monumental responsibility on our shoulders as we begin to navigate and chalk out the future. Only those who are free and enlightened can guide this movement.

Let me ask you a question: What makes our Babasaheb great? Why do we look up to him? Why does he inspire us? I am sure each one of us has a different answer and I will share with you my take on it.

Let us cast a critical look at the 20th century covering both the British-India and Post British-India. Can we name those who were intellectual giants, great

thinkers? Strangely in my calculation, I can count only four:

Nirad C. Chaudhuri, (1897—1999)
B. R. Ambedkar, (1891—1956)
Prem Nath Bazaz, (1905—1984) and
V. R. Narla, (1908—1985).

Mr. Chaudhuri left India for settling in UK in the early 1950s and thereby abdicated sign of any intellectual movement left behind. Both Mr. Bazaz and Mr. Narla belonged to the Indian version of the secular humanist movement, and regrettably today that movement is on its last legs. Only Babasaheb's movement is still alive today and I am not sure of its future given the realities of Ambedkarites and others. In other words, for all practical purposes, Dr. Ambedkar was the sole intellectual giant of the 20th century India and that is my **first** answer to why he is great.

The **Second** reason of his greatness points to his academic education. Think of the early years of the last century. Here is a man who earned degrees from University of Bombay, University of London, Ivy League Columbia University, and Gray's Inn. His earned degrees ranged from MA, Ph.D. D.Sc. and of course Barrister-at-law. This list of impressive accomplishments doesn't include the honorary degrees. Almost hundred years later, do you know anyone who can beat Babasaheb's record academically? To date our hero remains the most educated Indian that I know of.

The **Third** and the most powerful reason why I regard Babasaheb as truly a giant figure is this: His Legacy of Activism. Before I delve deeper on this point, let me share with you my deep held belief. You see people ask me why I care so much about the Untouchables of India. My answer is not easy because it is intertwined in the history of my Sikh faith in addition to my own individual growth. Historically I have come to realize that Babasaheb is the first person to devote his life to protecting the Dalit population after the advent of the Sikh Gurus. What is so breathtaking is to face the history of roughly 200 years of Sikh Guru's activism destroying the caste ideology and uplifting the Dalits.

Allow me to elaborate on the pivotal features of Babasaheb's singular Legacy of Activism:

- Protesting and leading the rallies on the streets

- Public burning of *Manusmriti*, the most important scripture among all the Dharmashastras.
- Organizing and educating the Dalits-at-large.
- Casting critical reviews against some of the Hindu scriptures—mainly in the areas of the caste and its toxic effects on the Untouchables. His scholarship on Hinduism has inspired me to undertake more rigorous analysis of Hinduism. I fully recognize, perhaps because of time restraints Babasaheb had little or none time left to pursuit delving into the *Darshanas* (erroneously referred to as Hindu philosophy) and the subject matter of yoga, truly a phenomenon nothing less than Hinduism's inner spirituality.
- Mounting a nonviolent resistance to M.K. Gandhi and his politics whose objective was well calculated to misleading the world on the issues of caste, and polishing his own messianic image.
- Mounting a resistance campaign against Gandhi in order to protect the Untouchables from a relentless propaganda designed to fool them.
- Writings books and articles to educate the world on the nature of Gandhi politics. "*What Gandhi and Congress Have Done to the Untouchables*" is by far the best scholarly work to that direction.
- Organizing campaigns to fight against Hindu orthodoxy.
- Putting out alerts on the Congress Party under the Brahmanism control.
- In the 32 years of Gandhi's history in India (1915-1948), Dr. Ambedkar is the sole person who embarked on a nonviolent resistance against Gandhi. This is starkly different from that of Muhammad Ali Jinnah whose campaign against Gandhi-inspired politics in the latter years turned deadly and soon thereafter led to the founding of Pakistan.

Because I conduct researches not to exclude political India, and largely because of my own emotional attachment with the Dalits, I think the time has matured at least to broach the subject of casting a critical eye on our revered Babasaheb's life. Why? Because those of us who adore him also have a duty to learn from his "mistakes," so

that we don't condemn ourselves in repeating them, and if Dalits aspire to progress significantly then it's logical and imperative for us to learn valuable lessons from those "mistakes." Had Dr. Ambedkar been sitting here, I believe he himself would have encouraged me to undertake a project to reflect on his past. That is precisely what I have done and today I present to you my analysis under the label, "Politics of Collaboration."

Politics of Collaboration spanned roughly 9 years from 1947 to 1956. Baffling that it is Babasaheb turned about-face suddenly transforming his legacy of activism into politics of collaboration with the persecutors. Here is a run-down:

Constitution of India: How many of us credit Dr. Ambedkar as the architect of this document? How many of us have read it? How many of us have seen what it looks like? Yes it is that *Blue Book*, the "replica" of British colonial Dyarchy government structure in which:

- Individual freedom rights are not guaranteed.
- There is no requirement for the government of India to be elected.
- Worst of all, the political power has been invested in the hands of those who inherited the power from the British.
- You might say gleefully that at least Untouchability was abolished via Article 17. Think about it again! The constitution never touched the sanctity (or un-sanctity) of the caste system and this alleged abolition of untouchability is highly diluted. Moreover, the Constitution never told us what "untouchability" is.
- Some even pay tribute to Babasaheb for codifying the affirmative action plan in the constitution which helped many Untouchables to move up the ladder. This is true partly. What is forgotten here is that it was the British who actually put in motion this policy of block reservations.
- Here is another issue to ponder: According to Article 25, Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists are declared as Hindus. It appears at the outset that this constitutional genocide had a full consent of Dr. Ambedkar whom you know was the chairman of the drafting

committee that apparently wrote the constitution. In more recent times, Jains have legally challenged the validity of this Article but lost their case in India's Supreme Court. You should know that Sikhs have never been shy of openly expressing their distrust of this particular clause not to mention of their systemic disgust directed at the unitary nature of the concentration of powers invested with the central government.

Hindu Code Bills: Under the stewardship of Babasaheb as India's first Minister of Law, there were four Hindu personal bills introduced and later enacted into laws; namely (1) Hindu Marriage and Divorce Act (1955); (2) Hindu Succession Act (1956); (3) Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act (1956); and (4) Hindu Adoption and Maintenance Act (1956). I am not here to discuss the merits or demerits of these laws. What I am bringing to your attention is the new encoded definition of Hindu: "Any Indian who was not a Muslim, Parsi, Christian, or Jew."

My friends let it be clear that from the evidence at hand it seems Dr. Ambedkar had no qualms when he consented to declaring Sikhs, Jains, and Buddhists as Hindus. He also made it clear those followers of Semitic religions are to be labeled as **not-Hindus**. I must be honest to you that by his actions as the Minister of Law, Babasaheb declared Untouchables as Hindus. It is quite apparent and I believe you will agree with me that these actions of Babasaheb need a full scope of investigation. It's almost saying that the man who championed various causes via his legacy of activism present as radically a different being when he joined hands with the persecutors and opted to be their front-man thereby potentially undermining his entire legacy of activism. For those of us who love him, the question arises: How can we explain Babasaheb's collaboration and its impact? What was the need to codify through the constitution and then through the laws the *modern Hinduism's* imperialistic designs to evaporate the identities of Indian-based religious and ethnic minorities?

After leaving Nehru's cabinet in early 1950s, Dr. Ambedkar sought entry into the Lok-Sabha but lost elections at least twice. However, he did enter the Rajya-Sabha membership and stayed there until his

death. We know that in October 1956, Babasaheb formally converted to Buddhist religion. Honestly I respect Dr. Ambedkar's decision but I am baffled. How could he convert to Buddhism as another religion away from Hinduism when in fact he himself codified into the law that Buddhists are Hindus? In my calculation, Dr. Ambedkar's conversion doesn't make sense. Barely two months later, in December 1956, Babasaheb passed away. Thereafter, almost a year later in 1957, "*The Buddha and His Dhamma*" was published with Ambedkar as its author. As I told you earlier, I read this book in 1997 which truly left me dumbfounded. You see I have exhausted many years of my life reading and analyzing religious scriptures to include those of Buddhism. The contents of "*The Buddha and His Dhamma*" just didn't tally with the Buddhist scriptures, not to mention of other errors. For a man like me who loves to read Dr. Ambedkar's critical scholarship, I found myself wondering and questioning the authenticity of "*The Buddha & his Dhamma*." Is there a mystery that needs to be resolved? Perhaps!

Earlier I mentioned the name of Prem Nath Bazaz, a secular humanist. In his 1975 published book "*The Role of Bhagavad Gita in Indian History*," Mr. Bazaz wrote a riveting paragraph on Babasaheb's own assessment of his past actions. This exact date of this confession is unknown to me but it's safer to assume it was uttered in the last months of his life. Babasaheb confessed: "I was a hack. What I was asked to do, I did much against my will." In other words Babasaheb is saying that he worked as a paid agent for the Hindu elite and did everything possible to unfurl their political and religious designs especially against the religious minorities. Mr. Bazaz continued further with Ambedkar's confession: "My friends tell me that I made the Constitution. But I am quite prepared to say that I shall be the first person to burn it out. I do not want it. It does not suit anybody."

Now you have to ask yourself: Being a "self-confessed agent," is it feasible that Dr. Ambedkar converted to Buddhism just to please his masters? I recognize that it's a difficult question. Could it be that his earlier prophecy "**I was born a Hindu, but I will not die a Hindu**" set him up by his Hindu masters to hoodwink us into believing prophecy coming to fulfillment? If Babasaheb did not author "*The Buddha & his Dhamma*," then is it plausible we have a case of caste manipulators in the background who were in fact its

real author? When you read this book carefully you will find that it is a replica of the *modern Hinduism's* agenda and in all likelihood Ambedkar was playing right into their hands.

The large discrepancy between the legacy of activism and the politics of collaboration is disturbing and there are these following other possible answers being tossed around:

- Velu Annamalai once suggested to me that Ambedkar was one-man force in the midst of powerful sharks. Therefore accordingly Babasaheb was won over by the sweet-talking Congress Party leaders. This explanation is not fully convincing. I know Akali leaders—uneducated that they were—buckled and melted like butter under the load of sweet-talking Gandhians. But given Dr. Ambedkar's track record of hard-nose confrontations, it's hard for me to accept this explanation.
- Another explanation is that Babasaheb was horrified at the bloody events perpetrated by the 1947 partition of British-India, and that extenuating circumstances prompted Dr. Ambedkar to extend a friendship hand to the Caste elites for the sake of peaceful coexistence. This explanation has some merits but still falls short.
- Another explanation put forth is that the Caste elites promised a better treatment of the Untouchables especially through reserved quota system and that mollified Dr. Ambedkar. There is even a merit to this hypothesis and if true then Babasaheb was as gullible as were the Akali leaders. We know for sure Babasaheb was far more intelligent than those Akali leaders to become an accomplice with the persecutors.
- I believe there is another compelling argument. During the last at least 10 years of Ambedkar's life, I understand he suffered from uncontrolled bouts of Diabetes Mellitus. Along with that there is a report that he was admitted to hospital for clinical depression for a few months plus a few more of consequential ailments. I think Babasaheb's deteriorating health may explain his baffling actions. There is no doubt that his impaired judgments are possibly linked to his vulnerability to gravitate towards the crafty

Hindu leaders thereby turning him into their ready-made agent.

Question arises: Did Dr. Ambedkar really convert to Buddhism after a thorough reading and analysis of the Buddhist scriptures? I will let you ponder over this question but before you begin that let me introduce you to Bishop Pickett. Jarrel Waskom Pickett (1890-1981) was the Bishop of Bombay in the Methodist Church. His career in Bombay started and paralleled to that of Dr. Ambedkar's campaign of activism in Bombay. Both of them became close friends to the point that they would pray together in the Church. Also Bishop Pickett had another motive and that was to formally convert Babasaheb into Christianity. Nonetheless he failed and left India for USA in 1956 on a day that newspapers aired the news of Dr. Ambedkar's death. In accordance with his 1980 published book, *"My Twentieth Century Odyssey"* I learned that the Bishop met Dr. Ambedkar soon after he had converted to Buddhism. In this last conversation, Dr. Ambedkar asked the Bishop if he had lost hope for his acceptance of Christ. The Bishop replied, "No I am still praying for you." To this Ambedkar said, "Please keep it up. I am not yet satisfied, and may still ask you to baptize me and admit me to the Methodist Church." Shortly after this exchange Babasaheb died of a heart attack. Now you may ask: Can we trust Bishop Pickett's comments? You see I have pondered over this question for many years. After due deliberation and evaluation I place a "high confidence" value to the writings of the Bishop.

Whether Dr. Ambedkar truly opted to embrace Christianity, Sikhism, or any other religion, or no religion at all, is not the core of my presentation. I simply want to bring to your attention that when it comes to adopting a religion different from that of Hinduism, we should exercise caution before rendering a final judgment on Babasaheb.

How do we rescue Dr. Ambedkar? How do we resurrect him? Given what I have presented to you, may I take the liberty in saying that the future of Dalits is gloomy, and is not likely to change for better given the ground realities in India, complicated and confused by the impact of Dr. Ambedkar's politics of collaboration. This assessment is true unless we change, learn from the past and chart out new ideas to navigate the future. Given my unquestioned love and respect for Babasaheb, and a

drive to protect the Dalit population, I am going to layout some pointers for you to think about:

1. Both Sikhs and Dalits join hands. They both should know that they are linked together at their roots and they cannot exist separate from each other. This is important considering the events of 1920s and 1930s where Gandhi was successful in distancing Sikhs and Dalits away from each other. Why? The answer is simple: The Hindu elites have known for all along that the revolutionary spirit of Sikhism is bound to unleash freedom to the Untouchables. And the best maneuver to keep Untouchables and other Sudras within the fold of Hinduism is to isolate them from Sikhism. Today it is incumbent upon the entire Untouchable and Sudra population to defeat the Gandhian machinations still-at-work.
2. Strengthen your ties with "Organization for Minorities of India" (OFMI). It is my understanding you already have jointly protested at the Gandhi march and at the Gandhi statue in San Francisco. Last year OFMI members flushed out the Gandhi promoters in their bid to install Gandhi statue in Sacramento, CA. And more recently California Legislature issued a proclamation honoring Babasaheb. This is great. OFMI has great potentials; keep going and expand your activities to include branches of OFMI in many parts of India and overseas.
3. Stop reanimating Babasaheb by promoting him as messiah. And let's start understanding the troubling end-years of his life.
4. Stop proclaiming Dr. Ambedkar's image as an architect of Indian constitution. It is disheartening to watch Babasaheb's close followers undermining our hero.
5. Stop the propaganda of projecting Dr. Ambedkar along with the image of Buddha and then promoting both of them in the same breath of religious indoctrination. Even though this lecture is not on Buddhism, but still it's not out of place to put an alert on how to read Buddhism: "Buddhism is incomprehensible without the yogic methods of concentration and meditation." This statement comes from the writings of Mircea Eliade (1907--1986) a great scholar of religions. Another renowned French scholar Emile Senart (1847-1928) wrote as early as 1900 in one of his many books, *Bouddhisme et. Yoga* that Buddha did not repudiate the Indian ascetic and contemplative traditions as a whole, he enhanced them: "It was on the soil of yoga that Buddha was

brought up, whatever new elements he might have been able to infuse into it, it was the world of yoga in which his thinking was shaped.” As you know I am writing a book on yoga and I happen to agree with these two assessments on Buddhism. As a cursory note I might add here that when you browse through *“The Buddha & His Dhamma,”* the word “Yoga” appears twice only—one of which is part of a chapter heading. In other words, what we know of yoga and its centrality in the understanding of Buddhism is entirely missing in *“The Buddha & his Dhamma.”*

6. Brainstorm and gather up strategies on how to undo and find solutions towards the actions of our Babasaheb during his end years of collaboration, not to exclude that notorious Constitution of India.

7. Create a new organization with scholars from various backgrounds to conduct skeptical inquiry into the last 10 years of Babasaheb’s life, not to exclude his conversion to Buddhism and the publication of *“The Buddha & his Dhamma.”* It’s also high time to learn what real Buddhism is all about. I am available to guide you in any manner possible.

8. We must come up with strategies to undermine the Constitution of India and delink that document from the name of Dr. Ambedkar. Thanks to Mr. M.R. Paul, I have learned that the statement of Dr. Ambedkar where he himself disowned his allegiance to the Constitution was uttered on September 2, 1956 during the debates held at the Rajya-Sabha. Here is a good example on Babasaheb’s character strength: Just three months before his death he disowned the Constitution. By his statement it’s quite clear his “actions” were not under his free-will. Now I am going to ask you a difficult question: Is it possible that Babasaheb was under duress too when he converted to Buddhism? It’s only a question and I invite further investigation. Mr. Paul told me that Babasaheb had an entirely a different Constitution in his possession for India but the caste-elite resisted it to the fullest and successfully killed it. The conclusion is: Babasaheb is not the author of the current Constitution of India. And with that acknowledgment I take back my earlier critical remarks though not “directed against” the personhood of Dr. Ambedkar.

9. Create a new political party with a new system of political thought leading to writing a new constitution committed to democracy, Western-style secularism with enshrined separation of church and state, and guaranteeing the full scope of individual fundamental rights. We need independent think-tanks in India to

guide various public policies with special emphasis on reassessing the public policies and their impacts on the welfare of Dalit population.

10. We must protect and resurrect our real Babasaheb—go back to the streets and alleys to protect the Dalit population, and Sikhs must be at the forefront with the Dalits until the time there is no ugly face of untouchability left alive, until the caste system is relegated to the dustbin. Only then can we all proclaim ourselves following in the footsteps of the Sikh Gurus. As an update let me air one forceful comment of Babasaheb specifically made in 1945: “If you wish to bring a breach in the [caste] system, then you have got to apply the dynamite to the Vedas and the Shastras, which deny any part to reason, to Vedas and Shashtra, which deny any part to morality. You must destroy the Religion of the Smritis.”

My speech is coming to an end, and I know well that this is the first time you had heard a critical, thought-provoking talk while celebrating Ambedkar Jyanti. Rests assure, Babasaheb was the greatest man of the 20th century India, and I believe India will not give birth to another being like him in this 21st century. There is something else that attracted me about him and that is his date of birth, April 14. You know in my Punjabi culture and Sikh religion’s Khalsahood, this day of April is special—reminds me of the morning after the momentous day of 1699-- and that by very token our Babasaheb was a **Vaisakhi Boy**—a brave man who lived up to the highest aspirations of Khalsahood during those years of his activism against the Caste and the rest of Hinduism—which we must embody those ideals, and thereby resurrect our hero to his true eminence.

All the best to you! And thank you for inviting me.

BRITISH-BORN SIKH APPOINTED HIGH COURT JUDGE IN LONDON

Special to the tribune
Shyam Bhatia in London

July 31, 2011



A British-born Sikh lawyer, who advised that British intervention in the Iraq war was unlawful, has been appointed a judge of the High Court in London.

History has been created with the appointment of Mr Justice

Rabinder Singh who becomes the first Sikh and the first male from an ethnic minority ever to be elevated to the exalted position of a High Court judge.

Another Sikh, Kenya-born Sir Mota Singh, also created history when he became the first judge to wear a turban in a British court. But Sir Mota Singh retired as a Crown Court judge, one level below the High Court.

The significance of Justice Rabinder Singh's achievement is that it is one of the country's most influential and prestigious legal appointments. He will from now on hear some of the UK's most serious and important legal issues and will be automatically in the running for Chief Justice as and when the position becomes vacant.

Friends and admirers of Rabinder Singh say he has an enviable human rights record. Some of the highlights of his legal career include representing the campaign of nuclear disarmament in 2002 when he argued that the UK would be in breach of international law if it used force against Iraq based on Security Council Resolution 1441.

In an opinion delivered jointly with fellow lawyer Charlotte Kilroy in November 2002, Singh argued: "We consider that it is clear that SCR 1441 does not authorise military action by a member state against Iraq. In our view there is nothing in the Preamble, which alters this view. Indeed it is notable that a late insertion into the Preamble was the commitment of all member states to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Iraq, Kuwait and the neighbouring states." Two years later in 2004, he successfully represented the human rights group, Liberty, in the House of Lords against the indefinite detention without trial of non-UK national suspected of terrorist activities. One year later, he successfully represented Liberty and the Joint Council for the Welfare of Immigrants in the case against the UK government over the refusal of economic benefits to refugees.

Born in 1964 to Sikh immigrant parents from India, Singh grew up in Bristol and went to Trinity College, Cambridge, where he graduated with a double first in law in 1985. He spent the following year studying for his LLM at the University of California at Berkeley where he became interested in constitutional law, as well as issues concerned with the misuse of power.

He returned to London by 1988 to do his Bar Finals and was called to the Bar in July 1989. For the next 10 years, he specialised in administrative law, employment law, European Community law, human rights law, commercial law and media laws. One of his colleagues from the earliest days was Cherie Booth, QC, the wife of future British Prime Minister Tony Blair. Together with Cherie and five other fellow lawyers, he set up his own set of Chambers - Matrix Chambers - in 2000. Named Barrister of the Year by Lawyer magazine in 2001, he was appointed a QC in 2002.

A Fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts, Singh has been cited for his interest in Ancient Greece. "One thing I would have liked to be is an academic specialising in Greek poetry", he is quoted as telling an interviewer.

THE SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTION OF THE SIKHS DURING THE ITALIAN CAMPAIGN 1943-1945

Harchand Singh Bedi, Malaysia

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India made its contribution to the Second World War by providing almost two million volunteers in a couple of years. At the outbreak of the Second World War, in September 1939, the Indian troops, totaled 2,005,038. By 1941, India had recruited 9,000,000 soldiers. By August 1945 two million volunteer soldiers were fighting in Africa, Sidi Barrani, Alam El Halfa and El Alamein. In Italy, Indian Forces were deployed in Cassino, Sangro and on the Gothic Line.



In Italy, more than half of the country saw the Sikhs

fighting against the Germans right from the first assault on the Gothic Line in August 1944, to the last assault on the Senio River in April 1945. During these months the Eighth British Army included the Fourth and Tenth Indian Divisions. These Indian Divisions had the famous Gurkha and Sikh Regiments who had been serving the British Empire for a Century.

Almost 50,000 troops, mostly between the ages of 19 and 22, fought for the sake of freedom in Italy. Close to 50 per cent of them were injured in the process. Of these, a total of 5782 Indian soldiers died in Italy. It is to their credit that out of twenty Victoria Cross decorations given for bravery during the war in Italy, the Indian soldiers received as many as six.

It is unfortunate that the major contribution of the three Indian Army Infantry Divisions, 4, 8 and 10 and the 43 Gurkha Infantry Brigade has been given such short shrift in the annals of war, this despite the fact that the war correspondent of the Illustrated London News has categorically stated that at the end of the Italian Campaign on VE Day 1945, 8th Indian Division was perhaps the best fighting formation in Italy. The story of their bravery and their sacrifice is still talked about in Italian cities and villages that they helped to liberate. However, the full account of their bravery is not available to the wider public.

Some Interesting Anecdotes.

The landing of Allies in Sicily on 09 July 1943 marked the commencement of the Italian Campaign. The landings signified the decline of Fascism and Italy joining the war on the side of Allies. The liberation of Ferrara was officially announced by the Anglo-American troops at 0730 hours on 24 April 1945. According to the testimonies of that time, Indian troops were among the first to reach Ferrara. They were part of the 5th Corps of the 8th British Army and were composed mainly by Sikh soldiers. After the liberation of Ferrara, these troops were deployed in Porotto, on the way leading to the Po River which ran along the Gothic Line.

Not many historic or photographic records exist regarding the contribution of Indian troops in the capture of Ferrara. The most evident sign of Indian presence in Ferrara is represented by the War Cemetery of Ravenna, Argenta and especially by the one in Forlì.

The cemetery in Forlì also has a Cremation Memorial commemorating the Hindu and Sikh soldiers and officers who died in Italy during this period, from 16 April 1944 till the end of the war.

The Fourth Indian Division was the first one to advance against the Gothic Line at 6 AM on 25 August, 1944 on Acqualagna – Fermignano - Urbino axis. It was the internal axis and it was also far from the sea, on the extreme left of the allied deployment. Thus, it was the hardest axis to advance on and to get to Romagna. The Gurkhas captured Audotore on 3rd September, 1944. The day after, in Poggio San Giovanni, Havildar (Sergeant) Sham Singh of the 2nd Battalion, 11 Sikh Regiment successfully captured a German machine gun position and four of its crew on his own.

INDIAN TROOPS IN MAJOR ACTION IN N. ITALY

LONDON, Wednesday.

Indian troops from the State of Nahba, fighting their first major action, played a prominent part in the establishment of a bridgehead across the Ronco River, in Italy.

The crossing of the Ronco River has advanced the Eighth Army lines a mile to the north from the contested town of Meldola.

Other Indian troops seized new positions at Monte Marzanella, west from Rocca, and at San Casciano on the Pontassieve-Forlì road.

Heavy rains make progress difficult in the lowlands, but Eighth Army forces, in the Adriatic sector, are approaching Ravenna.

Brazilian troops on the west coast captured Calcinai, two miles west from Galliciano.

The Italian communique announced that the bridgehead over the Ronco River had been strengthened. The Eighth Army cleared the enemy from Mondola.

South from Bologna the Fifth Army repulsed sharp counter-attacks inflicting heavy losses.

Polish troops forced the Germans to abandon the dominating Caminate Rocks, overlooking the plain around Forlì, and by last night Allied units were under two miles from this key town.



While the 4th Indian Division was fighting on the mountains close to Rimini, the 10th Division went up Tuscany and Catenia Alps, towards Meldola and Forlì to penetrate the defences of Romagna. On 5 October, 1944, Lance Naik (Corporal) Bhuri Singh of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Punjab Regiment assaulted a German trench which was protected by antitank weapons. On 10th October, 1944, another unit of the the 10th Division, the 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles, was very close to Cesena. A platoon was ordered to clear the enemy from the village of Ardiano. Havildar Murti Singh Rawat led his platoon successfully and cleared the village taking 11 German soldiers as prisoners.

On 14 December, 25th Indian Brigade of the 10th Division deployed in South of Faenza, came under counter attack from 90th German Panzer grenadier. During the Counter attack, Lance Naik Ratan Singh Rana, 18th Royal Garhwal Rifles, rescued a wounded officer, under heavy enemy bombardment. The 4th Indian Division distinguished itself again in Ravenna in April 1944 while crossing the Senio River. On 9 April, Naik Samer Singh of the 15 Punjab, crossed the river under enemy fire after three officers had been killed.

On night 10-11 April, 1944, during the assault on Scolo Tratturo, Naik Mohd Sadiq of 8th Punjab, charged a machine gun position and captured it.

On 3 April, the Eighth Division launched the final offensive. Two platoons of the 4th Battalion, 13th

Frontier Force Rifle Regiment, attacked Poggiolo, in Imola area at 22 00 hours. The German infantry was well entrenched and protected by mines and barbed wire. The 6th Platoon launched a frontal attack. The Jemadar (lieutenant) Milkhi Ram cut the barbed wire off so that his platoon could assault despite the direct fire of German mortars and small arms, the last effort. Entire Romagna felt grateful.



Sikh soldier in Italy with war trophy

“The Fourth, Eighth and Tenth Indian Divisions will forever be associated with the fighting for Cassino, the capture of Rome, the Arno Valley, the liberation of Florence and the breaking of the Gothic Line.

The Spoon River, where the Sikhs fought on the Emilia Romagna territory, has an exotic sound which still evokes the memories of the eastern hemisphere.

The Indian forces though limited to the strength of 4, 8 and 10 Indian Division, distinguished themselves for courage and tenacity in the battles of the Sangro, Cassino, the Liri Valley, the Gothic line, the Senio and several other engagements. The Indian soldiers fought in a terrain that was ideally suited for defense and the offensive proceeded against the grain of the country. Yet they fought with unparalleled courage and relentless tenacity.

Within the cemetery will be found the SANGRO RIVER CREMATION MEMORIAL, one of three memorials erected in Italy to officers and men of the Indian forces whose remains were cremated in accordance with their faith - the other two cremation

memorials are in Forli Indian Army War Cemetery and Rimini Gurkha War Cemetery.

The memorial at Sangro River commemorates 517 Indian servicemen who fell in 1943-44. Out of it, 237 Volunteers carried the surname "SINGH". The memorial at Cassino commemorates 1,438 Indian servicemen who fell in which, 377 Volunteers carried the surname "SINGH". The cremation memorial at Forli commemorates 769 Indian servicemen in which 370 Volunteers carried the surname "SINGH".

ਅਰਥ ਕਿ ਅਨਰਥ ?

(ਮੱਧ ਦਾ ਭੋਗ)

ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ

ਨੋਟਿੰਘਮ (ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ)

ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਹਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਲਈ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਾਤਾ ਜੀ ਵੀ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠੀ ਸਨ, ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਮੈਂ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬੀੜ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਡਰਦਾ ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ। ਜਪੁਜੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪਾਠ ਤਾਂ ਮੇਰਾ ਨਿਤ ਕਰਮ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਬਾਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸੋਚ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਕਦਾ ਸਾਂ। ਇੱਕ ਤਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬੀੜ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵੀ ਗਲਤੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਥਰ ਥਰ ਕੰਬਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਸੁਣ ਸੁਣਾ ਕੇ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਰੀਤਾਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਪਾਠ ਹੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਣ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਹ ਕੰਮ ਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ। ਨਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ੪੦ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਤੱਕ ਮੈਂ ਕਦੀ ਸਾਧਾਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ।

੧੯੬੫ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੈਂ ਇੰਗਲੈਂਡ ਆ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਮੇਰੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਕੁਲ-ਵਕਤੀ ਨਿਯੁਕਤੀ ਜਨਵਰੀ ੧੯੬੮ ਵਿੱਚ ਇੱਕ ਅਧਿਆਪਕ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਇੱਕ ਸੈਕੰਡਰੀ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਗ੍ਰੇਵਜੈਂਡ (ਕੈਂਟ) ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋ ਗਈ। ਇੱਥੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਦੀ ਘਾਟ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਕੁੱਝ ਹੋਰ ਸਾਥੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਦੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਰੱਖੀ (ਜੋ ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ)। ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਲਈ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੀ ਅਤਯੰਤ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਫੈਸਲਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਕਿ ਮੁਫਤ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਕੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਇਕੱਠੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇ ਅਤੇ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਲਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ। ਦੂਸਰੇ ਦੋ ਸੱਜਣ ਤਾਂ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਮੈਂ ਹਿਚਕਚਾਹਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਾਂ। ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੌਸਲਾ ਦੇਣ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਵੀ ਤਿਆਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਪੱਕੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਈ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਆਪਣੀ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੋਈ ਦੇਵੇਗਾ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਰਸੀਦ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਰੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਲਈ ਹੀ ਵਰਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਅਸੀਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਪਾਠੀ (ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਮੇਰੇ ਸਮੇਤ ਅਸੀਂ ਦੋ ਸਕੂਲ ਟੀਚਰ ਸਾਂ) ਮਾਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈਂਦੇ ਸਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਵਾਲੇ ਘਰ ਕੁੱਝ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਪੀਂਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਾਂ ਪਰ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਦੋ ਐਸੇ ਪਾਠੀ ਵੀ ਰੱਖਣੇ ਪਏ ਜੋ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਸਾਂ। ਇਹ ਪਾਠੀ ਪਾਠ ਰਖਵਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ "ਮੱਧ" ਆਦਿਕ ਦਾ ਭੋਗ

ਲਗਵਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰੇ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਡਟ ਕੇ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਹੋਈ ਪਰ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਅਸੀਂ ਲਗ ਪਗ ਹਰ ਸਪਤਾਹ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਨੇੜਲੇ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ। ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਕਾਰਨ ਧਰਮ ਪਰਚਾਰ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੌਖਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਤੇ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਰਜਿਸਟਰ ਕਰਵਾ ਲਈ ਗਈ।

ਇੱਕ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਇੱਕ ਸੁਨਿਆਰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਘਰ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਹ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਬਹੁਤ ਪੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਸਰਧਾਲੂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਸੀ। ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਦੂਸਰਾ ਦਿਨ ਸੀ ਜਦ ਪਾਠ "ਮਧ" ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਰੋਲ ਲਾ ਕੇ ਵਿਹਲਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸਾਂ। ਪਰਵਾਰ ਨੇ "ਮਧ" ਦੇ ਭੋਗ ਲਈ ਦੇਗ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਛੱਡੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਕਿਹਾ ਗਿਆ। ਮੈਂ ਸੰਗਤੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਖੁਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਪਰ ਉਸ ਦਿਨ ਹੋਰ ਕੋਈ ਅਰਦਾਸੀਆ ਨਾ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਨੀ ਪਈ। ਅਰਦਾਸ ਉਪ੍ਰੰਤ ਘਰ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੇ ੨੦ ਪੈਂਡ ਮੇਰੀ ਮੁੱਠੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਆ ਫੜਾਏ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਮੈਂ ਮਾਇਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਲੈਂਦਾ। ਅਗੋਂ ਉਸ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ, "ਗਿਆਨੀ ਜੀ ਆਰੰਭ ਦੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ੩੦ ਪੈਂਡ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਕਹਿ ਗਏ ਸਨ ਕਿ "ਮਧ" ਦੀ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵੇਲੇ ੨੦ ਪੈਂਡ ਦੇਣੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਉਹ ਤਿਆਰ ਰਖਣੇ ਮੈਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਆ ਜਾਵਾਂਗਾ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਆਏ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਨ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਬਣਦੇ ੨੦ ਪੈਂਡ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰੋ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਦੇ ਪੁੰਨ ਦਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਘਨ ਨਾ ਪਵੇ।" ਮੈਂ ਮਾਇਆ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀ ਸੋਸਾਇਟੀ ਦੀ ਰਸੀਦ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਪਰ ਸੋਚਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਕਿ "ਮਧ" ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਕੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਕਿਉਂ ਪੈਂਦੀ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਇਹ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ? ਕੀ ਇਹ ਸਿਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੈ?

ਘਰ ਆ ਕੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦਾ ਖਰੜਾ ਵਾਚਣ ਦਾ ਅਵਸਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵਿੱਚ "ਮਧ" ਦੇ ਭੋਗ ਬਾਰੇ ਇੱਕ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਤੱਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਦੇਖਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹਰ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਦਿਸ਼ਟ ਅਗੋਚਰ ਸ਼੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਪਾਲਣਹਾਰ ਦਾਤਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਨੂੰ "ਮਧ" ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਲਵਾਇਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਗਿਆਨੀਆਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਰਸਮ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਚਾਲੂ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੦੫ ਉੱਪਰ ਸੁਭਾਇਮਾਨ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਬਦ "ਮਧ" ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਧਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਵਾਚਿਆਂ ਜਾਹਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਬਦ "ਮਧ" ਦਾ ਇੱਥੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ "ਮਧ" (ਅੱਧ ਜਾਂ ਸੈਂਟਰ) ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਹੱਥ ਲਿਖਤ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਨੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਖੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ ਕੇਵਲ ਹਰ ਪੱਤਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਨੰਬਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ (ਯਾਣੀ ਦੋ ਸਫ਼ਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਇੱਕੋ ਨੰਬਰ)। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਿਖੀ ਬੀੜ (ਕਰਤਾਰਪੁਰੀ ਬੀੜ) ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ, "ਪੋਥੀ ਲਿਖ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਭਾਦਰੋਂ ਵਦੀ ਏਕਮ ਸੰਮਤ ੧੬੬੧ ਕੁਲ ਪਤਰੇ ੯੭੪" ਇਸ ਬੀੜ ਵਿੱਚ, ਜੋ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪ ਲਿਖਵਾਈ, "ਮਧ"

ਪੰਨਾ ੪੮੭ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਇਥੇ ਨਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ "ਮਧ" ਹੀ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ "ਮਧ" ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਇੱਥੇ ਹੈ ।

੧੮੬੦ ਵਿਚ ਛਾਪਾ ਖਾਨਾ ਚਾਲੂ ਹੋਣ ਤੇ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਨੇ ਛਾਪੇਖਾਨਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਾਲਕ ਆਪਣੀ ਮਰਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਅੱਗੇ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਛਾਪਦੇ ਸਨ ਸੋ ੧੭੦੮ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਨਿਯਮ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਛੋਟੇ ਵੱਡੇ ਡੱਟ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਾਪਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪੰਨੇ ੧੪੩੦ ਹੀ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ । ਹੁਣ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ੧੪੩੦ ਪੰਨੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਕਿਧਰੇ "ਮਧ" ਲਈ ਕੋਈ ਰਸਮ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰਨੀ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਣ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੧੫ ਤੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਹੋਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ । ਪਰ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਕਿਸੇ ਰਸਮ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ । ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਭੁੱਲ ਗਏ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਪਾਠ ਅਸੀਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਖਿਆ ਲੈਣ ਲਈ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਪੱਤਰੇ/ਸਫੇ ਗਿਣਣ ਲਈ ਨਹੀਂ।

ਸ਼ਬਦ "ਮਧ" ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਹੀ ਗ਼ਲਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਜਾਪਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਸੀਂ ਅਧੁਨਿਕ ਬੀੜਾਂ ਦੇ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੦੫ ਉੱਪਰ ਆਏ ਉਸ ਸ਼ਲੋਕ ਦੇ ਅਰਥ ਲਿਖ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ "ਮਧ" ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਪਾਠਕ ਖ਼ੁਦ ਹੀ ਦੇਖ ਲੈਣ ਕਿ "ਮਧ" (ਅੱਧ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ) ਦੇ ਭੋਗ ਦਾ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨਾਲ ਕੀ ਰਿਸ਼ਤਾ ਹੈ ।

ਜੈਤਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੫ ਵਾਰ ਸਲੋਕਾ ਨਾਲਿ

ਆਦਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਮਧਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਅੰਤਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਹ ॥

ਸਿਮਰੰਤਿ ਸੰਤ ਸਰਬਤ੍ਰ ਰਮਣੰ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਘ ਨਾਸਨ ਜਗਦੀਸੁਰਹ ॥

ਅਰਥ:- ਪਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਦੇ ਭਗਤ ਉਸ ਸਰਬ-ਵਿਆਪਕ ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਦਾ ਆਰਾਧਨ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਸ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੇ ਆਰੰਭ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਹਰ ਥਾਂ ਮੌਜੂਦ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਹੁਣ ਵੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਤਕ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਣ ਕਣ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਜਗਤ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਆਪਣੇ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਭ ਪਾਪਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਸ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ।

ਜ਼ਾਹਰ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇੱਥੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ "ਮਧ" (ਸੈਂਟਰ) ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਬੰਧ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ । ਅਸਲੀ "ਮਧ" ਤਾਂ ਪੰਨਾ ੭੧੫ ਤੇ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ । ਸਾਰਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਉਸ ਪ੍ਰਮਾਤਮਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੈ ਜੋ "ਆਦਿ ਸਚੁ ਜੁਗਾਦਿ ਸਚੁ " ਹੈ । ਜੇ ਕਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ "ਮਧ" ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦਾ "ਮਧ" ਸਮਝ ਲਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਵਿਚਲੇ ਹੇਠ ਲਿਖੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਤੇ ਵੀ ਭੋਗ ਪਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ।

੧. "ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਨਵ ਨਿਧਿ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਾ ਪਰਵਾਹ ॥

ਅਦਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਮਧਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਉਚ ਅਗਮ ਅਗਾਹ" ॥

(ਪੰਨਾ ੧੦੧੭)

੨. ਆਦਿ ਮਧਿ ਅੰਤਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੂ ਸੋਈ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੭੬੦)

੩. ਆਗੇ ਦਯੁ ਪਾਛੇ ਨਾਰਾਇਣ

ਮਧਿ ਭਾਗਿ ਹਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਰਸਾਇਣ॥ (ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੩੭)

੪. ਜੇ ਕੋ ਅਪਨੇ ਠਾਕੁਰ ਭਾਵੈ ।

ਕੋਟਿ ਮਧਿ ਏਹੁ ਕੀਰਤਨੁ ਗਾਵੈ (ਪੰਨਾ ੮੮੫)

ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਮਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਈ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਪਾਠ ਹੀ "ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ " (ਨਿਰੰਤਰ, ਇੱਕ ਰਸ) ਹੈ ਉਸ ਦਾ "ਮਧ" ਕਿਵੇਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ? ਭੋਗ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਹੈ ਸਮਾਪਤੀ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਤ । ਕੀ ੭੦੫ ਪੰਨੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਭੋਗ ਪਾਉਣ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਅਖੰਡ ਪਾਠ ਦਾ ਅੰਤ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ? ਕਿਧਰੇ ਇਹ ਰਸਮ ਅਨਪੜ੍ਹ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂ ਜੁਗਿਆਸੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਲਈ ਮਨ ਮਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਾ ਲਈ ਗਈ ? ਆਸ ਰਖਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਕੋਈ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਪਸ਼ਟੀਕਰਨ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਖੋਚਲ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਮੇਰਾ ਵਹਿਮ ਦੂਰ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ !

ਜੇ "ਮਧ" ਦਾ ਭੋਗ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦਵਾਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਨੂੰ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਵਿਚ ਸੋਧ ਕਰ ਲੈਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਜੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰਮਤ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਪ ਤੋੜਨੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ।

ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਗਾਂ-ਮਤਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜੋੜ ਕਿਉਂ ਬਦਲੇ ਗਏ?

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ਜੁਲਾਈ 2011 ਦੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਹਫ਼ਤੇ ਦੇਸ਼ੀ-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ੀ ਅਖਬਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵੈਬਸਾਈਟਾਂ ਤੇ ਛਪੀ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਕਿ **"ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਅਤੇ ਲਗਾਂ-ਮਤਰਾਂ ਬਦਲਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਝੀ ਸ਼ਾਜ਼ਸ"** ਇਹ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਲਈ ਭਾਰੀ ਚੋਣੌਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਚੰਦ, ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀਚੰਦ, ਹਿੰਦਾਲੀਏ, ਰਾਮਰਾਈਏ, ਨਿਰੰਜਨੀਏ, ਨਕਲੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰੀ, ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਡੇਰੇਦਾਰ, ਲਾਲਚੀ ਤੇ ਵੇਟਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਲੀਡਰ ਅਤੇ ਆਰ.ਐੱਸ.ਐੱਸ. ਆਦਿਕ ਨਖਿਧ ਸੋਚ ਦੇ ਧਾਰਨੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਬਿਆਨ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੱਚ (**ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ**) ਦੇ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਦਬੋਣ ਲਈ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਬੋਧੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪਖੰਡਾਂ ਦਾ ਭਰਵਾਂ ਖੰਡਨ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ, ਆਮ ਜਨਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਹਲਵਾ ਮੰਡਾ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਸੱਚੇ-ਸੁੱਚੇ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਸਲੀ ਉਪਦੇਸ਼ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਲਣ ਲਈ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੱਚੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਚੇ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਬੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਮਰਦ ਦੀ ਹਿਮਤ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਭਗਤਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਜਾਨਸੀਨਾਂ ਕੋਲ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ, ਭਗਤਾਂ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਇਕੱਤਰ ਕੀਤੀ। ਜਗਤ ਜਲੰਦੇ ਦਾ ਓਧਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਘਰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਹ ਨਾਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਹੋਇਆਂ ਜਿੰਦਗੀ ਦਾ ਬਹੁੱਤ ਵੱਡਾ ਹਿਸਾ ਦੇਸ਼-ਵਿਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿੱਚ ਵਿਚਰ ਕੇ **ਸੱਚ-ਧਰਮ** ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਉੱਚ ਜਾਤੀਆਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਲਿਤਾਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਾਂਹ ਫੜ ਕੇ, ਹੋਂਸਲਾਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਬਿਤਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਰ ਲਈ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੱਕੇ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਆਪਣਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਪੁੱਤ੍ਰ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਚੰਦ ਉਦਾਸੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਟੋਟੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ, ਬਾਗੀ ਹੋ, ਗੁਰੂ ਹੁਕਮਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟਾਲਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਜਿਕਰ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੈ-**ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਕਉਲ ਨਾ ਪਾਲਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਪੀਰਹੁ ਕਨੁ ਮੁਰਟੀਐ॥(967)**

ਦਾਤੂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਤਾ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੱਤ ਕੱਢ ਮਾਰੀ, ਪ੍ਰਿਥੀ ਚੰਦ ਤੇ ਮਿਹਰਬਾਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਢਾਹੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਗੀ ਹੋ ਗਏ, ਨਕਲੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਲਿਖਣ ਅਤੇ ਨਕਲੀ ਸਰੋਵਰ ਅਤੇ ਦਰਬਾਰ

ਉਸਾਰਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ, ਹਿੰਦਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰ-ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਜਨਮ ਸਾਖੀ ਆਦਿਕ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਨਮਤ ਦਾ ਰਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ।

ਬਾਬਾ ਰਾਮ ਰਾਏ ਨੇ ਤਾਂ ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ ਦੀ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਗੀਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਲਾਲਚ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੀ ਇਲਾਹੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਤੁੱਕ ਹੀ ਬਦਲ ਕੇ ਰੱਖ ਦਿੱਤੀ, ਫਿਰ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਵੱਗਿਆ ਦੀ ਮੁਆਫੀ ਮੰਗ ਗਿਆ। ਧੀਰ ਮੱਲ ਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੇ ਸ਼ੀਹੋਂ ਮਸੰਦ ਤੋਂ ਗੋਲੀ ਚਲਵਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਵਡਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਗੀ ਹੋ ਪਹਾੜਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਡੇਰਾ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਭੂਤਾਂ-ਪ੍ਰੇਤਾਂ ਕੱਢਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਲੱਗ ਪਿਆ। ਨਾਮਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਬਲਾਕਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਰਵਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਨਾਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਰੀਕ ਬਣ ਗਏ। ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਜਾਨਸੀਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਸਬਦ ਗੁਰੂ **“ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ”** ਦੇ ਲੜ ਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ-**ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕਉ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ॥**

ਨਾਮਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਏਕ ਤੋਂ ਅਨੇਕ ਵੰਨ-ਸੁਵੰਨੇ ਵਿਹਲੜ ਸਾਧ ਡੇਰਦਾਰੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਏ। ਉਦਾਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਰਮਲੇ ਜੋ ਕਾਸੀ ਤੋਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ, ਸਨਾਤਨੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਬੱਲੇ ਸਨ, ਸਨਾਤਨੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨਾਲ ਰਲ-ਗਡ ਕਰਕੇ ਕਥਾ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ, ਜਿਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਡੇਰਾਵਾਦ ਤੇ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਿੱਖ ਘਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ। ਫਿਰ ਕਿਤੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਠੱਲ੍ਹ ਪਾਈ ਪਰ ਸੰਤਾਂ, ਗ੍ਰੰਥੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਗੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿੱਚ ਜੋ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਿਖਿਆਰਬੀ ਸਨ ਨੇ ਵੱਖਰੀਆਂ-ਵੱਖਰੀਆਂ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਚਲਾ ਲਈਆਂ, ਜੋ ਹੁਣ ਤੱਕ ਚੱਲ ਰਹੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਡੇਰਾਵਾਦੀ-ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੁਝ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣਵਾਦ ਦਾ ਅਸਰ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਲਾਲਚ ਵੱਸ ਕਈ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਚੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਥਾ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਰਨ ਲੱਗ ਪਏ ਅਤੇ ਹੌਲੀ-ਹੌਲੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਨੂੰ **“ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ”** ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਰਨਾਂ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਨੁਯਾਈ **“ਸਿੱਖ ਰਹਿਤ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ”** ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ, ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਅਖੌਤੀ ਦਸਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ, ਸਰਬਲੋਹ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਤੇ ਪੋਥੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਨਤਾਈਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਡੇਰੇਦਾਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਝੋਲੀ ਚੁੱਕ ਲੀਡਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਧਮਕੀਆਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਫੇਰ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਗਲਤ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਵਿਰੋਧੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁੱਠੇ ਲਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪੰਥ ਚੋਂ ਛੇਕ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਇਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਅਕਾਲੀ ਦਲ ਬਾਦਲ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਸੰਪ੍ਰਦਾਈ ਡੇਰੇਦਾਰ ਘੁਸੜ ਗਏ ਹਨ। ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਜੋ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਸੋਮੇ ਸੰਨ ਨੂੰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ, ਕਮਰਸ਼ੀਅਲ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤੀ ਦੇ ਅੱਡੇ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ। ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਹੁਕਮ ਸੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਆਪ ਪੜ੍ਹੇ, ਵਿਚਾਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਆਪਣਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਜੀਵੇ। ਇੱਥੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਸੇਲ ਤੇ ਲਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਜਰਾ ਸੋਚੋ! ਗੁਰੂਆਂ-ਭਗਤਾਂ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ-ਗਿਆਨ ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਢਾਲਣ ਲਈ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਭਾੜੇ ਦੇ ਕਥਾ, ਕੀਰਤਨ, ਪਾਠਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਰਦਾਸਾਂ ਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਭੇਟਾ ਚੜ੍ਹਾ ਕੇ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਲਈ। ਇਹ ਜੋ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਾਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਨੂੰ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਦੀ ਬਾਦਲ ਦਲ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਤ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੀ ਮਿਲੀ-ਭੁਗਤ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਗਾਂ ਮਾਤਰਾਂ ਉਡਾ ਕੇ ਲੰਡਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਛਾਪਣ ਦਾ ਬਜ਼ਰ ਗੁਨਾਹ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਸ੍ਰ. ਪਰਮਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਰਨਾ ਵੇਲੇ, ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦੇ

ਚੇਅਰਮੈਨ ਸ੍ਰ. ਤਰਸੇਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਪਤਤਾਲ ਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਕਰੜਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ। ਓਹੀ ਲਾਬੀ ਹੁਣ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਤੇ ਕਾਬਜ ਹੈ ਨੇ ਹੁਣ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਸ਼ਾਜਸ ਅਧੀਨ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਅੱਖਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਛਾਪੇ ਹਨ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਈ ਲਗਾ ਮਾਤਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਦੇ ਪੂਰੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਹੀ ਬਦਲ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸੋਚਿਆ ਕਿ ਕਿਹੜਾ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਨੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਆਪ ਪੜ੍ਹਨਾਂ ਹੈ ਸਗੋਂ ਭਾੜੇ ਦੇ ਪਾਠੀਆਂ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਹੀ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਜਾਣੇ ਹਨ ਜੋ ਬੇਧਿਆਨੇ ਹੋ, ਸਪੀਡ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਠ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਿਤੇ ਪਾਠ ਲੇਟ ਨਾਂ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ। ਜਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਚੋ! ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੇਲੇ ਧਰਮ-ਗ੍ਰੰਥਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਠਾਂ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਘਾਟਾ ਸੀ? ਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਹੋਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਚ ਕੇ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਘਾਟਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ? ਕੀ ਧਰਮ-ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਇਕੱਲੇ ਪੈਸੇ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਾਉਣ, ਮੱਥੇ ਟੇਕਣ ਅਤੇ ਧੂਫਾਂ ਧੁਖਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਹਨ? ਜੇ ਅੱਜ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਬਾਈਬਲ ਈਸਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਮਜੀਦ ਮੁਸਲਮ ਵੀਰ ਆਪ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਵਿਚਾਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੇ? ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਰੇਕ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਲਾਈਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਬਾਈਬਲ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਤਾਬਾਂ ਮਿਲ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ? ਕੀ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਵੱਡੀਆਂ-ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਆਲ੍ਹੀਸ਼ਾਨ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗਾਂ ਬਣਾ, ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀਆਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰ, ਧੜੇ ਬਣਾਂ, ਚੋਣਾਂ ਲੜ ਕੇ ਕਾਬਜ ਹੋਣ ਤੱਕ ਹੀ ਸੀਮਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਹਨ? ਕੀ ਗੁਰੂਆਂ-ਭਗਤਾਂ, ਖਾਲਸਾ ਪੰਥ, ਮਿਸਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਕੀਮਤੀ ਸਰਮਾਇਆ ਚੋਣ ਲੜਾਈਆਂ, ਆਲ੍ਹੀਸ਼ਾਨ ਬਿਲਡਿੰਗਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਖਾਵੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਠਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕਰਮਕਾਂਡਾਂ ਤੇ ਲਾਇਆ ਸੀ? ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਨੂੰ ਪੁਜਾਰੀਵਾਦ ਦੇ ਜੂਲੇ ਹੇਠੋਂ ਕੱਢ ਕੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਧਰਮ-ਕਰਮ ਆਪ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ **“ਸਿੱਖ”** ਧਰਮ ਪੱਖੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਜਾਗ੍ਰਿਤ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਸੁੱਧ ਪੜ੍ਹਨੀ ਆਉਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾੜੇ ਪਾਠੀ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਠ ਕਰਾ ਕੇ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਭਾਲਦਾ।

ਧਿਆਨ ਦਿਓ ਜੇ ਲੋਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਧਰਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਘੁਸੜ ਕੇ ਜਾਂ ਡੇਰਾਵਾਦੀ ਸੋਚ ਦੇ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਬੋਲੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਮੀਡੀਏ ਵਿੱਚ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਨ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਪ ਦੱਸਦੇ ਹਨ, ਕਦੋਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਚਾਰਧਾਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝਣਗੇ ਅਤੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਤਨਾਂ ਸਮਾਂ ਅੰਧਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸੀ ਹੋ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੱਗਰ ਲੱਗ ਲੁਟੀਦੇ ਰਹਾਂਗੇ? ਅਜੋਕੇ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਜਿਹੇ ਲੋਕ ਜੋ ਵਾਕਿਆ ਹੀ ਤਨੇ-ਮਨੇ **“ਗੁਰੂ-ਗ੍ਰੰਥ”** ਨੂੰ ਸਮਰਪਤ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ **“ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ”** ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਲਗਾਂ-ਮਾਤਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅੱਖਰ ਬਦਲਣ ਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਥ ਦੇ ਕਟਹਿਰੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੜਾ ਕਰਕੇ, ਇਸ ਅਵੱਗਿਆ ਦੀ ਸਜਾ ਲਗਾਉਣ, ਸ਼ਾਜਸੀ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕਿੱਡਾ ਵੱਡਾ ਵੀ ਲੀਡਰ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਾਂ ਹੋਵੇ? ਕਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਮੁੱਚਾ ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ **“ਜੁੱਗੋ-ਜੁੱਗ ਅਟੱਲ ਆਦਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ”** ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਧਰਮ-ਆਗੂ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ-ਦਾਤਾ ਮੰਨ ਲਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਖੌਤੀ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਖਹਿੜਾ ਛੁੱਟ ਜਾਵੇ। ਕੀ ਅਜੋਕੇ ਜਥੇਦਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਲੀਡਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਅਹੁਦੇ ਤਿਆਗ ਕੇ **“ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ”** ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦਾ ਆਗੂ ਮੰਨਣ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਕਰਨਗੇ? ਕੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਅਨੁਸਾਰੀ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਲਾਗੂ ਕਰਕੇ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਧਰਮ ਮਰਯਾਦਾ ਦੀ ਛੁੱਟ ਦੂਰ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਮਾਨ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜੁਰਤ ਦਿਖਾਉਣਗੇ?

ਸਿੱਖ ਕੌਮ ਦੇ ਰਹਿਬਰੋ! ਬਚਾ ਲੋ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਟੇ-ਧਾੜ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਤੋਂ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਫਾਇਦਾ ਉਠਾ, ਸਿੱਖ ਵਿਰੋਧੀ ਲਾਬੀ ਗੁਰੂ-ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਵੀ ਅਦਲਾ-ਬਦਲੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਤਰਲੇ-ਮੱਛੀ ਹੋ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ।

BOOKS FROM KHALSA TRICENTENNIAL FOUNDATION OF NORTH AMERICA INC.

Realizing the need for correct information about Sikhism in the English language for the benefit of Diaspora youth, KTF requested S. Gurbachan Singh Sidhu, UK, to revise some of his books and write new ones. Mr. Sidhu is one of the founders of The Sikh Missionary Society of UK and Guru Nanak Charitable Trust, Mullanpur Mandi, Ludhiana. Of the many books and pamphlets in English that he has authored we have been able to afford to publish only four:

1. Sikh Religion and Christianity – 110 pages
2. Sikh Religion and Islam – 153 pages (Co-authored with Gurmukh Singh)
3. An Introduction to Sikhism – 76 pages
4. Panjab and Panjabi – 177 pages

These are excellent books for Sikhs and non Sikhs alike. Reading these books you will get the real meaning of Sikhi, something that Gurdwaras have miserably failed to teach. These books are for free distribution. We invite our readers in the USA to order any combination of 40 books for a donation to KTF of \$100.00, including postage, and distribute them free to their family, friends, local sangats or schools operated by Gurdwaras. Your donation will help in the publication of The Sikh Bulletin.

TEACH YOURSELF GURBANĪ. FOLLOWING TWO SOURCES ARE EXCELLENT:

1. www.srigranth.org This website will help you find page number of a shabad in Gurmukhi, English, Devanagari and Transliteration; and also to Panjabi translation by Prof Sahib Singh.
2. www.gurugranthdarpan.com This site carries the Panjabi translation of GGS by Prof Sahib Singh.

Some other useful links:

www.sikhbullertin.com

www.singhsabhacanada.com

<http://www.iuscanada.com>

Aarti condemned by the Sikh Gurus being practiced at Patna Sahib:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gWDcBdddddU>

www.sikhmarg.com;

Aarti condemned by the Sikh Gurus being practiced at Patna Sahib:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1gWDcBdddddU>

Useful Sikh Organizations:

1. SALDEF, Sikh American Legal Defense and Education Fund, 1413 K St. NW. 5th Floor, Washington, DC 20005. Tel: 202-393-2700; Fax: 202-318-3344; Email: info@saldef.org ; Web: www.saldef.org
About SALDEF: Founded in 1996, SALDEF is the oldest Sikh American civil rights and educational organization dedicated to protecting and promoting the civil rights of Sikh Americans through advocacy, education, and media relations. SALDEF's mission is to create a fostering environment in the United States for future generations of Sikh Americans.