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EDITORIAL

ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਰਾਜ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ : Prof Kulwant Singh 1

ARTICLES

- ELIMINATING OF JATHEDAR KAUNKE IN FAKE ENCOUNTER
REFLECTION OF HORRIBLE CONSENSUS AMONG
POLITICAL CLASS : Jaspal Singh Sidhu 5
- MARTYRDOM AND SACRIFICE – REMEMBERING THE
SIKH HEROES OF 1947 IN KASHMIR : Dr Jasbir S. Sarna 11
- GURU TEG BAHADUR: FROM SIMRAN TO SHAHADT : Dr Tejwant S Gill 19
- J.S. GREWAL ON SIKH HISTORY : Dr Indu Banga 26
- INTEGRATION OF CREATOR AND CREATION - 2 : Prof Kulwant Singh 31
- LET'S REVIVE WORK CULTURE - KIRAT : Porf Prabhjot Kaur 41
- BASANT KI VAR: A POETICAL AND
HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE : Dr Jaswant Singh 53
- MEHMA PARKASH - PART IV : G.S. Khurana 63
- JAPUJI – ENGLISH TRANSLATION & INTERPRETATION : Prof Kulwant Singh 68
- GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB: LIFE & WORKS : Harneet Kaur 77
- HEAVENLY CULTURE WORLD PEACE &
RESTORATION OF LIGHT SPIRITUAL : Col J.S. Multani 85
- ਸਤਲੁਜ, ਰਾਵੀ ਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ : ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਤੱਥ* : Manjit Singh Khaira 88
- ON THE ISCFRONT : Col J.S. Multani 95

REVIEWS

- KNOWING GURU NANAK (DR TEJWANT S. GILL) : Jagmohan Singh 104
- THE SIKH GURUS – EMBODIMENTS OF
THE SHABDA (DR S.S. BHATTI) : Dr H.S. Virk 114

NEWS & VIEWS

: 124

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EDITORIAL

ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਰਾਜ ਅਭਿਮਾਨ

Hubris is a concept and term taken from “The ancient Greeks who considered hubris a dangerous character flaw capable of provoking the wrath of the gods...”. Typically, overconfidence led the hero to attempt to overstep the boundaries of human limitations and assume a godlike status, and the gods inevitably humbled the offender with a sharp reminder of their morality.” (Source: <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/hubris>)

Guru Nanak terms this human flaw as “Haumay” and calls it a chronic disease. Besides causing physical damage and mental degeneration to the arrogant offender, it results in his spiritual damnation as well. It manifests itself in symptoms and acts of inflated ego and excessive pride in one’s physical, intellectual or political powers to the exclusion of prevailing legal, social and moral imperatives. The retribution that invariably follows the committing of such hubristic acts is most often in the form of loss of reputation and moral character being sullied. While the corporal punishment for an ordinary crime following conviction in a court of law can be manipulated and even escaped, moral retribution, very often, in the form of loss of reputation and damage to public image is instant and inevitable. It is a stigma, an inefaceable black spot which sticks forever. Of all the retributive consequences or punishments for the commission of acts of sinful nature is the loss of public image and lack of public trust, henceforth in the offenders. When the crimes committed fall in the domain of religion and matter of faith, these become completely unpardonable and scarcely to be condoned.

The public apology offered recently by the president of the leading Panthic party Shiromani Akali Dal in Punjab state for acts of omission

and commission committed during their long tenure of political rule in Punjab from 2007 to 2017 fall in this category of rare of rare crimes and sins. As per his own admission, the gravest criminal and sinful acts of sacrilege were committed when a copy of the sacred text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib was, stolen from a village Gurdwara was dismantled and its pages torn and scattered in the village streets and drains. To add insult to the injury, the hand written posters provoking and daring the Sikhs to catch the culprits were put upon the Gurdwara/ Village walls. Not only the state civil and police administration under the rule and government of Shiromani Akali Dal / the representative Panthic party led by the father-son-duo failed to arrest the culprits but also fired upon the peacefully protesting Sikh gathering in which two devout Sikhs were killed at Behbal Kalan in Kotkapura. This ruling party and its government neither realized the gravity of situation nor got the perpetrators of the crime punished, nor made any serious efforts to assuage the hurt feelings of the Sikh masses. Instead of seriously investigating this most gruesome and heinous crime of the desecration of the sacred most text, embodiment of the highest and the greatest Sikh divine authority, it conveniently passed away the investigation to the central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) to wash its hands off this tragic episode. Had, the then government arrested the culprits immediately and brought them to justice and punished the guilty police officials for firing upon the protestors and had the then Jathedar Sri Akal Takht summoned the father son-duo holding them morally responsible and guilty for these acts of sacrilege and awarded them the traditional Sikh punishment and had they gracefully accepted it and performed the prescribed sewa and begged pardon thereafter, their public apology would have some relevance and credibility. A public apology without owning their culpability or willful evading their moral responsibility during the tragic incidents sounds hollow and meaningless. One is reminded of William Shakespeare's immortal lines from his famous play "Hamlet", where a similarly culpable king of Denmark utters these lines while atoning for his crime and praying. These lines are:

My words fly up, my thoughts remain below,

Words without thought never to heaven go.

(Act III, Scene III)

As in the state of Denmark in Shakespeare's Play, "something is rotten in the state of Denmark", things were rotten in the then state of Punjab during their ten years rule.

It would be befitting to enlist some of the other highly objectionable and inappropriate occurrences which together resulted in the near decimation of a century old representative Panthic political party Shiromani Akali Dal all due to the morally reprehensive and opportunistic acts of the then Akali leadership. The most repulsive act was the way the anti-Sikh chief of a Sirsa Dera guilty of sacrilege and desecration of the sacred Sikh text and many other immoral acts was stage managed to be pardoned by the then Jahtedar of Sri Akal Takht by the then Akali leadership and then made to withdraw the granted pardon under the unbearable public protest and pressure. It is also guilty of not only mixing religion and politics but making religion subservient to politics and damaging the status and credibility of two premier Sikh Institutions of Sri Akal Takht and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee. While Jathedars of this august institution, one after the other were made pawns in the game of politics, election to SGPC was polluted beyond repair. Akali legislators alternated between being legislators or elected to the SGPC house, one or two of them being simultaneously becoming president of SGPC while remaining a legislator. A lady member convicted of infanticide by a court of law was made to become president of SGPC. Election to the office of the SGPC President and other office bearers remained a sham during its rule. Telecast of Gurbani Kirtan and daily service from Sri Harmandar Sahib was monopolized by its leadership's family business. State of Punjab became a haven for drug smuggling and proliferation of drug addiction among the Punjab / Sikh youth. The Public perception that a comparatively cheaper synthetic drug known as *Chitta* was factory manufactured, marketed, sold clandestinely among the youth all under the official patronage of some members of the ruling clan still prevails among the masses. A substantial section of Punjab's younger generation has been wiped out and lakhs of families have been ruined. Frightening number of drug addicts, peddlers and smugglers are in state's jails and de-addiction centres and making of films like *Udta Punjab* told a horrifying tale of this allegedly state-

sponsored deadly drug business. This kind of adverse public perception about this leadership is not likely to be easily effaced from public memory by this belated public apology. Failing to resolve any of the pending state issues such as unfair distribution of State river waters in violation of established constitutional riparian principles, allowing the state capital remaining a union territory, failure to get release of Sikh prisoners having completed their prison terms, reduced representation of Punjab State in Bhakra Beas Management Board (BBMB), very little increase in State's industrial capacity and employment generation; supply of electric power at very high tariff rates, monopolization of State Public transport and cable network by the ruling family and their cronies and near decimation of public sector transport, proliferation of gangsters, and police-bureaucrat-politician-drug smugglers nexus has further eroded their credibility among the masses. All these negative events, failure to solve outstanding state issues and acts of maladministration and corruption took place during this party's ten year rule when it was also a shareholder in power at the centre. As has been rightly said that power corrupts, absolute power corrupts absolutely. Now when all vestiges of power have been shattered and false pride bolstered by human ego has been shattered, this kind of public apology is too little too late and that too again with the seeming expectation/ motivation to get into the political mainstream. It looks like a fly in the ointment which creates a suspicion about the genuineness of the apology *Haumay* as Guru Nanak says is a chronic disease (*deerag rog*) which can be cured when ego is completely rid of ambition and genuine humility becomes a part of life. When shall the Sikhs and Punjab get a selfless, honest and visionary leadership? Let us pray for this vacuum to be filled.

ਜਿਸ ਕੈ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਰਾਜ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥
ਸੋ ਨਰਕਪਾਤੀ ਹੋਵਤ ਸੁਆਨੁ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 278)

ਅਪਰਾਧੀ ਦੂਣਾ ਨਿਵੈ ਜੋ ਹੰਤਾ ਮਿਰਗਾਹਿ ॥
ਸੀਸਿ ਨਿਵਾਇਐ ਕਿਆ ਥੀਐ ਜਾ ਰਿਦੈ ਕੁਸੁਧੇ ਜਾਹਿ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p.470)

ELIMINATING OF JATHEDAR KAUNKE IN FAKE ENCOUNTER REFLECTIONS OF HORRIBLE CONSENSUS AMONG POLITICAL CLASS

JASPAL SINGH SIDHU*

Some questions have been troubling millions of Sikhs in India and abroad that relate to the facts established by the official probe, now in the public domain after 31 years. That, as per the mandate of the Congress-ruled New Delhi Establishment in those days the Punjab government headed by its party Chief Minister Beant Singh had sanctioned the elimination of acting Akal Takht Jathedar Gurdev Singh Kaunke in a fake police encounter in 1992-end. But why did succeeding three Punjab governments of Akali Dal – BJP led by Parkash Singh Badal suppress the killing of the head of Sikh clergy during their nearly 15 years of rule?

Was there any political consensus or secret understanding between Congress and Akalis to finish off those who had threatened both parties' style of ruling in collaboration with pampered top police and civil bureaucracy? There is no concrete answer or proof to such underhand wheeling dealings of the political class. But the way circumstantial evidence and other developments of the past three decades have unfolded themselves speak volumes about the mutual collaboration of the political class. No one can deny that the Badal governments rewarded all those top police officers with plump positions who were infamous for killing the Sikh youth in fake encounters during the preceding government of Beant Singh in Punjab.

Another question becomes all the more pertinent when one looks at the facts that the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), a custodian and regulating authority of the Akal Takht, the

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supreme spiritual and temporal seat for the Sikhs, has been controlled by the Akali Dal itself.

Viewing Historically, the Akali Dal, a political outfit of the Sikhs came into being in 1920 when the Sikh community was struggling to get their gurdwaras (Sikh shrines) liberated from the British-backed mahants (hereditary priests) and the community made a lot of sacrifices to achieve the goal. Since the inception of the statutory body, SGPC in 1925, the Akali Dal has continuously been controlling it. And even as Akali Dal is no longer a political party of the Sikhs alone it cannot ignore that the Sikh community has still been its dominant electoral base. All this makes it morally and otherwise incumbent on the Akali Dal that it should act as custodian and protector of the Sikh clergy. But why it happened the other way around-- is perturbing the sensitive and religious Sikhs, particularly when the Akali Dal still invokes support of the Sikhs and also exercises its decree in the appointment of the Akal Takht jathedars.

Events leading to the elimination of Jathedar Kaunke and developments thereafter speak volumes for themselves. The Akali Dal headed by Parkash Singh Badal contested the Punjab assembly polls in 1997 and made a promise in the party's 'election manifesto' that if they came into power, they would punish the police officials who had committed excesses on the innocent Sikh families and killed the youth in fake police encounters during their preceding Congress and governor's rule in the state. As expected, when Mr Badal became Chief Minister, the aggrieved Sikhs and human rights activists approached him for action against erring police officials. The Punjab Human Rights Organization (PHRO) headed by retired Justice of Punjab and Haryana High Court Ajit Singh Bains also pressed for an inquiry into the killing of Jathedar Kaunke which was a matter of serious concern for Sikhs at that time. After several representations, Mr Badal, ultimately officially ordered an inquiry into the killing of Jathedar Kaunke by Additional Director General of Police (ADGP) B P Tewari in 1998. Next year, the ADGP submitted his investigation report to the Chief Minister in 1999. The Badal government suppressed that report and ignored all the PHRO's queries about it. Later on, efforts of several RTI activists to get a copy of the report failed, even during the two

subsequent Badal governments in 2007 to 2012 and 2012 to 2017. Till today, the report has not been released officially and the Jathedar is being shown as ABSCONDING in police record.

After the army attack on the Durbar Sahib, Amritsar in June 1984, the then incumbent Akal Takht Jathedar Kirpal Singh whom Sikhs accused of failing to perform the role that befitted his position, had stopped coming to the Akal Takht secretariat. The United Akali Dal headed by acting president Baba Joginder Singh and the Sikh Students' Federation leaders virtually controlled the SGPC affairs and the Akal Takht. Both outfits in collaboration with Damdami Taksal organized 'sarbat khalsa' (a gathering of Sikh community's representatives) at the Akal Takht on 26 January 1986. That gathering appointed Jasbir Singh Rode as Jathedar of the Akal Takht. Since Jathedar Rode was incarcerated in the Sagar prison, Gurdev Singh Kaunke was appointed as acting Jathedar till the former was released from jail. Jathedar Kaunke performed the duties as Akal Takht Jathedar till he was arrested following the announcement of 'Khalistan' by a five-member Panthic Committee from Durbar Sahib on 29 April 1986.

Now some dedicated human rights activists managed to procure a copy of the report from the official records. Then, they submitted that BP Tewari report to present to Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh and requested him to act upon it. Now Akal Takht has taken cognizance of that report and directed the SGPC to get the police case registered into the elimination of Jathedar Kaunke in the fake police encounter.

According to the 11-page report, a murder of a person took place in Kaunke, the native village of Jathedar Kaunke falling under the Jagraon police station on 7 December 1992. A few days later, the Jagraon police near Ludhiana picked up Jathedar Kaunke from his village. Following pressure from villagers, the Jathedar was released from police custody to perform the last rites of a small child who died in his family. The report says that on 25 December 1992, a Jagraon police party again came to Kaunke village, and encircled the village gurdwara in which Jathedar was performing religious rites. He was picked up from within the gurdwara in the presence of 200 villagers who had gathered there. (<https://www.bbc.com/punjabi/articles/>

c6p1gr7ny16o). For seven days, the Jathedar was given third-degree torture in the Jagraon CIA investigation center. The report records the witnesses of the torture including police official Darshan Singh who is still alive and has given live interviews to television/web channels narrating how the jathedar was brutally tortured and bundled out of the CIA center room as a heap of mutilated flesh with eyelids propping out. Then he was shot at by an inebriated police officer from his service revolver. Later the dead body was taken to a nearby rivulet where it was chopped into pieces and thrown into the water. The next day, the police concocted a story that the jathedar arrested in FIR no 181 was being taken to a nearby village for the recovery of illegal arms hidden there. The jathedar broke the belt of police constable Tarsem Singh with which the former was chained and ran away from the police custody. The second FIR was recorded in the Jagraon police station on 2 Jan 1993 against the Jathedar that he had run away from police custody. To make the police story sound more authentic, the police suspended Tarsem Singh for his lack of alertness which facilitated the Jathedar to escape. Since then the Jathedar has been shown as absconding.

The BP Tewari report carries the statements of 40 villagers, the Jathedar's wife, another woman who supplied food to the incarcerated Jathedar in the CIA center, and also a religious head of a nearby Nanaksar gurdwara who happened to visit the Jathedar in CIA staff custody and reported his physical bad condition outside. The report rejected the police version that Jathedar had run away from police custody as a "white lie". The report indicated that KPS Gill who was then DGP of Punjab on extension was aware of about all that happened at the Jagraon CIA center and the elimination of the Jathedar. That is why, Senior Superintendent Police Swarn Singh, SHO Gurmeet Singh, CIA Staff in charge Harbhagwan Singh Sodi, and some other officials relating to the Jathedar's episode were overnight transferred and were replaced by officials from outside. It was easy for the new faces of police to feign their ignorance about what happened to the Jathedar and suppress the matter accordingly. The concocted story of the Jagraon police, however, was revealed as the suspended constable Tarsem Singh was soon given a promotion.

The report also quotes that Akali Dal chief Mr Badal happened to come to Jagraon to meet his party leaders in those days. He was informed by his party leader from Ludhiana Surjan Singh Thekedar and others about the Jathedar in police custody. Mr. Badal called SSP Swaran Singh and asked him to give fair treatment to the Jathedar and arrange homely cooked food for him.

Interestingly, the entire story of Jathedar Kaunke's "disappearance" from police custody was documented as early as 1999 by an eminent human rights activist late Ram Narayan Kumar. That documentation is part of his book "Terror in Punjab-Narrative, Knowledge and Truth" published in 2008 (SHIPRA Publications, Delhi). In the detailed report under the heading "The Life and the Death of a Sikh Priest", spreading over 20 pages (from pages 58 to 78) Mr. Kumar penned down statements of Jathedar's family members including his wife Gurmail Kaur, villagers, police officers including SSP Swarn Singh and also a recorded interview of ex-army man Darshan Singh who was reemployed by the Jagraon police and who had frequently visited the CIA investigation center. The book also carries the interviews of Ranjit Singh and Mohinder Singh both from Kaunke village who were also taken into custody by the police and were sent to the CIA centre. The two had witnessed how the Jathedar was being tortured.

Following Jathedar Raghbir Singh's directions, a team of SGPC staff visited the family of Jathedar Kaunke for the first time after his elimination 31 years ago. The Sikh circles now view the Akal Takht and SGPC activities as a cover-up exercise and ask why incumbent Jathedar does not pinpoint an accusing finger on the Akali Dal which is equally guilty of suppressing the brutal murder by police.

The Sikhs are not expecting any action departing the earlier ones from the existing AAP government in Punjab.

MARTYRDOM AND SACRIFICE
– REMEMBERING THE SIKH HEROES OF 1947 IN
KASHMIR –

DR JASBIR SINGH SARNA*

State of Jammu and Kashmir had a significant population before partition in both rural and urban areas. As a result of the preaching and propagation of Sikh Gurus' Sikh gospel, especially by Guru Nanak and Guru Hargobind Sahib and Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule in Kashmir before its separation and veteran Sikh preachers like Akali Koer Singh, significant number of its native residents had converted to Sikhism. It were these Sikh natives who suffered large scale massacre and loss of life and property and Sikh shrines following attacks by tribal Pakistan to aided by local Muslims. This article provides reliable statistical account of this large scale bloodshed and violence which occurred in the Baramulla, Poonch region. — Editor

In 1947, during the partition of India, Jammu and Kashmir, like other princely states, witnessed a significant turmoil. The partition was carried out under a bi-national agreement. But in September 1947, Pakistan organized a tribal attack in the border areas of Kashmir, leading to widespread violence, looting, and abduction. During the turbulent times of the partition of India in 1947, the Sikh communities residing in various villages of the Baramulla district in Jammu and Kashmir found themselves thrust into a harrowing ordeal. These communities faced severe and often fatal attacks orchestrated by tribal Pakistanis and aided by local Muslims. The historical accounts of this

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time highlight the immense suffering and sacrifices endured by the Kashmiri Sikh community during the tumultuous events of 1947.

On October 31, 1947, tribals launched an attack on Kashmir, resulting in atrocities against Sikhs in various regions, including Muzaffarabad, Mirpur, Baramulla, Biru, Hal-Dadiyal, Alibag Sirhal, Bhimber, Devbotala, and Poonch. The Sikh community including Nanak Panthis, and Nanak Naam Leva suffered significant losses during this period, with estimates of 20,000 to 33,000 Sikh men, women, and children martyred. In 1980-82, oral evidence was recorded in Baramulla district, confirming the events of 1947. These records were verified by village elders. For instance, in **Khadniyar** village, most Sikhs had fled to Ichahama, Srinagar, but some who remained were later martyred when the enemy (tribals) took control of Baramulla. Mayya Singh's family, for example, sought refuge in a walnut tree forest but was eventually martyred by the attackers. Similarly, in **Shalपुरa**, the Sikhs sought safety on Cho'gall hill but were eventually taken down by the Indian Army, leading to their displacement to places like Srinagar and Baramulla.

Didarpura village also faced attacks and destruction, with local people looting and setting fire to the village. Some Sikhs who tried to protect the Gurdwara were killed and thrown into the fire. The village had a significant Sikh population in 1947, and several Sikhs were martyred. **Rawalpura**, which is now part of Kupwara district, saw its residents escape to safer areas like Sopur and Balgam Chure when they heard about the tribal attack. A fierce encounter occurred between the Sikhs and the attackers in Balgam Chure. About five hundred Sikhs achieved martyrdom.

In **Sialkot (Shalkot)** the initial response of the Sikhs was to seek refuge in a forested area, hoping to escape the approaching attackers. However, some courageous Sikhs, driven by a strong sense of devotion, decided to remain behind to protect their sacred Gurdwara. Tragically, these brave individuals paid the ultimate price for their dedication as they were martyred within the Gurdwara premises. The Gurdwara itself was ruthlessly set ablaze. Ultimately, a larger group of Sikhs from the village joined the forest caravan, uniting with those who had initially sought refuge there. This pivotal moment marked the beginning of

their journey to safety. The two neighboring villages **Chatusa and Tangmula**, before the turmoil of 1947, were home to a thriving Sikh population of over 300 individuals. These villages were situated in an elevated and forested region, approximately 15 kilometers away from Baramulla. On a fateful day, while two Sikhs, Bhai Man Singh and S. Balwant Singh, were on horseback, they encountered an unexpected and tragic event. Balwant Singh was fatally shot by tribal Pakistanis from the nearby Venakhari village. This incident set off a chain of events that would forever change the fate of the Sikhs in these villages. When Bhai Man Singh returned to his village, he rallied all the villagers, including those from Tangamula, and organized them into a caravan. With their families in tow, they embarked on a journey through the forested terrain. As the situation escalated, the attackers looted and torched the homes of the Sikhs left behind. The forest provided refuge to these Sikhs for an extended period, during which they endured hunger and harsh weather conditions. Regrettably, some of them fell ill from consuming certain vegetation. However, the caravan's resilience and resourcefulness saw them through, and indigenous treatments helped those who had fallen ill. Eventually, this group of Sikhs was rescued by the Indian army, which provided them with essential supplies and support. Tragically, those Sikhs who had stayed behind in Chatusa and Tangamula villages were not as fortunate and faced martyrdom at the hands of the attackers.

On the 12th of Katak, Sammat 2004, by 8 PM, an assembly took place at the village of **Satrana**. Sikh families from various villages had gathered together, and most of them, including women and children, tragically faced martyrdom in their own villages. The villages represented in this caravan included Chakshatloo, Bhatpura, Wanpora, Patusa, Panzala, Ghundbal, Hamadub, Ghundi, Phagipura, Hachipura, Mandana, Yarabugh, Charalighund, and Harduchanam. More than 3500 Sikhs, along with their families, were part of this caravan. These families had brought along some possessions, including both small and large items, traditional weapons, and clothing, as they fled their homes in haste. As they embarked on this journey, it was a bitterly cold night in Katak. They performed their prayers and then proceeded towards Srinagar. In the midst of this perilous journey, they could only watch

in despair as they saw their villages engulfed in flames from a distance. The journey was not without its challenges. An incident occurred at Hachipora where a youth from Makhan Singh's family in Yarabugh lost his life. Despite this tragedy, the caravan continued moving forward and eventually halted at the court grounds of Sopur Munsab in the morning. Elders among them consulted leaders from the Elder National Conference leaders, including individuals like Sufi Akbar and Muhammad Maqbool Sherwani, who advised them to stay. However, the Sikh caravan chose to continue its journey.

While crossing a bridge, their weapons were forcibly confiscated. They decided to leave the main road and turned towards Nursery Sopur. Their respite was brief, as news of the enemy's approach reached them. The caravan swiftly proceeded towards Bulgam. When they were still about a kilometer away from their destination, they heard enthusiastic cheers of "Bole so nihal." Believing that the Indian army had arrived, they rejoiced and advanced rapidly, shouting. However, tragedy struck as gunshots were fired at them from half a distance. Sikh families began losing their members, but they bravely pressed forward. Prominent leaders like S. Chhabil Singh Patusa, Bhai Man Singh Tangamula, S. Arjan Singh Chak Gujri, S. Lachman Singh Dutt Wanpora, S. Kapur Singh Patusa, Master Kirpal Singh Bhatpura, and others led the way, urging their fellow Sikhs to fight the enemy and attain martyrdom.

The fierce encounter lasted from 8 AM to 5 PM. Many Sikh families lost their lives in the skirmish, and numerous tribal Pakistani soldiers were also killed. Despite the enemy's use of firearms, the Sikhs remained steadfast. At 5 PM, the Kanspure front, consisting of the Dogra princely army and tribal Pakistanis, disintegrated. The Dogra forces retreated while the tribal Pakistani army advanced. The tribal Pakistani army unleashed a barrage of bullets, grenades, and machine gun fire on the Sikh caravan, resulting in further casualties. In desperation, Sikh families scattered and sought refuge wherever they could. Many were killed during this chaos, and those who survived returned to Nursery Sopur. Panicked Sikh families, in a desperate bid to prevent their women and children from falling into enemy hands, began jumping into the river Jhelum, tragically sacrificing their own

lives. Some members of the caravan headed towards the Hichahama front, some went to Srinagar, and others returned to their respective villages. However, Sikh families who attempted to deliver food to their villages faced martyrdom at the hands of native Muslims on the way. Those who survived this traumatic ordeal did so with the assistance of the Indian Army and eventually relocated to Baramulla and Srinagar.

In the village of **Panzala**, around 300 Sikhs faced an attack in 1947. They gathered in Satrana village and moved towards Sopur and Balgam, where many were martyred. Notably, a mother named Gopi Kaur sacrificed herself and her two children by immolating in a pyre. Ghundi Hum Dub, with over 200 Sikhs, also suffered casualties in 1947. Some escaped, but about 80 Sikhs lost their lives. **Wanpora**, another village in Baramulla district, had a thriving Sikh population of over 200 residents before 1947. Upon receiving word of the imminent attack by tribal Pakistanis, all the Sikhs in the village, accompanied by their families, swiftly departed from their homes. They journeyed to the neighboring village of Satrana in the form of a caravan. From there, the Sikhs continued their journey to Balgam Chure through Sopur. **Bhatpura**, a village of about 400 Sikhs, was divided into three parts. When attacked, two-thirds had already left, while the rest sought refuge on a hillock. The village was set on fire, and many Sikhs and women were martyred. Mata Radha Kaur from Bhatpura displayed immense courage but was shot when she refused to abandon her faith. She eventually passed away, and her home was looted and burnt.

Bhatpura lost 65 of its residents during these tragic events. These stories illustrate the harrowing experiences faced by these villages during the tribal attacks of 1947. They also highlight the remarkable bravery and sacrifices made by individuals and communities to uphold their Sikh faith and protect their homes and families in the face of great adversity.

Chak Shatloo, also known as Chak Gujri, was a village with a diverse population of both Sikhs and Muslims before 1947. The tranquility of this village was shattered when tribal attacks occurred in the region. In response, all the Sikhs living in Chak Shatloo left

their homes and gathered in the nearby village of Satrana. From there, they formed a caravan to escape further danger, ultimately heading toward Balam Chura, which was reached via Sopur. As the Sikhs reached Balam Chura, they encountered fierce opposition from the enemy tribesmen. Many Sikh lives were tragically lost in this confrontation. It was a dire situation for the Sikhs as they were starving, injured, and outnumbered by their armed adversaries. One harrowing account involves S. Arjan Singh, a Sikh who valiantly held onto his faith even in the face of grave danger. He refused to renounce his religion despite repeated demands from his captors. In an act of unspeakable cruelty, he was buried alive in the sand near an old crude bridge in Baramulla, only to be later beheaded. **The oppressors even placed a hot tawa (a flat iron used for cooking) on his severed neck, prolonging his agony. His story stands as a unique testament to the strength of his faith and the brutality he endured.** Moreover, this village witnessed extraordinary courage displayed by Sikh women. When these warrior women were captured by the tribesmen with the intent of taking them to Pakistan, they found themselves walking in the middle of the enemy group on a bridge over the river Jhelum. Seizing an opportunity, one brave woman cheered, prompting the others to leap from the bridge into the river to avoid capture. Tragically, the enemies fired bullets at these women from the riverbanks, resulting in their martyrdom. This chapter in Sikh history showcases the indomitable spirit of women who chose to face martyrdom rather than forsake their faith. The aftermath of these events left Chak Shatloo village entirely deserted. However, the families of some surviving martyrs eventually returned to the village. In total, this village suffered the loss of more than 90 of its residents during these tragic events.

These accounts illustrate the bravery and sacrifices made by Sikhs during the challenging times of 1947 in the Baramulla district, with approximately 80 Sikhs in Ghundi Hamadub, and 65 in Bhatpura, giving their lives for their faith and community.

These tragic events were not isolated incidents. Several other villages, such as **Charaligund, Yarabugh, Maidan Cho'gall, and Handwara**, experienced similar attacks and hardships. The Sikh

communities in these villages, too, had to confront adversity. Gurdwaras were targeted, and Sikh populations suffered grievous losses. During these trying times, the Sikhs displayed immense bravery and resilience. Their devotion to their faith and their commitment to protecting their religious sites were evident. However, they were not spared from the horrors of the partition, and many of them faced unimaginable suffering and loss.

Parmpillan village glorified the martyrdom of 14 Sikh individuals from this village. They were shot and martyred after responding to their attackers with courage. Baramulla is described as a significant town with a historical connection to Sikh Gurus. When the tribal attack occurred, efforts were made to protect Sikhs and Hindus, and some Sikhs left for Srinagar. Many Sikh homes were burned. **Salamabad** village suffered looting and burning by tribal forces. Bhai Gokal Singh, an Electricity Inspector, was caught but eventually freed. Several Singhs were martyred, and the survivors returned to the village. **Dardkot** village faced a significant impact during the tribal attack. Sikhs fought bravely but eventually went hungry and endured hardships before reaching Jammu. **Triboniya**, located in the Tithwal mountains, saw a population of around 450 Sikhs in 1947. Two Sikhs, S. Ramaiah Singh and S. Uttam Singh, played a crucial role in relaying information to Maharaja Hari Singh in Srinagar. This location Sopur mentions the challenges faced by Sikhs as they tried to reach Srinagar while being pursued by tribal attackers. Some Sikhs received help from noble Muslims like Muhammad Sultan. In this area, namely **Dangiwacha**, Sikh families were targeted by tribal forces. Some sought refuge with Pirs (spiritual leaders), but ultimately, a large tribal army attacked them, resulting in many Sikh casualties. Sharakawara is mentioned as a village that successfully reached Srinagar with the help of the Indian Army, ensuring the safety of its Sikh residents. **Naupra Jagir**, located near Singhpura Kalan, saw many Sikhs join the caravan to Baltham, facing martyrdom and suffering along the route. **Singhpura Kalan** was known for its progressive Sikh community. When the tribal attack occurred, Sikhs left their homes, and reached Baltham, and many were martyred.

Najibhat Village is Located near Singhpura Kalan, Najibhat was home to around 125 Sikhs in 1947, alongside a Muslim population.

Upon hearing of tribal attacks in Baramulla, the Sikh residents of Najibhat initially sought refuge in Dardpora village. However, upon learning that Sikh reinforcements had arrived in Baramulla, they returned home. Tragically, the tribesmen ambushed them from the high hills of Singhpura, resulting in the martyrdom and injury of many Sikhs. The survivors were later brutally martyred by the enemy. The village lost 18 of its residents in these events. **Shirakawa** Village is situated near a hillock, with both Sikhs and Muslims residing there. When news of the tribal attack on Baramulla reached the village, the thoughtful and intelligent Sikhs, particularly under the leadership of S. Kapur Singh, decided that immediate evacuation to Srinagar was the safest course of action. The entire village successfully reached Srinagar in 1947 without any loss of life.

Dardpora Village was situated not far from Baramulla and had a Sikh population of approximately 325 in 1947. On 12 Katak, the village was subjected to looting and arson by local goons and tribals, forcing the Sikhs to flee as a caravan towards Ichahama. They participated in the Ichahama front and later moved to Srinagar. Unfortunately, those who returned to Dardpora after the conflict were martyred by the assailants. The village mourned the loss of 14 of its residents.

Kanihama Village located near the Srinagar-Gulmarg road, had around 160 Sikhs in 1947. Hearing of the tribal attack in Baramulla on 11 Katak, the Sikh families gathered and formed a caravan towards Ichahama village. Notably, a brave warrior from Kanahama named Kartar Singh inflicted significant damage on the tribesmen before succumbing to the battle. The village lost 8 residents in these events. **Biawa** Village situated near the Srinagar-Gulmarg road, was home to Sikhs as well as people from various other backgrounds. In response to the tribal attack, the Sikhs of Biawa joined the caravan heading towards Ichahama, later moving to Srinagar. A devoted Sikh, Bhai Sevak Singh, refused to leave 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' behind and chose martyrdom along with his son. Their courage is celebrated. The village saw the loss of 6 of its residents. **Upalna**, perched on a small hill near Baramulla, saw its Sikh families joining a caravan to Dardpora in response to the tribal attack. Afterward, some Sikhs participated in

the Ichahama conflict, while others returned home to face looting and arson by the tribesmen. A total of 38 residents of Upalna sacrificed their lives in these trying times. **Gohan**, located 7 km from Baramulla on a high hill, learned of the tribal attack on 11 Katak, Sammat 2004. The villagers formed a caravan, which eventually reached Srinagar via Ichahama and Budgam. Two residents, S. Balwant Singh Nambardar and S. Gyan Singh, witnessed the looting and burning of their village and reached Srinagar on horseback. Gohan lost 17 of its residents in these events. **Chandusa** Village Situated on a hilly terrain along the Baramulla-Gulmarg Baba Rishi road, Chandusa was home to a single family. Upon learning of the tribal attack on 11 Katak, the villagers gathered as a caravan but were ambushed close to their village. Among the brave defenders were S. Ramaiah Singh, Mr. Gaja Singh, S. Ujagar Singh, and S. Kapur Singh. S. Ramaiah Singh was martyred while fighting, and upon the caravan's return, houses were looted and burned. Tragically, 14 residents, known as the Singh Parwanians, were executed by the tribesmen. S. Sucha Singh's mother, Mata Ghunni Kaur, played a heroic role in preserving their memory. The village marked the martyrdom of 25 residents.

To sum up the partition of India in 1947 brought immense turmoil and tragedy to the Sikh communities in the Baramulla district of Jammu and Kashmir. The villages mentioned above bore witness to the indomitable spirit of the Sikh people, who, despite facing grave danger, displayed unwavering devotion to their faith and a profound sense of community. Their stories are a testament to the sacrifices made during this tumultuous period in history. These stories collectively reflect the challenges, sacrifices, and resilience of the Sikh community during the tribal attack in 1947 .

GURU TEG BAHADUR: FROM SIMRAN TO SHAHADAT

DR TEJWANT SINGH GILL*

Guru Teg Bahadur (1621-1675) was the 9th Sikh Guru. He assumed this exalted status after Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan. Being the son of his deceased brother, the former was his nephew and the latter his grandson. His assumption was, no doubt, late. There is nothing on record to show that he ever objected to the practice that was followed in this regard. Just possible, he regarded it as symptomatic. The practice that Guru Nanak had initiated had been dropped. The new practice, genealogical in form, was also not above board. Several were the reasons which cast clouds of uncertainty and apprehension.

To ponder over the reasons that the practice involved, can both be interesting and instructive. They are several and of various kinds. The domestic situation was tinged with sorrow of which his acutely sensitive mind could not be oblivious. The martyrdom of his grandfather, illustrious for several achievements, most of all for the compilation of Adi Granth, was painful beyond words. Though Guru Hargovind had assumed the mantle of miri along with piri, nowhere prevailed there the reign of partnership (sanjhi valta) wherein all were equal partners. Rather Harimander Sahib, its religious and spiritual epitome, had come under the control of those who strove to appear sanctimonious but essentially went against the sanctity it symbolized. So much so, on one occasion, before he became Guru, Teg Bahadur went there to pray but was denied entry into its precincts. It is not on record if later he either went there on his own or was beseeched to do so.

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In such a situation, the best thing for him to do was, to concentrate on the Bani of Guru Nanak. It formed the basis of Adi Granth and Bhai Gurdas was there to act as his guide and teacher. Since he had collaborated with Guru Arjan to prepare Adi Granth, Bhai Gurdas was the best person to do so. He whole-heartedly helped Teg Bahadur in delving into the depth of Guru Nanak's oeuvre. This impelled the young Teg Bahadur to assume simran as way of living a fruitful life. This was meditation, essentially different from asceticism and renunciation. For asceticism, it was essential to renounce bodily comforts. Not only renunciation, their discomfiture was for it the next option. For renunciation, denial of domestic, more so of marital life, was so very essential. As opposed to both, simran advocated simple living and high thinking. For Guru Nanak, this had meant to overcome all worldly constraints, so as to deserve the Almighty's benign benediction. For Teg Bahadur, this dictum became so essential that in all the couplets and quatrains he composed, reiteration of Nanak became a categorical imperative. More than a poetic device, it was meant to assert that absolute adherence to what Guru Nanak had illumined was so very essential.

For leading life in the true and authentic sense, Guru Nanak had put emphasis upon not fearing any worldly agency, whether social, political or religious. Instead, it was essential to fear the Almighty, kind-hearted, merciful and benevolent. This became Guru Teg Bahadur's life-principle, particularly after he became the Guru. From the time of Guru Arjan, the authorities were biased against this teaching and signals to this effect were regularly received by his predecessors. They faced no serious danger because for them discretion was the better part of valor. Nurtured upon the teachings of Guru Nanak and in the deepest recesses of his heart pondering over Guru Arjan's martyrdom, Guru Teg Bahadur neither evaded nor avoided the fact that his actions and activities were under close scrutiny.

The orthodox and bigoted sections of Islamic dispensation, based in Sirhind, not far from Anandpur, were keeping a close eye upon Guru Teg Bahadur's preaching of Guru Nanak's message, meant to

alleviate the misery and poverty of the people living in the villages. Historical records tell that at least two times, warrants to arrest him were issued, nullified by efforts of certain well-meaning persons in authority. No wonder, he was aware of all that posed a danger to his well-being. The courage and sobriety he embodied endeared him to the people living nearby and afar from Anandpur. He valued the regard they had for so very ardently. Moved by this, he took it as his mission to visit all the places Guru Nanak had gone in the course of his travels. The result was that laying down his life for people began to figure in his mind with a great deal of urgency. Not in the nominal but authentic sense, he proved himself *Hind di chadar* by which he is eulogized so reverently by people of all castes and creeds, faiths and beliefs.

The coming of the Kashmiri pandits beseeching for protection from persecution, for wearing the sacred thread might not have happened exactly as it has got enshrined in the commonsense of the people. Wearing the sacred thread for form's sake was what Guru Nanak had disproved in no uncertain terms. Probably different issues were troubling the Kashmiri people. Kashmir was regarded as haven of luxurious and erotic indulgence. What to talk of the emperor, his courtiers, subedars and their subordinates believed that they were destined to make the best of this dispensation. The compilation of Adi Granth and its recitation had sent the message of equality and fraternity. Traders and craftsmen coming quite often to the plains of Punjab might have been charmed by this new phenomenon. To raise voice against the enormities to which the Kashmiri people of all creeds were subjected, might have occurred to them. Most probably they might have begun visiting Anandpur where the custodian of the teachings of the Adi Granth had his abode. To borrow from William Shakespeare the expression "readiness is all" was what Guru Teg Bahadur was found embodying in the true sense of the word. Very vigorously, he began to side with the people who lived close by as well as far wide. Historical records, ambiguously reliable, tell that he was apprehended from a place close to Ropar on the allegation that he had illegally entered into the territory of Sirhind. The fact of the matter was that geographical boundaries had no importance in his eyes. He took it as

his mission to preach Guru Nanak's teachings everywhere. Put under arrest, he was kept in prison in Sirhind for several months. It was acutely hot when he was taken to Delhi to face execution. Not a month had passed in prison when he was beheaded in the vicinity of the Red Fort. As in life so in death, glory was his for a follower of his cremated his dead body by putting his cottage on fire. Another brought his blood-soaked head to Anandpur where his illustrious son received it with all the solemnity required by the occasion, with his aged grandmother and widowed mother by his side.

During his tenure lasting sixteen years, Guru Teg Bahadur composed shlokas comprising lines, varying from two to six in number. They all, numbering around sixty four, can be put into two categories. The first category is of those which he composed after becoming the Guru but before his apprehension. They are about four times as compared with those of the latter category, going up to sixteen. They figure in various ragas, to show that life is mortal, human relations are fragile, wealth, power and authority are short-lived and vanish while a person is still alive. Marital bond also ends, temporarily before but essentially after death. Here, his theoretical assumption cannot do without recognizing the worth his wedlock with Mata Gujri had brought into his life. If its full recognition was missed, obviously circumstances, prevailing in the world around, were to blame. Likewise, the attention he invoked of the primordial mother to help him in having glimpse of the Divine could not be set aside. Both these factors went a long way to show how cordiality prevailing profusely in personal life could be a meaningful incentive for bestowing spiritual serenity.

Human mind was the chief leitmotif of his shlokas of these years. In Guru Granth Sahib, they figure in fifteen ragas, In one he composed in raag Sorith, he calls upon the wavering mind to foster love for the Divine and devise some way to achieve this end. Finding it not happen as desired, he feels sad to note what is desired is not achieved. Even then, he does not reconcile with the inevitable and calls upon the human being to devise some way to achieve his end. Finding it not within his power to do so, he invokes the attention of

the primordial mother to come to his aid. One is left wondering if the call was to his mother Mata Nanaki who regarded him as her dearest son! After Guru Har Rai's elevation as the Guru, he had come with her to settle at her parental house, His young wife, Mata Gujri had also accompanied him to this place, Here he stayed for about eighteen years till the Sikhs invoking their congregational authority, guided by the 8th Guru Harkrishan, urged him to be the Guru and he accepted the offer with all the humility he could muster for the occasion.

After consenting to become the Guru, he did not immediately feel reconciled to his elevation. What to do to justify his new position was a factor that lurked duppermost in his mind. In raag dhanasri, he questioned himself to know what was required of him to do to justify the elevation. He was eager to do what could put an end to the doubt that troubled his mind. Temporarily unable to come up with adequate answer, he called upon the Almighty to protect his self-esteem that went beyond self-respect. By articulating it in raag basant, what he realized was that Simran should be the determining factor for him to pursue in the course of his life. If in raag basant, he cautioned himself against turning indifferent to simran, now he urged himself to be resolute in this pursuit. Such was the state of mind he had acquired when apprehended beyond the border of the state he put up. Made to stay in Sirhind for several months, he was ultimately moved to Delhi to be martyred along with his three disciples who were brutally killed.

During the three months of his confinement in Sirhind, days of travel to Delhi and the period before martyrdom, his thinking and feeling turned all the more sober and serious. The period during which he travelled to Delhi was of summer when usually it was very hot during the day as well as the night. Probably he would have travelled on foot or been carried on a bullock-cart. Whether day-time and night-time passed calmly was not certain under the condition that prevailed. All the more somber and serious might have been the state of mind in which he reached Delhi. There also, he was put in prison probably in isolation from his three followers who, in full devotion, were ready to face all consequences. In the prison he was alone and it was in such a

state, that he composed the sixteen shlokas which act as epilogue of Guru Granth Sahib with Guru Nanak's Japuji as the prologue.

Unlike his earlier shlokas, he did not compose them with one or the other raga in mind. Like Guru Nanak's masterpiece, he did not base their composition on the raga-system. But it does not mean that they are not meant to be soulfully recited and sung. As is true of Guru Nanak's masterpiece, herein as well the musical measure transcends one to emerge from an instrument. So crystalized is the expression of motifs in them that the reader cannot help turning into the reciter invoking his or her own musical tone and tenor. Horror of the invisible, lure of property, bliss from erotic charm, illusion that luxury caused and comfort that wedded life provided, they all appeared in the landscape of his mind like cloudlets in the sky, only to disappear in no time. Pain and pleasure, praise and derision, rage and grief, causing injury or sustaining it in return, all were real and unreal at the same time. Though picture-making had always distracted him, their conjoint sense, he expressed best by employing words in the following picture, not decorative and conventional:

*Nanak, as a picture separates itself not from the wall it is hung,
Happens not what one wants, something else occurs in its place*

It is not out of context to know that recourse to image particularly of the pictorial sort had not been his fond way of making an observation or giving a value-judgement. Here it was an image, rather a picture which he had recourse to for articulating a value-judgement.

Most remarkable are the twoshlokas, which figure towards the end. The dialogic relation figuring between them postulates optimism of hope and will against pessimism of loss and despair.

*As strength drops, bonds harden, nothing stays within human grasp,
Only the Divine is there to give aid, as elephant facing panther's assault!
As strength grows, bonds drop to achieve gets possible indeed,
Nanak! All is within your hands, only you can all happen again.*

In the Sikh circles, for quite some time, it was presumed that Guru Teg Bahadur believed in devoting himself entirely to the urgent need to control the mind. This belief was further extended to uphold his dire need to remain steadfast, control the mind and not let it waver

after attachments and attractions. Even the urge to withstand oppression unleashed by the authorities was not to be resisted. They presumed that this was a message he had sent to his son who had become the Guru. He had not yet forged the Khalsa, destined to withstand oppression and suppression very much in vogue then. The second shloka, they believed was composed by the tenth Guru who had started believing that the mind should strengthen itself enough so as to resist oppression and suppression unleashed from any quarter. However, studied closely side by side, they forward quite a different state of mind and equip us with another perspective. From the theme, diction, rhythm and feeling therein articulated, it becomes clear that both the shlokas were of Guru Teg Bahadur. The first one got composed when pessimism held sway over his mind. From it, then arose the counter state when optimism of the will fared forward. It enabled him to visualize a state of becoming to replace that of being which earlier urged him to forego his initiative and will, No wonder, the message emanating from both was of clouds darkening the horizon but lightening dispersing their darkness at the same time.

J.S. GREWAL ON SIKH HISTORY

DR INDU BANGA*

In this article on Dr J.S. (Jagtar Singh) Grewal's multilayered contribution to Sikh history, we may begin with a few general observations. He studies Sikh history with reference to the Punjab as a geographical and cultural region in India. For him, history covers the whole of the past society. He regards religion as constituting 'a large chunk of life which mattered to the people'. His explanations are informed by a rational secular worldview, but without any prejudice against religion. He believes that ideology, whether secular or religious, is important as a motor force in the life and action of people. Therefore, Dr Grewal is interested as much in ideas as in their historical context. He generally respects tradition, but makes a careful distinction between the task of the historian and that of a theologian. Nearly half of his three scores of books and 200 research papers exemplify the efficaciousness of historical method for studying Sikh history.

Approaching Guru Nanak with an open mind and paying close attention to his words, Dr Grewal comes to the conclusion that Guru Nanak was offering a system of interconnected ideas which was independent of other systems: Guru Nanak founded the Sikh faith. This is contrary to W.H. McLeod's position who places Guru Nanak in the *sant* tradition, that is amongst the *sants* (not saints) like Kabir. Dr Grewal argues convincingly that even though Sant Kabir used the terms *bukam*, *shabad*, *nadar*, *naam* and the *guru*, his emphasis and even concepts were not exactly the same as in Guru Nanak Bani. After putting these ideas together as a coherent whole, Dr Grewal comes upon a new religious ideology. In fact, ever since the publication of his *Guru Nanak in History* (1969), his differences with McLeod have

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remained basic.

There were significant differences in the social message of Sant Kabir and Guru Nanak. Both remained concerned with caste; Guru Nanak identified himself with the lowest of the low to the disregard of his socially privileged situation. Kabir did not think of equality in terms of gender, whereas Guru Nanak consciously created a larger space for women than we find in the whole range of religious literature of the times. Even though much of the space thus created was within the patriarchal framework, Guru Nanak 'does not say anything which can be used to support inequality of any kind'. Moreover, Kabir Bani gave a bare inkling of the political situation around, but Guru Nanak criticized oppression, injustice, corruption and discrimination in no uncertain terms.

Guru Nanak's faith combined spiritual and temporal concerns, and liberation-in-life for him was 'a social project for the redemption of others'. His concern for their suffering and welfare was termed *parupkar* by his successors. Guru Nanak prescribed a way of life at Kartarpur and to sustain it, institutionalized the *dharamsal* (later Gurdwara), *sangat*, *langar* and, above all, Guruship. Sikh Panth came into existence in his life time as a product of his conscious decision and deliberate action. Sant Kabir, however, had no hand in the emergence of the Vaishnavite Kabir Panth which came up almost a century after his passing away.

Proceeding from this understanding of the founder, Dr Grewal analyses the Bani and contributions of the successor Gurus, *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas, and the contents of the *Janamsakhis* like the Puratan and the *B-40*. The author underscores distinctiveness of Guru Nanak's message and looks upon him as the founder of a new faith and a new Panth. It may be added that contrary to McLeod's idea that *Janamsakhis* were 'myths', Dr Grewal talks of different *Janamsakhi* traditions, each as a different interpretation of the life and mission of Guru Nanak.

In his study of Guru Gobind Singh (2019), Dr Grewal brings out interrelationships between the ideology of Guru Nanak, developments under his successors, and active agency of the Mughal state. The tenth Guru's own compositions reinforced Guru Nanak's ideology, with

social equality and concern for justice and righteousness as its integral parts. On the Baisakhi of 1699, 'fresh injunctions were added to the ideals of the Sikh faith cherished by his predecessors. The old and the new were combined to forge a new kind of order'. Significantly, at least six *Rabitnamas* are placed in Guru Gobind Singh's lifetime with the suggestion that he himself had the norms of the Khalsa way of life laid down. Dr Grewal maintains that, 'the most important features of the *rabit* were in place during the time of Guru Gobind Singh or soon afterwards, including the five symbols, which later constituted the formulation of 5Ks'.

Notwithstanding his colossal losses, Guru Gobind Singh favoured a 'peaceful settlement' with the Mughals over the issue of restoration of Anandpur. His letter to Aurangzeb (*Zafarnama*), meeting with his son and successor Bahadur Shah, and moving with him up to a point in the Deccan are placed in this context. When Guru Gobind Singh felt convinced about 'the evasive attitude of Bahadur Shah', he declined to go any further with the emperor, and encamped at Nanded. Soon afterwards, the tenth Guru commissioned Banda Singh to go to the Punjab and lead the Khalsa in revolt against an unjust Mughal state.

Significantly, according to Dr Grewal, 'the ideal of sovereignty had come into currency before Banda Singh's appearance on the scene and this ideal survived the failure of his enterprise'. In other words, this ideal was conceived by Guru Gobind Singh himself. After the martyrdom of Banda and his companions in 1716, the Khalsa waged a long struggle for political power against Mughals and Afghans, which culminated in the establishment of Khalsa Raj in the Punjab in 1765.

Dr Grewal emphasizes that the ideal of martyrdom remained 'an integral part of the struggle for sovereign rule'. It was a product of Sikh history and ideology. Incidentally, here too, he counters the assumptions of some Western scholars. He also elaborates on the many-faceted legacy of Guru Gobind Singh, including the doctrines of Guru Granth and Guru Panth, which provided cohesion to the Khalsa in their grim political struggle. By the end of the eighteenth century, the Khalsa (Singh) identity became the 'dominant Sikh identity'.

The distinctiveness of Sikh identity is basic to Dr Grewal's understanding of Sikh history. In a separate book entitled, *History, Literature and Identity: Four Centuries of Sikh Tradition* (2011), he reinforces his argument through a rigorous analysis of fourteen core Sikh texts produced during Mughal, Sikh and colonial rule. He assumes a close connection between the historical context and the texts, and treats them in five parts.

Firstly, the deliberate articulation of a new dispensation by Guru Nanak and its conscious elaboration by his first four successors. In the seventeenth century context of confrontation with the Mughal state, distinct ideology and the identity based on it was emphatically articulated by Bhai Gurdas and Guru Tegh Bahadur. The former used the term *nirmal panth* for this new path, and the latter underlined fearlessness built into its ideology and upheld freedom of conscience.

In the literature related to Guru Gobind Singh there was an added emphasis on distinctive identity and the Khalsa as a political community. The term *tisar panth* (the third way) made its appearance around 1700 and remained in use in the literature produced during the period of Sikh rule.

In the last part of this book, Dr Grewal analyses Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha's *Ham Hindu Nahin* (1898) and concludes that his argument was based largely on the early Sikh literature. Like him, the other Singh Sabha leaders derived their doctrines, concerns and self-image from the Sikh tradition. In other words, the ideology of the Singh Sabha movement was not an 'invention', or a product of colonial rule. However, Nabha's insistence that distinctive identity made the Sikhs 'a qaum or nationality', was new in the colonial situation; it 'entitled them to a share in political power as an integral part of the Indian Nation', suggests Dr Grewal.

Finally, it is underlined that the early Sikh identity hinged as much on the 'objective differences' of the 'Sikhs' from the others (both 'Hindus' and Muslims) around as on the 'Sikh subjective awareness' of their distinctiveness. Moreover, in the pre-colonial period, the Parsi, Muslim and Hindu observers (for example, 'Mobad', Qazi Noor Muhammad and Ganesh Das Wadehra, respectively) looked upon the

Sikhs ‘as distinct from both Hindus and Muslims’.

There is much more to Dr Grewal’s contribution to the field of Sikh history. His widely read *The Sikhs of the Punjab* (New Cambridge History of India, 2017), covers Sikh history from its inception to the aftermath of militancy. He evaluates debates on the ‘fundamental’ concerns of Sikh studies (1997,1998,2011); lays bare the biases of *Western Scholarship* on Guru Nanak (1992); reflects on ‘the issue’ of gender relations in *Guru Nanak and Patriarchy*(1993); scrutinizes modern *Historical Writings on the Sikhs* (2012); questions the Persian accounts of *Guru Tegh Bahadur* (1976); analyses major Sikh and non-Sikh sources (2001,2004,2009); studies the doctrine, history, structure, social content and status of *Guru Granth Sahib* (2009); provides fresh insights into the early Sikh tradition and nature of the eighteenth-century Sikh polity (1972, 2007);affords a fuller picture of the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (1987, 2001); traces the history of the Akali movement (1996); and places in perspective the much misunderstood Sikh figures of the twentieth century—Master Tara Singh (2017) and Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha(2018).

As a whole, Dr Grewal’s work illustrates the ‘complexity, character and comprehensiveness’ of Sikh history. He maintains, however, that if Sikh history has acquired greater depth,there is more to regional history ‘in terms of space, size and diversity of the population’. For a meaningful and lasting interpretation, the two need to be studied in their interrelationships. It is not surprising that Dr Grewal has published extensively also on the Punjab region from the earliest times to the present, thus imparting a distinct form to regional history. The field of Sikh (and Punjab) history has not been the same since he entered it in the late 1960s.

**INTEGRATION OF CREATOR AND CREATION
– SIKH THEOLOGY ROOTED IN ECO-THEOLOGY –
PART II**

PROF KULWANT SINGH*

There is complete affinity between Nature's laws called Eco-theology in modern parlance and Sikh Theology (*Balibari Kudrat Vasya*). This article traces the major contours of this close relationship between Nature and Sikhism in four parts. First two Parts have been published in Oct-Dec 2023 issue of *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* and the last two parts are being concluded in the this issue. — Editor

III

Apart from the close affinity between the nature's seasonal rhythm and graphic presentation of Sikh spiritual spectrum, Sikh theology highlights all human instincts, impulses, feelings and thoughts which dehumanize as well as elevate human beings in their life's journey and determine their degraded or morally uplifted State through the use of similes and metaphors borrowed from nature and its vast variety of fauna and flora and biodiversity in the sacred Sikh text Sri Guru Granth Sahib. This imagery is so rich, widespread and appropriate that it becomes a most appropriate medium of expression for the expression of almost every human instinct. Before we bring out the one to one correspondence between the natural object picked up and the intended human instinct to be expressed, it will be appropriate to catalogue some of the prominent human vices and virtues which Sikh theology highlights and records. In the negative list are human vices like lust,

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anger, greed, worldly, familial attachments and pride, human tendency to grab what belongs to others and encroach upon others' right, Indulgence in slander, calumny, violence, double dealing, disguise or keeping false appearances. On the positive side, are human virtues of love, compassion, detachment, urge and desperate craving for communion with the Divine, cultivation of virtues of contentment, patience, steadfastness, humility and sense of fulfillment and performance of good deeds. Nature's biodiversity provides the widest frame work of reference for the expression of human feelings and thoughts as Sikh Gurus were intimately connected to nature. Their Sikh followers, majority of whom having been engaged in agriculture since the early stages of their history, also remain closely in touch with the earth and nature. So Gurbani verses communicate human feelings and thoughts through the use of similes and metaphors from nature. Excessive carnal desire or lust in human body, beyond is legitimate cathartic purgation of an irresistible natural biological attraction towards the opposite sex partly for procreation through a marital relationship, leads to degeneration of both human body and mind and soul.

Similarly, feeling of anger, rashness of temper and human tendency to flare up at the slightest provocation has a debilitating effect upon the human body. Both excessive lust and anger are corrosive for the human body as borax melts the gold. A Gurbani verse states:

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਕਾਇਆ ਕਉ ਗਾਲੈ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਕੰਚਨ ਸੋਹਾਗਾ ਢਾਲੈ ॥
*Lust and wrath disintegrate the body,
As borax gold.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 932

ਕਲਿ ਕਲਵਾਲੀ ਕਾਮੁ ਮਦੁ ਮਨੁਆ ਪੀਵਣਹਾਰੁ ॥
ਮਜਲਸ ਕੂੜੇ ਲਬ ਕੀ ਪੀ ਪੀ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥
*Kaliyuga is the vat, lust the wine; the mind the boozier.
With wrath is the cup by attachment filled;
Pride the Cup-bearer.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 553

Human greed, indiscrete craving for acquisition of material wealth

through means fair and foul, indulgence in corruption even at the cost of one's reputation and moral character and willful violation of rule of law has been squarely condemned in Sikh Gurbani and theology. A human being, falling a victim to excessive greed is worst than a mad dog stricken with rabies:

ਜਿਉ ਕੂਕਰੁ ਹਰਕਾਇਆ ਧਾਵੈ ਦਹ ਦਿਸ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮਦਿ ਬਿਆਪਿਆ ਫਿਰਿ ਫਿਰਿ ਜੋਨੀ ਪਾਇ ॥੨॥

Man like a rabid dog in ten directions runs.

The avaricious man, of discrimination bereft, grabs things, righteously and unrighteously.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 50

Another verse comparing a greedy person to a nomadic hunter with a sharp edged dagger leading a pack of dogs consisting of a male dog and two female dogs (bitches) symbolic of human greed and craving desire to amass more and more wealth day and night and grabbing even what belongs to others.

ਏਕੁ ਸੁਆਨੁ ਦੁਇ ਸੁਆਨੀ ਨਾਲਿ ॥ ਭਲਕੇ ਭਉਕਹਿ ਸਦਾ ਬਇਆਲਿ ॥
ਕੁੜੁ ਛੁਰਾ ਮੁਠਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ॥ ਧਾਣਕ ਰੂਪਿ ਰਹਾ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥੧॥
ਮੈ ਪਤਿ ਕੀ ਪੰਦਿ ਨ ਕਰਣੀ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਹਉ ਬਿਗੜੈ ਰੂਪਿ ਰਹਾ ਬਿਕਰਾਲ ॥

By my side is a hound and two bitches,
That each morning raise terrible howl,
The dagger of falsehood and robbed carrion with me I carry,
Know Lord-Creator, a low-caste nomad am I.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 24

Man's attachment to one's family, wife and offsprings to the complete exclusion of one's spiritual bond with the Divine creator and complete ignorance about the moral nature of human life, its temporariness and inevitable termination with the coming of death has been compared to a fish carelessly swimming in the water unaware of the fishing net cast and being caught unawares. Human beings entangled in the lustful enticements of flesh and physical attraction of the female spouse remain ignorant of death and his spiritual destination:

ਜੈਸੇ ਮੀਨੁ ਪਾਨੀ ਮਹਿ ਰਹੈ ॥
ਕਾਲ ਜਾਲ ਕੀ ਸੁਧਿ ਨਹੀ ਲਹੈ ॥
ਜਿਹਬਾ ਸੁਆਦੀ ਲੀਲਿਤ ਲੋਹ ॥

ਐਸੇ ਕਨਿਕ ਕਾਮਨੀ ਬਾਧਿਓ ਮੋਹ ॥੧॥

Like to the fish living in water,
That forgetful of the net, instrument of death,
For pleasure of palate the iron hook it swallows;
Even thus is man bound by attachment to gold and woman.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1252

Arrogance, egoistic domination over others and narcissistic tendency to be self-centered is another human vice which has been highlighted in Sikh theology and Gurbani verses through the use of appropriate similes and parallelism from nature. Egocentric persons have been termed as Manmukhs (self-oriented) in contrast to the idealistic persons termed as Gurmukhs (God oriented) The former remain entangled in verbal duals and continuous strife and become notorious for their bad reputation like the smell of garlic:

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਾਕਤੁ ਐਸਾ ਹੈ ਜੈਸੀ ਲਸਨ ਕੀ ਖਾਨਿ ॥

ਕੋਨੇ ਬੈਠੇ ਖਾਈਐ ਪਰਗਟ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਦਾਨਿ ॥੧੭॥

Saith Kabir: The materialist is foul like bit of garlic
Which even though you consume on top of a roof,
Will yet become apparent.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1366

Even a shit-eating pig is better than an egoistic and self-centred person says saint Kabir:

ਕਬੀਰ ਸਾਕਤ ਤੇ ਸੂਕਰ ਭਲਾ ਰਾਖੈ ਆਛਾ ਗਾਉ ॥

ਉਹੁ ਸਾਕਤੁ ਬਪੁਰਾ ਮਰਿ ਗਇਆ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਲੈਹੈ ਨਾਉ ॥

Even the pig is better than the misbeliever,
As it keeps the village clean,
As the wretched misbeliever dies, none his name mentions.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1373

Thus, all these human vices recorded in Sikh Theology have been illustrated through the employment of similes and metaphors taken from appropriate species mainly from the animal kingdom. In one of the important verses written in semi-sanskrit Gurmukhi script called *Sabaskriti*, human world and life have been projected through the metaphor of a thick forest infested with animals like dogs, jackals and asses symbolizing human greed and wild temperament. It is a dwelling

place of five smugglers symbolizing five human vices of lust, anger, greed, worldly attachments and egoistic pride which are forever on the lookout to rob human beings who are unaware of their disguised presence. The world also is a seamless river of fire which can only be crossed with Divine grace. It runs as follows:

ਉਚ ਮੂਚ ਅਪਾਰ ਗੋਬਿੰਦਹ ॥
 ਉਦਿਆਨ ਬਸਨੰ ਸੰਸਾਰੰ ਸਨਬੰਧੀ ਸ੍ਵਾਨ ਸਿਆਲ ਖਰਹ ॥
 ਬਿਖਮ ਸਥਾਨ ਮਨ ਮੋਹ ਮਦਿਰੰ ਮਹਾਂ ਅਸਾਧ ਪੰਚ ਤਸਕਰਹ ॥
 ਹੀਤ ਮੋਹ ਭੈ ਭਰਮ ਭ੍ਰਮਣੰ ਅਹੰ ਫਾਂਸ ਤੀਖੁਣ ਕਠਿਨਹ ॥
 ਪਾਵਕ ਤੋਅ ਅਸਾਧ ਘੋਰੰ ਅਗਮ ਤੀਰ ਨਹ ਲੰਘਨਹ ॥
 ਭਜੁ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਿ ਗੁਪਾਲ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਚਰਣ ਸਰਣ ਉਧਰਣ ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ॥੫੮॥
 ਕ੍ਰਿਪਾ ਕਰੰਤ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੋਪਾਲਹ ਸਗਲੁੰ ਰੋਗ ਖੰਡਣਹ ॥
 ਸਾਧ ਸੰਗੋਣਿ ਗੁਣ ਰਮਤ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਰਣਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਪਰਮੇਸੁਰਹ ॥੫੯॥

*Man in the forest of the world abides, wherein those related to him,
 Abide like dog, jackal, ass.*

*Hard is this spot, wherein the mind by wine of attachment is intoxicated,
 And in it live the five irreclaimable thieves.*

*In attachment and fear does man wander,
 With the tormenting, hard noose round his neck,*

*In this world is unextinguishable fire of desire,
 And the terrible ocean, with shore inaccessible, hard to cross,*

Saith Nanak: In holy company to the Lord the devoted;

By seeking shelter with the Divine feet by His grace shalt thou be saved.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1360

It is pertinent to point out here that in Sikh theology and gurbani verses most of the human vices and other human weaknesses have been depicted through the imagery of bestial diminution from the animal kingdom while most of the human virtues have been represented through the images of birds from the world of winged species (aviation). Repeated use of images of dog, jackal, snake, ass, elephant, pig, fish as similes and metaphors highlight one or other human weakness or vice in different contexts. On the other hand, rainbird, Cuckoo, swan, sea gull have been used to represent human virtue of detachment, desperate spiritual craving for communion with the Divine, human soul's flight from human body and human faith in Divine protection and grace. The only exception to this rule from the general

pattern are the images of dog and fish as dog also stands for loyalty besides being a symbol of human greed and fish out of water represents human predicament of inescapable death without Divine union besides being a symbol of the continuous restlessness of human mind.

Coming to the human virtues and their representation in Sikh theology, the foremost virtue is one of detachment even while living in the thick of worldly affairs. Sikh theology advocates a house holder's life contrary to asceticism and monasticism preached by the yogic creeds and renunciation or *vanpratha* in old age preached by Hinduism. Sikhism believes in the cultivation of detached outlook even while leading an active life of a householder. This display of detached outlook has been highlighted through images of a duck and a lotus flower both of which while being rooted in water keep themselves out of it. Duck keeps her feathers dry even while swimming and lotus flower with its roots in mud and water keeps its head above water while it blossoms:

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲੁ ਨਿਰਾਲਮੁ ਮੁਰਗਾਈ ਨੈ ਸਾਣੇ ॥
ਸੁਰਤਿ ਸਬਦਿ ਭਵ ਸਾਗਰੁ ਤਰੀਐ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮੁ ਵਖਾਣੇ ॥
ਰਹਹਿ ਇਕਾਂਤਿ ਏਕੋ ਮਨਿ ਵਸਿਆ ਆਸਾ ਮਹਿ ਨਿਰਾਸੋ ॥

By remaining as the lotus untouched by water and the duck on the stream,

By concentrated fixing of the mind in the holy word,

By contemplation of the name,

Saith Nanak, is crossed the ocean of existence.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 938

ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਦਾ ਨਿਰਲੇਪ ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਕਮਲ ਅਲੇਪ ॥

God enlightened ever are immaculate

As the lotus growing in water is by it left untouched.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 272

Besides these similes and metaphors from nature symbolizing human virtues, there are two most prominent images of white swan and sandal wood tree signifying human spiritual enlightenment and human perfection. We find repeated usage of the symbol of white swan for the description of a spiritually enlightened person as is evident from the references cited below:

ਸਰਵਰ ਹੰਸ ਪੁਰੇ ਹੀ ਮੇਲਾ ਖਸਮੈ ਏਵੈ ਭਾਣਾ ॥

ਸਰਵਰ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਹੀਰਾ ਮੋਤੀ ਸੋ ਹੰਸਾ ਕਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥

*The Pool and Swans from primal Time are to each other attuned,
Such is the Lord's Will,
Inside the Pool lie pearls and jewels that are the Swan's feed.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 956

Similarly, the sandalwood (*chandan*) is the richest symbol of human perfection as its fragrance is spread into the whole ambience around it as association with pious and spiritually enlightened person uplift others in his company:

ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਉਚ ਨੀਚ ਹਮ ਗਾਏ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਖੇ ॥
ਜਿਉ ਚੰਦਨ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਸੈ ਨਿੰਮੁ ਬਿਰਖਾ ਗੁਨ ਚੰਦਨ ਕੇ ਬਸਖੇ ॥੨॥

*In union with the holy Preceptor, true friend,
The Lord's exalted merits have we low ones sung,
On us like neem tree abiding by sandalwood, qualities of sandalwood
are bestowed.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 976

ਚੰਦਨ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ ਤਰਵਰੁ ਬਿਗਰਿਓ ॥
ਸੋ ਤਰਵਰੁ ਚੰਦਨੁ ਹੋਇ ਨਿਬਰਿਓ ॥੨॥

*In company with sandalwood is changed some tree –
That tree as sandalwood has ended.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1158

Living a life of contentment, austerity and within one's means without envying anybody else's affluence is valued in Sikhism:

ਰੁਖੀ ਸੁਖੀ ਖਾਇ ਕੈ ਠੰਢਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੀਉ ॥
ਫਰੀਦਾ ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈ ਚੋਪੜੀ ਨਾ ਤਰਸਾਏ ਜੀਉ ॥੨੯॥

*Farid, eat thy dry crust of bread; take simple cold water;
Envy not the delicacies another is enjoying.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1380

Spiritual and mental enlightenment is the highest virtue. It is the climax of all human activity as a tree laden with fruit is the end of early germination, growth and flowering. Spiritual enlightenment wipes out even past *Karams* and leads to human emancipation.

ਫਲ ਕਾਰਨ ਫੂਲੀ ਬਨਰਾਇ ॥
ਫਲੁ ਲਾਗਾ ਤਬ ਫੂਲੁ ਬਿਲਾਇ ॥
ਗਿਆਨੈ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਰਮ ਅਭਿਆਸੁ ॥

ਗਿਆਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਤਹ ਕਰਮਹ ਨਾਸੁ ॥੩॥

To bear fruit is vegetation in bloom,

As appears fruit, do flowers disappear,

For enlightenment is involvement in action,

As appears enlightenment, is the effect of action annulled.

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1167

A similar relationship exists between the Rainbird (*Babeeha*) and the rain from the sky. Both swan and rain bird in Sikh theology and Gurbani verses are symbols of human seekers of truth and spiritual enlightenment.

In addition to the close affinity between nature and Sikh theology, some developments in Sikh history, Sikh architecture, Sikh practices, rituals and ceremonies also draw inspiration from nature and have their roots in the composite, and closely integrated ecology and nature. Some of the Sikh Gurus during their pontification and religious missionary activities initiated digging of wells, ponds for drinking water in the arid zones of Punjab and planted mangroves around the Sikh shrines built on the banks of these water bodies. Besides the golden Temple located in the centre of the pool of water at Amritsar, the other major Sikh shrines at Taran Tarn and Muktsar are also located near the water bodies.

The Sikh architecture has also imbibed some of the ecological features of fresh air, sunny, bright ambience and openness of space. A standard Sikh Gurdwara building is spacious with four doors opening in four directions and a dome with a pinnacle pointing towards the sky. The four entrances opening in four directions, besides being symbolic of universal outlook of Sikhism indicating free unhindered access to everyone irrespective of his caste, creed or colour and gender, also signifies nature's openness and spaciousness. Sikh shrines have never faced any stampede due to congestion nor have ever barred the entry of any one on the basis of difference of religion, caste or gender. Sikhism has imbibed its catholicity of outlook partly from the integrated nature of ecology and partly from the universal outlook of Sikh Guru's teachings.

The Sikh practice of running daily free community kitchen (*Langar*) by every Sikh Gurdwara and now by some Sikh organizations, especially during the occurrence of some natural or manmade calamities such as the present day Corona Virus pandemic all over the globe has also its roots in Divinely created nature dispensing its bounties to its created specious without any discrimination. Partaking of food prepared and served free sitting in a line together in *Langar* without difference of social status is a derivative corollary from Nature's benevolence. Most of the Sikh rituals associated with birth, betrothal, weddings and death ceremonies are without any claptrap of religious jargon and begin and end with a simple traditional Sikh prayer with the recitation of sacred verses in between suitable to the occasion. Last rites of the departed person's body include a traditional Sikh prayer followed by the recitation of *Sobila* (celebratory verses) including the Guru Nanank's *Aarti* verse celebrating the natures' magnificence and beauty of nature.

Sikhism does not believe in good or bad omens, auspiciousness or ill effects of particular days, months, occasions, and moments since it considers all units of time as part of the nature's grand design. Majority of Sikh weddings called Anand Karj ceremony and prayer meetings for the departed soul take place on Sundays or any other day convenient to the concerned families. There is neither any search for any auspicious moment for any *Lagan* or *Mahoorat* for fixing a wedding nor any matching of horoscopes of the prospective wedding couple. With faith in God's benevolence and prayer for Divine grace, Sikhs launch on their family or business ventures. Sikh farmers undertake sowing of their crops when the climatic conditions are favourable with a prayer on their lips. Sikhism since its inception, believes in gender equality and recognizes the indispensability of male female relationship. Guru Nanak's verse in *Asa Di var* collection of his verses highlights the equality of women and their indispensable need in human life:

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ ॥

ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥

From women is man born, inside her is he conceived;

To Women is man engaged, and woman he marries.

*With woman is man's companionship.
From Woman originate new generations.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 473

Sikhism rejects any superstition attached to female body after giving birth to a child and her solitary isolation or confinement for a fixed period. It considers child birth as a natural process. Sikhism does not believe in Sati tradition / system where a married woman was mandated to burn-herself on the funeral pyre of her deceased husband. On the other hand, Sikhism believes in practice of widow marriage without the attachment of any stigma to a widowed female. Neither do Sikh women undertake fasts (*karvachauth*) for the longevity of their male spouses nor do they feed any Brahmins or observe any other ceremony like *sharadh* for their dead ancestors.

There are plenty of Sikh / Punjabi folk songs, sayings, maxims and proverbs associated with agriculture which broadly refer to changing seasons, suitability or adversity of climatic conditions for carrying on various agricultural activities. Communicating these rustic usages in a foreign language such as English would dilute their real flavour and essence. Some of the festivals like Vaisakhi, Lohri and Basant are also associated with the Changing phases of nature and celebrated with fervor.

Thus, every aspect of Sikhism including its spiritual, mystical and conceptual theorization of the Divine Cosmic power; the expression of its spiritual insights, state of Sikh devotees mind and spirit and its reflection through the use of symbols and images from nature together with its rituals, practices, ceremonies, architecture and folk songs has its genesis in nature and its cosmic laws being visualized and studied as eco-theology. In other words, Sikh theology and eco-theology are inseparable. Sikh theology is a derivational corollary of eco-theology laws.

PS: English translation of quoted verses is taken from G.S. Talib's translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib

LET'S REVIVE WORK CULTURE - KIRAT

PRINCIPAL PRABHJOT KAUR*

The authors of Janam Sakhis tell us that Baba Nanak would bless the devotees saying, “May you always remember ‘Kartar’”, ‘Kartar’ being a synonym of God. Literally, the word ‘Kartar’ means, one who creates, one who is dynamic and creative. ‘He has created the whole world, and seating himself within the creation beholds it with delight.’¹ Guru Nanak was so fascinated with the adjective ‘Kartar’ for God that he decided to name the newly established city ‘Kartarpur’, where he had decided to settle down after the completion of his world tours called *udasis* in Sikh parlance. The word ‘Kartarpur’ literally means ‘the abode of Kartar- the creator’. Guru Nanak established the city at a time when, according to the Indian school of thought, he was old enough to retire from active life, become a recluse and retire to the forests to seek liberation from the cycle of birth and death. But Guru Nanak was made of a different stuff. Throwing this idea of so called liberation to the winds, he decided to establish a new city, where a culture of dynamism and creativity was to prevail. He took off his ‘udasi’ robes, donned the dress of a common man, a farmer, and actively engaged himself in farming doing all kinds of allied work. He himself would plough the fields, pull out weeds and tend to all work. He would also engage his compatriots who later came to be called Sikhs, in the same work. At Kartarpur, all the residents would work together, eat together and pray together. It was an ideal community life, where all would share the fruits of the labour of love that everyone did.

Bhai Lehna, who was later elevated to the status of the Guru, met Guru Nanak for the first time while the latter was working in the fields. Chroniclers record that when Bhai Lehna was heading towards

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kartarpur in order to have a glimpse of the great Guru, he happened to meet a farmer working in fields, whom he asked the way to Guru Nanak's house. The kind farmer holding the reins of his horse led him to the house of Nanak. Bhai Lehna who had expected to meet Guru Nanak sitting cross legged on a raised platform, absorbed in deep meditation with eyes closed; was shocked to find in Guru Nanak an ordinary farm labourer. Bhai Lehna was so deeply touched by something in his personality, that he abandoned the idea of going on the pilgrimage and decided to stay put there. It was in these very fields that Bhai Lehna successfully passed the test on manual labour when he was to be elevated to the status of a Guru. Thus Kartarpur became a place where the idea of Sikh way of life (kirat karo, nam Japo, vand Chhako) was practically demonstrated. The Sikhs would get up early in the morning and recite Gurbani in the morning as well as in the evening. They would dwell upon the *sabad* during the day (ਗਿਆਨ ਗੋਸਟਿ ਚਰਚਾ ਸਦਾ), as a result of which, their minds were enlightened enough to be able to get rid of the burden of all superstition and empty rituals and were saved from the clutches of tantras and mantras. Bhai Gurdas testifies the idea in the following words in Var 1 Pauri 38:

Then Baba (Nanak) returned to Kartarpur where , he put aside the attire of a recluse.

Putting on a householders dress he sat splendidly on a cot (and executed his mission.)

.....

Baba would utter hymns and the light would spread and the darkness dispelled

Discussions were held and unstruck melodies were heard.

'Sodar' and 'Arti' were sung and 'Japuji' was recited in the ambrosial hours of the day.

Thus the Gurmukh (Baba Nanak) saved the people from the clutches of tantra, mantra and other empty rituals as given in Atharva Veda.²

Instead of relying on the empty rituals, spells and magic charms for a happy life, Baba Nanak recommended a life of socially useful productive activity and also fully enjoying the fruits of the hard labour. One can be liberated while laughing, playing, dressing and eating:

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੇ ਮੁਕਤਿ॥^੩

Gurmukh Baba Nanak aspired to expand the Kartarpur experiment to the whole world. The crux of this new experiment of combining the spiritual and empirical worldviews was the principle of 'kirat'-doing all kinds of work especially the manual work; earning one's bread with the sweat of one's brow, enjoying the fruits of the labour and sharing one's earnings with others. Baba Nanak wanted all the members of the society to fully participate in this creative process. After all, he worshipped an entity that was creative and dynamic. Gurbani says, "ਜੈਸਾ ਸੇਵੈ ਤੈਸੇ ਹੋਇ॥" One becomes like the one that is worshipped. So the Sikhs who worshipped the One Creative and Dynamic God (ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖ, ਕਰਤਾਰ) had to be creative and dynamic. This culture of being creative and dynamic revolutionized the attitudes of the people towards life and a group of people was created who shared collective interest of living a full life; where even as personal an aspiration as that of liberation was a collective goal:

ਆਪੁ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਮੁਕਤੁ ਕਰੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਸੁ ਜਨ ਕਉ ਸਦਾ ਨਮਸਕਾਰੁ॥⁹

(He himself is liberated, and he liberates the universe. O Nanak, to that humble servant, I bow in reverence forever.)

Liberation, for Guru Nanak was not the same as was in the prevalent religious thought, which could only be attained after death. Guru Nanak believed in the liberation while living here in this world. This ideal was called 'Jiwan Mukht'. Guru Sahib totally rejected the idea of any liberation after life if while living in this world, all the time man was either in fear of the so called hell or waiting for the supposed heaven where he could enjoy a luxurious life after death. "What is hell and what is heaven, the saints reject both and have no obligation to either of them, by the grace of my Guru", says Gurbani. Jiwan Mukht had no meaning if one was not mukt(free) from all kinds of fear while living this life. Main concern of the Gurus was to live this life well, which according to them is a penalty for disobedience to God, but an opportunity given to man to evolve himself to the highest level:

ਭਈ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਮਾਨੁਖ ਦੇਹੁਰੀਆ॥
ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਮਿਲਣ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਰੀਆ॥

You have been blessed with this human body, this is your opportunity to meet the Lord of the Universe (to be like the one you worship by evolving yourself to the highest level.)

Rejecting both the fear of hell or the temptation of any imaginary heaven, the emphasis is placed on liberation from feelings from fear and guilt, two negative emotions that cause split in the personality of a man. Guru Sahib wanted man to be truly liberated. One who goes begging in other's houses and as such is dependent on others for his daily needs can never lead a self respecting and self reliant life so essential for a happy and blissful life. That is why Guru Sahib gave the idea of earning one's livelihood by the sweat of one's brow and a fear free life by way of living life in remembrance of fearless God.⁵

Guru Nanak aspired to create a group of God oriented people who were earth aware and whose face was turned towards life affirming ideals. Needless to say that the status of any social, economic and political set up depends on the work culture of the members of that society. Even spiritual development of man is not possible if one does not involve himself in some useful activity. Baba Nanak had decided to create a society with a work culture that was conducive to its healthy development. In this set up, there was to be no place for idlers. He rejected the people who in the name of religion took it as a matter of right not to do any work and go about begging for food(or other amenities) in others' homes. Such people are a burden on the society and as such deserve to be rejected as they don't contribute anything to the general good. In one of his compositions, Bhai Gurdas states that one, who forgetting the Lord, goes upon pinning his hopes upon men, is worse than animals and ghosts, while one who earns his livelihood by working with his own limbs(hands and feet) is a 'Gurmukh', who has made his life meaningful and fruitful while living in this world. Of the eighty four lakhs of species, human's is the best when man speaks and listens to sweet words, earns his livelihood, by working with his hands, while his feet take him to the congregation of the saintly people, earns a rightful living and feeds the needy out of his savings.⁶

Unfortunately, the condition of the society when Baba Nanak appeared on the scene was totally averse to the dynamic ideals that Guru Nanak had decided to pursue. According to the accepted practice of the time, man's life was divided into four parts, the last stage being that of a recluse, completely retiring from society, devoting one's time exclusively to the mission of other worldly concerns in an effort to

attain personal liberation. Guru Nanak aspired to reverse the situation. He wanted to restore health to the sick society of the time. M. A. Macauliffe records in his book 'The Sikh Religion' that when asked about the nature of the newborn, the family astrologer Hardyal remarked that the voice of Guru Nanak at the time of his birth was "as the laughing voice of a wise man when joining a social circle." Baba Nanak was the wise man to have joined a social circle, which he aimed at transforming by changing the attitude of the people towards life. He wanted to create a society of God-conscious men who remained earth aware and utilized God consciousness for transforming life on this earth.⁷

In a healthy society, all its members are expected to do some or the other work, earn their livelihood and also contribute towards the betterment of society. The personality of a man is shaped according to the work he does and the spirit in which the work is done. Arnold Toynbee a well known historian is of the view that there are as many perspectives as there are kinds of work. A creative and constructive personality is the result of creative and constructive work done with a positive frame of mind. Guru Sahib aimed at creating a dynamic and creative man in whom the Creator could find expression; so he made earning one's livelihood by rightful means a cardinal principle of the new religion that he had founded. A line from Gurbani says, "ਮਨ ਕਰ ਬਚਨ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅਪਨਾ ਧਿਆਈ॥" It literally means that one must meditate on God not only in thought and in words but also in deeds, in one's positive actions which includes working with hands. This is also an important form of *simran*, remembrance of God. That is why, while stating three cardinal principles, 'Kirat' was given the first place in the sequence. The last few years of Baba Nanak's physical life on this planet were spent in active physical work. This set a practical example for others to follow, which they enthusiastically did.

Emphasis on manual work helped fulfil another mission of Guru Nanak's life. In the prevalent system of four tier caste system of society, the people who worked with their hands stood at the lowest level in the hierarchy. These people were called Sudras, the untouchables, whose only purpose of life was to serve the three upper segments of society, and in return be discarded by them to the extent that even their touch was considered unholy. Working on the latest evolutionary

theory of bringing the change from the edge, Guru Sahib started the process of transformation of the society, not from the centre (the ruling class), but from the edge, the marginalized sections of society, the mass of humanity, who had been deprived of the right to live a respectable life, in spite of the fact that the structure of the society rested on the manual work they were doing.

During his travels Guru Sahib met people from all kinds of professions and held dialogues with them. During one of his journeys, he stayed in the house of Bhai Lalo. He outrightly rejected the lavish feast hosted by a feudal Lord, Malik Bhago, thereby giving the message that the people like Malik Bhago who exploited the poor were not to be a part of the system he had wished to create. He demonstrated that the people like Bhai Lalo whose food was as pure as milk were to be an integral part of such a society. Prof Puran Singh rightly says that Sikh society is nourished from the milk that flowed from the food prepared in the kitchen of the workers like Bhai Lalo. This flow of milk that is produced by the hard working honest workers who are full of milk of human kindness and love is the one that serves as manure for the fields that produce the food and fruit nourishing the human body and soul of the members of the Sikh society. The money earned by such people is not *maya* (illusion) but is as sacred as the worker himself:

ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਖਾਧਾ ਧੰਧਾ ਮਾਇਆ ਸਭ ਪਵਿਤ ਹਰਿ ਜੋ ਨਾਮ ਰਸ ਰਾਤੇ॥
 ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਘਰ ਮੰਦਰ ਮਹਲ ਸਰਾਈ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ,
 ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਭਿਆਗਤ ਜਾਇ ਵਰਸਾਤੇ॥
 ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਤੁਰੇ ਜੀਨ ਖੁਰਗੀਰ ਸਭਿ ਪਵਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ
 ਜਿਨੀ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਾਧ ਸੰਤ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਜਾਤੇ॥^੯

When work just becomes a means of earning money and nothing sacred like love for work is attached to it, then it is no longer a 'kirat'. It becomes 'Dhanda', which has been condemned in very strong words in Gurbani:

ਧੰਧਾ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਜਨਮ ਗੁਆਇਆ ਸੁਖਦਾਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਨ ਵਸਾਇਆ॥^੯
 ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਲੋਭੁ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਸਬਲਾ ਨਿਤੁ ਧੰਧਾ ਕਰਤ ਵਿਹਾਏ॥^{੧੦}

It is like a poison that kills the spirit within man. Man becomes spiritually dead and lives only at a physical plane, which is the cause of all sorrow and suffering:

ਬਿਖੁ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ਕਮਾਵਣੀ ਬਿਖੁ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਇ॥

ਬਿਨੁ ਨਾਵੈ ਠਉਰ ਨ ਪਾਇਨੀ ਜਮਪੁਰੁ ਦੂਖੁ ਸਹਾਹਿ॥^{੧੧}(੩੦)

Work done with evil intentions, with an eye on becoming rich by hook or by crook is, still worse, as bad as eating a dead body:

ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮੁਰਦਾਰ ਖਾਇ॥ ਅਵਰੀ ਨੋ ਸਮਝਾਵਣੁ ਜਾਇ॥
ਮੁਠਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਾਏ ਸਾਥੈ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਐਸਾ ਆਗੂ ਜਾਪੈ॥^{੧੨}

Sadly, in the present social and political set up most often the money minded crooked people rule the roost. Such people waste their own lives and further pollute the whole system which ultimately becomes the cause of acute suffering. According to Gurbani, such people are like worms writhing in the muck, like maggots they rot and sink in dirt. They are wasting away themselves in the unending cycle of birth and death:

ਬਿਸਟਾ ਕੇ ਕੀੜੇ ਬਿਸਟਾ ਰਾਤੇ ਮਰਿ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਹੋਹਿ ਖੁਆਰੁ॥^{੧੩}

Guru Sahib strongly disapproved of such a life. He wanted men to utilize this opportunity on the earth to evolve themselves to the highest level, a stage that is called 'Sachiara' in Sikh parlance.

'Kirat' is one of the important tools in achieving the stage of sachiara- a truthful being, a perfect being. Prof Puran Singh elaborates this point when he says that one who works with his hands has a fragrant soul. Whoever comes in the contact of such a personality becomes sacred. He further asserts that to be one with God, one need not perform any particular postures as recommended by yogis. The only posture required for this purpose is the posture of a man when he sows the seeds, ploughs his fields and then does hard labour to harvest the crops. Black smiths, carpenters, masons and farmers, all enjoy the same status in His court as do poets, saints and yogis etc.¹⁴ Thus doing labour becomes a spiritual deed. At another place the mystic poet, Prof Puran Singh goes to the extent of saying that all philosophical discourse is a waste of time if physical labour is not attached to it. He says, "What is the use of meditation and religious discourses, if one does not do work with his own hands. A study of history of the world shows that when religious leaders start living on the alms of the devotees, the whole philosophy is degraded to the level of sin. The countries where citizens are not in the habit of working with their hands can never progress in the field of art and culture, religion and philosophy."¹⁵ Sikh history records that when the missionaries called

masands in sikh parlance, disregarded the principle of earning their living by the sweat of their brow and started living on the alms of the devotees, they lost all their moral fervour and became corrupt, Guru Sahib took strict measures and removed them from the exalted position.

The state of India is a sufficient testimony to the truth of the statement. A nation that was known the world over for its spiritual greatness, fell into the abyss of total depravity and degradation, when other worldly concerns were given supremacy over a householder's life; when the worker was degraded to the lowest level. All this resulted in the degradation of the people of this great country to the extent that it remained a slave to the foreign powers for centuries. The womenfolk were dishonoured. The thought that the situation could be reversed never even crossed their minds. Guru Nanak woke them up from the deep slumber¹⁶. He taught how a life should be lived if one was to lead a life of dignity. Earning one's living by the sweat of one's brow and doing manual work were important conditions, a highway for leading a dynamic and self respecting life. The guidelines as to what routine should be followed have been provided in Gurbani as well as in the compositions of Bhai Gurdas: "The gurmukh getting up in the ambrosial hour of early morning takes bath, and after reciting the holy hymns, goes to dharmasal, sitting in the exalted company of the saintly people, he listens to the hymns. Effacing all doubts, he serves the Sikhs of the Guru, **earning his livelihood by righteous means, he shares his earnings with others and himself eats whatever is left after serving all.** In this way the disciple exalts himself to the highest level. Thou Gurmukhs thus tread their path on this highway of the way of life."¹⁷

ਗੁਰਸਿਖ ਭਲਕੇ ਉਠ ਕਰਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਸਰੁ ਨਾਵੰਦਾ।

The Gurus ensured that all and sundry in the group followed this routine as their daily way of life. The Gurus themselves did all kinds of work. Guru Angad Sahib was tested for Guruship in the fields of Kartarpur. While in Khadur Sahib, he made arrangements for the preservation of Gurbani, scientifically arranged the Gurmukhi alphabet, organized classes for children after the morning prayers and sports competitions were held in the evening. According to Kanhaiya Lal, the author of Tarikh-e-Punjab, "Langar continued to be served

in his kitchen all the time from morning till evening. Guru ji would work with his own hands and make his both ends meet from the income thus earned.”¹⁸ Mata Khivi ji played a historical role in the service of the daily Langar. Her daughter, Bibi Amro would get up early in the morning, churn the milk and do other household chores while reciting Gurbani. Guru Amardas ji continued serving in the langar till a very advanced age in life, he would clean the utensils, and would fetch water from the river Beas. He ensured that missionary duties were assigned only to the Sikhs who earned their own living and were in the habit of working with their own hands and would perform all kinds of seva. He promoted the trade of wood among the Sikhs. The wood for the newly established cities was supplied from Goindwal Sahib. Markets for salt, and a jiggery etc. became so popular, that they would get orders from as far as Delhi. Bhai Jetha, a poor orphan boy, who later became the fourth Guru, was selling roasted gram in the streets of Goindwal, when Guru Amardas ji decided to marry his own daughter to him. He was elevated to the status of the Guru only after he passed the test of patiently working as a mason to raise the platforms as per the orders of the third Guru. Guru Arjan Sahib would personally nurse the patients of leprosy. During the famine in Lahore too, he would personally look after the sick and the suffering victims of the famine. History tells us that whenever the groups of Sangat came to be in his presence, he would go a long distance to receive them and would physically be in attendance of the Sangat, serving them Langar and doing other kinds of seva. Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Guru did not hire any paid labour for the construction of Akal Takhat. It was constructed by dedicated Sikhs like Bhai Buddha and Bhai Gurdas: “ਕਿਸੀ ਰਾਜ ਨਹਿ ਹਾਥਿ ਲਗਾਯੋ। ਬੁਢੇ ਔਰ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਬਨਾਯੋ।“ When various cities were established by the gurus, the Sikhs and the Gurus themselves would work alongside the labour. Good quality bricks were baked for the construction of Darbar Sahib at the brick kiln got made by the Guru himself. Guru Har Rai Sahib did a yeoman's service to the sick by planting rare herbs in the gardens established by him in Kiratpur Sahib. The beautiful city came to be known as the city of gardens. When wars were thrust upon the tenth Guru, he motivated the craftsmen to make good weapons. The Sikligar and Vanjaras offered

their services to the Guru during such times. They adopted Sikhism as their faith and a large number of them are still engaged in the work. Apart from manual workers, people from all professions came to the service of the Guru. Many artists, Bhands, poets, Bhats, and scholars came to the court of the Guru and permanently made Anandpur their abode. Guru's court was known to house fifty two poets.¹⁹

When the city of Amritsar was established by the fourth Guru, he took care to see that all sorts of craftsmen were given due place in the city. According to one estimate craftsmen from 52 professions were established in the city of Amritsar,²⁰ giving a very strong message that all work done with a spirit of dedication and piety was accepted and respected in the society he had wished to create. Even today the markets and the bazaars named after particular crafts exist. *Bazaar Mochian*, *bazaar Kathian*, *bazaar Loharan*, *bazaar tarkhanan*, *bazaar Bajaajan* are just a few to be named. No doubt Guru Sahib knew how important it was to encourage the small scale industry which is the back bone of the economy at the micro level. Let's hope these bazaars, an important part of the Sikh heritage, maintain their identity and are not sacrificed at the altar of globalization.

References to almost all the crafts and trade etc. are found in Gurbani. The message was 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਭੁ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ਭਲਾ ਜੇ ਸਹਜੇ ਕੀਜੈ ਰਾਮ'²¹ All dealings when accomplished with poise and peace are acceptable in the house of the Guru. But still, most of the imagery used in Gurbani pertains to the farming and allied professions:

ਕਿਰਸਾਣੀ ਕਿਰਸਾਨ ਕਰੇ ਲੋਚੈ ਜੀਉ ਲਾਇ॥
 ਹਲੁ ਜੋਤੈ ਉਦਮ ਕਰੇ ਮੇਰਾ ਪੁਤ ਧੀ ਖਾਇ॥
 ਤਿਉ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਜਪੁ ਕਰੇ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤ ਛੁਡਾਏ॥²²

A Punjabi saying puts farming at the top of the professions²³. Professor Puran Singh also takes the farming tools as symbols of manual work, "till a priest, maulvi, pandit and Sadhu Sanyasi takes up a plough, a spade and a rake in his hand and start working as a labour, they will not shed their lethargy, they will keep on playing the dirty mental gamble till eternity. Their thinking, their reflections, their contemplation, and even their supposed God will remain stale..... Man can have a fresh glimpse of a new and fresh God when one labours with his own hands."²⁴ Reflections and meditation without actual

physical labour is like being in deep slumber.²⁵

Guru Sahib conducted a successful experiment of giving the glimpse of a new God through hard labour to all who came into contact with him. All such people were so inspired by this new and fresh idea of finding God in work that they were ever ready to do all kinds of labour for creating a new progressive and forward looking society, which never looked back. ਅਗਾਹਾ ਕੂ ਤੁਾਘਿ ਪਿਛਾ ਫੇਰਿ ਨ ਮੁਹਚੜਾ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਿਝਿ ਇਵੇਹਾ ਵਾਰ ਬਹੁੜਿ ਨ ਹੋਵੀ ਜਨਮੜਾ॥²⁶ “Look ahead, don't turn your face backwards”, became their motto. The guru- inspired Sikhs were determined to be successful this time by dint of the sweat of their brow and not to be reincarnated again. Kahlil Gibran, a Lebanese philosopher and poet appears to be agreeing with Baba Nanak, when he says, “But if you in your pain call birth an affliction and the support of flesh a curse written upon your brow, then I answer that naught but the sweat of your brow shall wash away what is written.”²⁷ But there is one condition that the work must be done with love and with full involvement. He further says, “All work is empty save when there is love. And when you work with love, you relate yourself to yourself, to one another and to God. What it is to work with Love. It is to charge all things you fashion with a breath of your own spirit. And if you cannot work with love but only with distaste, it is better you should leave your work and sit at the gate of the temple and take alms of those who work with joy.”²⁸ Even a beggar is better than a person who works unwillingly and with distaste. By according spiritual value to physical labour, the Guru gave spiritual power to the common worker, common people, who attained a blissful state and were able to make possible what had earlier seemed impossible. After all, that Almighty God too demands only the labour of Love:

ਬੇਢੀ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਮਜ਼ਰੀ ਮਾਗੈ ਜਉ ਕੋਉ ਛਾਨਿ ਛਵਾਵੈ ਹੋ॥²⁹

(That Carpenter demands the wages of Love, if someone wants Him to build his house)

Let us once again pick up the spades and till the land to make mud cups, to be used by one and all to drink deep into the nectar of the labour of Love,³⁰ and revive the work culture so mercifully given to us by Baba Nanak. This is the only way to carve the destiny of the nation anew.

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ਜਗਾਇਆ ਖੁਆਬ ਸੇ ॥
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ਕੈ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ਸੁਣੰਦਾ। ਸੰਕਾ ਮਨਹੁ ਮਿਟਾਇ ਕੈ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵ ਕਰੰਦਾ।
ਕਿਰਤ ਵਿਰਤ ਕਰਿ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਲੈ ਪਰਸਾਦ ਆਣਿ ਵਰਤੰਦਾ। ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਇ
ਕਰਿ ਪਿਛੋਂ ਬਚਿਆ ਆਪੁ ਖਵੰਦਾ ਕਲੀ ਕਾਲ ਪਰਗਾਸ ਕਰਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਚੇਲਾ ਚੇਲਾ ਗੁਰੁ
ਸੰਦਾ। ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਗਾਡੀ ਰਾਹੁ ਚਲੰਦਾ। ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਗਾਡੀ ਰਾਹੁ ਚਲੰਦਾ। (Bhai Gurdas
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BASANT KI VAR: POETICAL AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

DR JASWANT SINGH AND TEAM*

INTRODUCTION

Revealed by Guru Arjan Dev ji (1563-1606), 'Basant Ki Var' is recorded at page 1193 of the Guru Granth Sahib. This is the shortest *var* among all *vars* recorded in the Guru Granth Sahib. In this *var*, there are only three *pauris* (stanzas). No *salok* has been recorded along with them. Every *pauri* consists of five lines each. Instead of the word 'mahalâ,' 'mahalu' appears in the title of this *var*. "In several manuscripts, 'mahalâ' is written in place of 'mahalu' as the title of this *var*."¹ "During the time between Maghi² and Hola Mohalla,³ along with the tradition of singing *keirtan*⁴ in Rag Basant during congregational gatherings, there is also a custom of singing "Basant Ki Var."⁵

1. HISTORICAL DIMENSION

In the preface to this *Bani*⁶ in the traditional commentary of the Guru Granth Sahib, it is written that when Guru Arjan Sahib began dictating 'Basant Ki Var,' a *langri*⁷ approached the Guru and requested him to partake *langar*.⁸ Till then, the Guru had revealed only three *pauris* of Basant Ki Var. Due to the respect for food, the Guru left this composition incomplete to have food. Therefore, this *var* had been restricted to only three *pauris*.⁹

This narrative of the traditional commentary is based on 'Gurpratap Suraj Granth,' by Bhai Santokh Singh.¹⁰ The same narrative is present in 'Shabdarth Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji' too.¹¹

Giani Haribans Singh has rejected the above narrative. His view

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is: “When the consciousness of the Guru was immersed in IkOankar, then how could he, on the request of the cook, leave the revelation coming from the Origin unfinished and prefer food instead? This claim is not convincing. Even if we believe that the Guru left the *Bani* incomplete and went to partake the food, could he have not completed the revelation of the *Bani* on his return? So, the fact is that this *var* is complete as such. Even now, lovers of Gurbani read it daily with fondness. Forsaking *Bani* in fear of disrespecting the god of food is actually a disrespect to *Bani*.”¹²

Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara, too has rejected the above narrative mentioned in the traditional commentary and stated: “The narrative gives the impression that the Guru gave more importance to partaking food than composing the *var*. This account does not appear to be true considering the Gurmat (Guru’s thought) principle. The truth is that this is the appropriate size of the *var* as per the Divine design.”¹³

Consequently, this *var* is complete, just like the rest of the revealed *Bani* of the Guru Granth Sahib. The signature ‘Nanak’ is recorded in the last line of each *pauri* of this *var*. Besides, the number at the end of this *var* is ‘.3.1.’ which also supports the completeness of this *var*. Had this *var* been incomplete, then the number ‘.1.’ would have been absent from the above numerals.

2. POETICAL PERSPECTIVE

2.1 The first line of this stanza is a symbolic statement. It states, ‘O brother! Blossom by contemplating on the Nam of IkOankar. The line is conveying that just like a plant turns lush-green when watered, humans beings blossoms by contemplating on the Nam of IkOankar. At a semantic level, this statement is a comparison between two conditions. Therefore, it can be categorized as a simile. Flourishing and blossoming is the nature of vegetation, which has been used in the context of human beings here. Consequently, semantic deviation also appears here. Besides, a phonetically similar word ‘hariâ’ (lush-green/blossomed) has been used with ‘hari’ (IkOankar). This similarity creates a unique phonological effect. This linguistic technique of pairing homophones is called ‘*shabad mitarta*’ in Indic poetics.

Symbolism has also been employed in the second line. It has

been stated that this pleasant season is received through great fortune. Here, ‘ruti suhâi’ (pleasant season), which has been used in the context of spring, refers to ‘human-birth.’ By comparing human birth to a pleasant season, the line informs that just as spring is the most looked forward season among all seasons, in the same manner, human life is supreme amongst all species.

The third line is also a symbolic statement. Here, while describing the beauty of spring, it has been indicated that forest, grass, the three worlds (the entire creation) blossom in spring. Similarly, the Amrit-like fruit of Nam can be received only in human birth. In the phrase, ‘vaG utriGu tribhavaGu’ (forest, grass, three worlds), the letter ‘G’ has been used thrice. Therefore, alliteration appears here. When the last letter of a word is repeated, it is considered a unique form of alliteration known as ‘*anti anuprash alankar*’ (alliteration of ending consonant) in Indic poetics.

In the fourth and fifth lines, the words ‘châi’ (soot) and ‘dhâi’ (runs) are used symbolically. The word ‘châi’ here means filth, symbolizing all kinds of transgressions and negative tendencies, and ‘dhâi’ means runs, which allude to the wandering in the cycle of birth and death.

This stanza has five lines. The meter of these lines is as follows: first (13+11), second (14+10), third (13+10), fourth (13+10), and fifth (14+10). Each line ends with two long meters. It can be labeled as a five-line *pauri*. In this type of *pauri*, each line consists of 24 meters. The first pause appears after 13 meters and the second after the 24th meter. Two long meters appear at the end of each line.

ਬਸੰਤ ਕੀ ਵਾਰ ਮਹਲੁ ੫
 ੴ ਸੋਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
 ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਕੈ ਹੋਹੁ ਹਰਿਆ ਭਾਈ ॥
 ਕਰਮਿ ਲਿਖੰਤੈ ਪਾਈਐ ਇਹ ਰੁਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਈ ॥
 ਵਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣੁ ਮਉਲਿਆ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਫਲੁ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਮਿਲਿ ਸਾਧੂ ਸੁਖੁ ਊਪਜੈ ਲਥੀ ਸਭ ਛਾਈ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸਿਮਰੈ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਫਿਰਿ ਬਹੁਤਿ ਨ ਧਾਈ ॥੧॥

–ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ੧੧੯੩

2.2 In the first line of 2nd Stanza, symbolism has been beautifully employed. The word ‘panje’ (all five) has been used as a symbol of the five vices (lust, anger, greed, attachment, ego). The adjective ‘mahâbalî’

(mighty) has been used for the five vices to show their damaging power. Further, it is stated that by taking the true support of the Nam of IkOankar, these five powerful vices have been tied and tamed. By calling the five vices mighty and mentioning the act of tying them, personification has been employed as a poetic device. Often, the word 'mighty' and the act of tying are used in the context of humans, but here it has been used for the five vices. The word 'badhe' (tied) is also symbolic, which means controlled or overpowered.

The second line is also a symbolic statement. It has been stated that the benevolent IkOankar has made the human being to reflect on Own feet (Nam), and by doing so, IkOankar has come to support the being. This statement means that IkOankar has bestowed grace and has caused the being to devote themselves to IkOankar and has come to the aid of the being during their moments of crisis.

The third line is also a symbolic statement. It has been stated that due to the Nam of IkOankar, all sorrows and sufferings have been eradicated, and the Being has become rejuvenated and healthy. This statement means that due to the Nam of IkOankar, all their sufferings have been eradicated, and the being has flourished forever.

The fourth and fifth lines employ natural linguistic expression. Through accessible language, it has been stated that the being who reflects on Nam every moment (day-night) is not subjected to the fear of death anymore. The being becomes like IkOankar, from whom it has originated.

This stanza has five lines. The meter of these lines is as follows: first (13+10), second (14+10), third (13+10), fourth (14+10), and fifth (14+10). Each line ends with two long meters. It can be labeled as a five-line *pauri*. In this type of *pauri*, each line consists of 24 meters. The first pause appears after 13 meters and the second after the 24th meter. Two long meters appear at the end of each line.

ਪੰਜੇ ਬਧੇ ਮਹਾਬਲੀ ਕਰਿ ਸਚਾ ਢੋਆ ॥
ਆਪਣੇ ਚਰਣ ਜਪਾਇਅਨੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਦਯੁ ਖੜੋਆ ॥
ਰੋਗ ਸੋਗ ਸਭਿ ਮਿਟਿ ਗਏ ਨਿਤ ਨਵਾ ਨਿਰੋਆ ॥
ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਣਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਧਿਆਇਦਾ ਫਿਰਿ ਪਾਇ ਨ ਮੋਆ ॥
ਜਿਸ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਸੋਈ ਫਿਰਿ ਹੋਆ ॥੨॥

-ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ੧੧੯੩

2.3 3rd stanza employs natural linguistic expression. Through accessible language, it has been asked: From where does the being originate, where does it live, and into what does it merge; no one knows. All beings and creatures have been created by IkOankar; who can estimate the worth of IkOankar? Those who always recite, contemplate, and listen to the Nam of IkOankar, receive honor.

In the third line, the usage of ‘kahani dhiâini suGani’ (recite, meditate, listen) is indeed creative. All these words end with the letter ‘ni.’ When the last letter of a word is repeated, it is a unique form of alliteration known as ‘*anti anuprash alankar*’ (alliteration of an ending consonant) in Indic poetics. It is also phonological parallelism. The acts of reciting, meditating, and listening point to the overall reflective ability of humans. This line conveys that the devotees, whose consciousness is entirely connected to IkOankar, always receive honor. In this stanza, words like ‘khasam’ (Master), ‘agamu’ (inaccessible), ‘agocarū’ (imperceptible), and ‘sâhibo’ (Sovereign) have been used for IkOankar, which are highlighting special traits of IkOankar. Therefore, eulogy appears here.

This stanza has five lines. The meter of these lines is as follows: first (12+10), second (13+11), third (13+10), fourth (13+12), and fifth (15+9). Each line ends with two long meters. It can be labeled as a five-line *pauri*. In this type of *pauri*, each line consists of 24 meters. The first pause appears after 13 meters and the second after the 24th meter. Two long meters appear at the end of each line.

ਕਿਥਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਕਹ ਰਹੈ ਕਹ ਮਾਹਿ ਸਮਾਵੈ ॥
ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਸਭਿ ਖਸਮ ਕੇ ਕਉਣੁ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
ਕਹਨਿ ਧਿਆਇਨਿ ਸੁਣਨਿ ਨਿਤ ਸੇ ਭਗਤ ਸੁਹਾਵੈ ॥
ਅਗਮੁ ਅਗੋਚਰੁ ਸਾਹਿਬੋ ਦੂਸਰੁ ਲਵੈ ਨ ਲਾਵੈ ॥
ਸਚੁ ਪੂਰੈ ਗੁਰਿ ਉਪਦੇਸਿਆ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸੁਣਾਵੈ ॥੩॥੧॥

–ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ੧੧੯੩

3. COMMENTARY

3.1 Basant *Rag*, an ancient Indian classical, is a musical mode that meant to be sung in springtime. It is a lively and energetic musical composition that brings joy and delight to the senses in the holistic season of spring. Our senses are evoked in wonderment and awe in

spring when we notice the flower buds beginning to bloom, the lush green shades of the plants and vegetation surrounding us, and when all the birds sing their songs in synchronous harmony to awaken us at day-break. Springtime in South Asia is referred to as the season of *Basant*. It is considered a season of re-calibration, renewal, and growth for all things in nature to reset, restore, grow, and prosper. Three short compositions of Guru Arjan's *Basant Ki Var* sung in *Basant Rag* (musical mode) describe the beautiful visions of spring as the season of transformation and rejuvenation for all that co-exists in harmony within nature. In the first composition, human beings are asked to reflect on what makes them flourish and experience their inner beauty and joy-like bliss.

O, brothers and sisters, it is springtime. Time for rejuvenation! Notice the lush green plants and budding flowers around waiting to blossom fully. Isn't it amazing how *IkOankar*, the Eternal-Provider, has orchestrated the perfect conditions for everything in nature to be able to grow and flourish in synchronous harmony? If all the vegetation and creatures around us can thrive, one wonders what sustains us and rejuvenates us to flourish? It is the will and command of the Eternal-Provider to provide this life cycle, this beautiful season, this human existence for us to realize our creative potential. Through the gracious nature of the Eternal-Provider, we receive the gift of *Nam*, the Identification with *IkOankar*, the Eternal-Provider. *Nam* nourishes, restores, and rejuvenates us to flourish just like the flowering buds that bloom in spring. The intuitive wisdom from the Eternal-Provider and *Nam* enables us to feel the oneness, our divine essence, and natural state of joy and happiness. Experiencing *Nam* alleviates the mind from everything that takes us away from our divine essence and prevents us from experiencing our true nature of happiness, serenity, and contentment. Through the remembrance of *Nam*, we can flourish by remaining in a blissful state, liberated from the fears of life and death. This is how the forest and plants stay lush green, creatures sustain their vitality in spring, and everything co-exists in the life cycle. We thrive in synchronism with the Eternal-Provider's will and command. Suppose we were to be inspired by the magnificence of nature and could appreciate its steadfast beauty, would we pause to reflect on

what enables us to flourish, to radiate as beautifully as the flowers that bloom in spring? What enables us to experience joy, inner serenity, and contentment? Perhaps it is when sitting quietly in nature and taking in the breathtaking views or listening to a melodious rag a that pierces our heart, we experience this beauty, the flow of love as Nam, the eternal gift from our Eternal-Provider. What renews us to experience our inner vitality? Will we recognize the presence of Nam to be the beauty we seek from within?

3.2 In this second verse, the Guru continues to help us explore how to focus our mind and attend to our emotions without letting them overwhelm us, so we can remain in the constancy of the joy that naturally arises and flows from within.

O being, discover how to tame your mind, to be free from attachments, and from being overpowered by emotions such as anger, lust, greed, and pride. *IkOankar*, the Remover of suffering, is with us as our protector-guardian, to help us overpower these vices and to experience the gift of *Nam*, the Identification with the Remover of suffering. In concentrating our minds on Nam, our worries and sorrows no longer control us, they dissipate, and we feel rejuvenated. In our daily remembrance of Nam, we awaken each day feeling renewed. Our fears about life, death, and separation leave us. This is how we become divine-like and realize our true potential, with the eternal wisdom and Nam, with the oneness that is available to us, through the grace and support of *IkOankar*, the Remover of suffering. Imagine being in an arena with boxing gloves on getting ready to battle a strong opponent. Similarly, we are preparing for the battle of our lives, not an external battle but one that lies within us. This battle is against our negative thinking, attachments, and emotions (of pride, anger, lust, and greed) that engulf us, overwhelm us, and cause us to react harmfully to ourselves and to others. These internal vices, if untamed, cause us much suffering and discontent, and managing them on our own can be exhausting. In this verse, the Guru assures us that if we are prepared for the battle against our vices, the Remover of suffering becomes our coach, mentor, and support who stands by our side. Suppose we persevere and are committed to seeing through the struggle, then, the Remover of suffering is the life-force energy that revitalizes

us and shows us how to align ourselves back to that sanctuary of inner-goodness, the Nam, within. Suppose we allow ourselves to drench in the vitality of our life force to feel its presence inwardly, then, the support, training, and action happen with the grace of IkOankar, the Remover of Suffering. Do we seek the support of our mentor-guardian, the Remover of Suffering, to help us cultivate feelings of joy and happiness from within?

3.3 In the first two verses of *Basant Ki Var*, we reflect on what supports us to feel nourished and beautiful inside out and what sustains our inner growth. In the second verse, we recognize that our capacity to thrive depends on our ability to combat the state of our habitual mindsets and emotional states that can influence our innate capacity to remain joy-like and happy. In the third verse, we reflect more deeply on our life journey, our relationship with *IkOankar*, the Eternal-Provider, where we are destined if we are determined to pursue this connection within.

Pause for a moment to reflect; from whom do you originate? To whom will you return in the end? Ask yourself, where are you right now in your journey? Are you living your life to be reminded of the connection you have with *IkOankar*, the Eternal-Provider? Look at the magnificence of nature, look at the life-forms and creatures, look at the beings around us that the Eternal-Provider sustains. How do we even begin to honor the One who has created such abundance? Maybe when we begin to listen, recite and contemplate on the magnificence of the One, we may realize our origin, purpose, and eternal connection to the One. This connection is *Nam*, the Identification with the One, with IkOankar, the 1Force, the Eternal Provider. This is how we feel the 1Force's Oneness. Now, can we realize the opportunity we have in this lifetime to honor that goodness, that wisdom from within? Can we become as radiant and beautiful as the abundant nature, the Eternal-Provider, has created around us? To realize the true potential of the Eternal-Provider is beyond the grasp of the mind and the senses. Still, this wisdom has been imparted so that we can immerse ourselves in this connection to become divine-like. In essence, to become part of the paradigm of the Nam of IkOankar to experience Oneness. There will be poignant times in our

lives where we will dig deep to ask the fundamental questions in life with awe-struck wonder. If we recognize that our origin and end are with IkOankar, the 1Force, the Eternal Provider, how do we remain connected to IkOankar? It is only by connecting with Nam, the beautiful essence, from within. Just like a bee attracted to the color and sweetness of the flower will reluctantly separate from the honey it produces, so do we feel the absence and loss of separation and desire to merge with the Oneness that exists in everything around us. Only by experiencing the bliss of Oneness, the feeling of separateness dissolves. Springtime fills us with hope and the possibility to rejuvenate ourselves. These verses remind us that the time to flourish is in the *here* and *now*. The Guru provides us with the key to experiencing the beauty within the Beautiful. First, seek the possibility that the Beautiful can be experienced within. Then notice what gets in the way. If our beginning and ending started in love, we shall remain immersed in this love? So let us seek the opportunity to experience this inner sanctuary of bliss available to us right now? When nature in spring provides all the logistic support to cherish Divine Love.

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REFERENCES

- 1 Dr. Amar Singh, Sri Guru Granth Sahib Dian Hath Likhat Biran De Darshan, page 53.
- 2 The sangrand (beginning of the solar months of Indic and Panjabi calendars) of month Magh (mid-January to mid-February), which comes the next day after Lohri (a North Indian festival), is called Maghi.
- 3 Parallel to the traditional festival of Holi, Guru Gobind Singh Sahib started the tradition of celebrating 'Hola Mohalla' to train the Khalsa in warfare. The Guru started this tradition in 1700 (1757 VS Chet Vadi 1) at fort Holgarh, Anandpur Sahib. Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhai Vir Singh, etc., have interpreted 'Hola Maholla' as 'attack' and 'place of attack' or 'artificial attack.' According to Dr. Ratan Singh Jaggi, "By changing Holi (feminine form) to Hola (masculine form), the act of attacking fiercely on that day has been expressed through this word." Poet Sumair Singh has written about this

tradition started by the Guru as:

‘auran kî holî mam holâ. kahyo kripâ nidh bacanamolâ’ (we play Hola during the Holi of others. The graceful uttered these precious words). Now, it has become a festival of three days which is celebrated from a day before Holi to the day after it. - Dr. Ratan Singh Jaggi, Sikh Panth Vishvakosh, volume - two, page 508-509.

- 4 Singing of spiritual compositions in prescribed musical modes (ragas).
- 5 Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara, Steek Ramkali Ki Var (Rai Balvand Tatha Sata Doom Aakhi) Ate Basant Ki Var Mahal 5, page 92.
- 6 Literally meaning an utterance of the Guru (Guru’s wisdom); in general it refers to the compositions of all the contributors in the Guru Granth Sahib.
- 7 Literally a cook; in the Sikh context, it refers to a devotee who prepares and serves food at the community kitchen.
- 8 Literally means kitchen. But in the Sikh context, it refers to the community kitchen where everyone partakes food with others without any distinction of caste, color, creed, gender or background.
- 9 Sant Kirpal Singh, Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji Da Sampardai Teeka Sri Amir Bhandar, volume eight, page 590-591.
- 10 Dr. Kirpal Singh (editor), Sri Gurpratap Suraj Granth Vichon Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji Da Jivan-Birtant (volume two), Krit Mahankavi Santokh Singh Ji, page 290-291.
- 11 Shabdarth Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, volume four, page 1193.
- 12 Giani Haribans Singh, Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darshan Nirnai Steek, volume eleven, page 673.
- 13 Bhai Joginder Singh Talwara, Steek Ramkali Ki Var (Rai Balvand Tatha Satai Doom Aakhi) Ate Basant Ki Var Mahal 5, page 89-90.

MEHMA PARKASH - PART III

G.S. KHURANA*

Everygrowing acceptance of Sikh values, recitation of Gurbani, influence of Sikh Gurus among large populace of the area were an eye sore for Mughal Emperors from the days of Jahangir. He had tested the valour of Sikhs in various battle field. After he usurped power, he faced resistance from his brother Dara Shakoh who was a clean hearted person with spiritual bent of mind. He had great respect for Sikh Gurus and was appreciative of their practice of providing free food (langar), environmental conservation and other humanitarian works during the contemporary tenure of Guru Har Rai. Aurangzeb was a bigot Muslim to the extent that he even got killed a Muslim Sufi Saint (Mansoor). He had a misgiving that Guru Har Rai had helped and blessed Dara Shikoh during struggle for power. He also had a obsession for miracles and miraculous powers of religious figures. He wanted to meet Guru Har Rai, who deputed his son Ram Rai to convey to Aurangzeb the real nature of the Sikh values, their mission of equality, uiniversal brotherhood and to remove all doubts about Gurbani. As Ram Rai presented himself in the royal court, he fell a prey to the emperor's material worldly temptations. He displayed some so called miracles and also distorted a Gurbani verse to earn favour of the Emperor. It all led to his being disowned by Guru Har Rai which created further distance from Mughal Darbar.

It was in such a situation that the infant Har Krishan was entrusted with the role of Guruship to continue to spread the message of one God, freedom of faith, fearlessness, sacrifice for rightful cause and promotion of other human values.

Guru Harkrishan was only five years and three months of age at

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that time. In infancy and early childhood, his eyes and face had glowing features as if rays of divinity scattered all around for emancipation of humanity. Anyone who glanced at on him performing child like activities instantly bowed before him.

Sarup Das Bhalla in Mehma Parkash has depicted his features in poetic verse as under

“ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਬਾਲਮੁਕੰਦ ਅਦਭੁਤ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਰੂਪ
ਮੂਰਤ ਪਰਮਾਨੰਦ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਜਾਕੇ”

After bestowal of Guruship, he acquired a unique personality which Sarup Das states as:

ਸੋਭ ਸਭਾ ਦਿਆਲ ਕੀ ਕੈਸੇ ਹੋਇ
ਬਿਨੇ ਨੇਤਕ ਕੇ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਨਹੀਂ,
ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਹਬਾ ਕੇ ਨੈਨ,

Guru Harkrishan had a mandate from his father to continue the tradition of Sangat, langar sanctity of Gurbani self respect and keeping his head higher even in adversity, desisting from displaying any miracles under any circumstances and never to come face to face with Aurangzeb.

Rai Rai had acquired space in Mughal Darbar primarily to dispute with Guru Harkrishan and lay his claim to Guruship and make the self respecting Sikh Sangat and the entire community subservient to Mughal Empire. Compromising the supremacy of Sikh Gurus, various plans were made at Mughal Darbar for the instigation of Ram Rai to achieve his nefarious desires.

Under a calculated plan, a softly worded message was dispatched to Guru Harkrishan expressing desire of Aurangzeb for having his ‘Darshan’.

In keeping with the tradition, congregation was held where Sikhs came from far and wide. Recitation of Gurbai was held and individual and collective problems of Sikhs were heard and resolved by Guru Harkrishan. His blessings provided solace and consolation to the Sikh devotees.

In a sangat gathering, Guru Harkrishan read the contents of the message of Aurangzeb aloud and sought response from the Sangat, which did not reject the invitation and empowered Guru Harkrishan

to take a suitable decision. Knowing well that the message was couched in diplomatic language with ulterior motives and ill-will, the Guru made up his mind to go to Delhi atleast to build up liason with Sikh Sangat of Delhi and to promote Sikh tenets and Gurbani recitation. He went to his mother and requested her to accompany him to Delhi to which she agreed.

Preparation for the journey to Delhi and the events which were to follow (known only to Guru Harkrishan) started. Necessary materials for journey and stay at Delhi were packed. The journey for Delhi started with large number of Sikhs following reciting kirtan and still larger number of followers joined the caravan on the way.

On the other side, as part of conspiracy, Aurangzeb and Ram Rai deputed Raja Jai Singh to accord a outstanding reception to Guru Harkrishan on arriving at the outskirts of Delhi. It was on the misconception that the tender-aged Guru Harkrishan will be dazzled by the royal grandeur. Raja Jai Singh was excited to receive and host the Divine Guru. He talked to Rani (his wife) who also felt elated at the prospect of having the Divine guest. Raja Jai Singh, in his inner self, nursed a wish to have Guru Harkrishan in his lap. Not to be left behind, Rani also desired to have Guru Harkrishan in her lap and be not recognised as Rani without her appearing as Such.

When the caravan arrived at the spot where Jai Singh was in waiting, he was spell bound to see the number of persons and the glow around Guru Harkrishan's face who smiled on coming close to him. While Raja forgot all what he had wished, Guru Harkrishan knowing his inner wish, raised his arms to signal falling in the lap of Raja. He jumped from the horse back to fall in the lap of Raja Jai Singh. On reaching the palace of Raja Jai Singh, Guru Harkrishan was welcomed by a look-alike Rani but he skipped her and going ahead spotted Rani clad in the dress of a maid servant and then leapt into her lap to fulfill her desire.

Raja Jai Singh went to Aurangzeb and narrated the entire event. Aurangzeb in keeping with the desired plan collected diamond studded toys and dresses and told Jai Singh that he wished to see Guru Harkrishan and pay respect to him. Raja Jai Singh told Guru Harkrishan

and in response, Guru ji stated that if Aurangzeb will be pleased, he has no objection. Thereupon, Guru Harkrishan and Raja Jai Singh went on horse back to the palace of Aurangzeb where Ram Rai received them and affectionately lifted Guru Harkrishan in his lap and took him inside and took a seat on a couch (Moor). Aurangzeb was mesmerized at a first glance on the face of Guru Harkrishan. He told Ram Rai about the reasons for his being deprived of right of succession despite having powers to show miracles. Ram Rai replied that his father was annoyed over his display of miracles. Thereafter, they returned to the palace of Raja Jai Singh.

This narration seems to be the figment of imagination of Sarup Dass Bhall as Guru Har Rai had sent a Hukamnama for Sikhs not to have any relationship with Ram Rai and had also instructed Guru Harkrishan not to come face to face with Aurangzeb. Aurangzeb had sent costly presents out of which Guru accepted only a 'Tasvi' (a Rosary).

During the stay of Guru Harkrishan at the palace of Raja Jai Singh, there used to be a sea wave of human faces to listen to Gurbani, message of universal brotherhood, freedom of faith, help to needy, leading a truthful and honest life and to seek blessings of Guru Harkrishan. Merciful eyes and benevolent hand of Guru Harkrishan removed all kinds of woes of the seekers.

Aurangzeb could not relish such a state of affairs. He had another ill-conceived plan. He asked Raja Jai Singh to arrange another meeting with Guru Harkrishan and also let him to show miracles. Guru Harkrishan knew that it was a conspiracy. He told his mother that he will not see the face of Aurangzeb and that his request for meeting was a deception and that come what may he will neither meet Aurangzeb nor display miracles.

He went into seclusion after conveying to Raja Jai Singh and Aurangzeb that he has been infected with small pox. He remained in deep meditation for five days and on coming out, told his mother that under will of the Almighty, time has come for him to leave his mortal body. Mata Krishan Kaur was in shock but called a gathering of Sangat.

There was grief all around in the city after this message. Sikhs

made a request for naming the next Guru for their emancipation. Guru Harkrishan could only utter the words, “Baba Bakalay” which hinted that his successor was to be found in the town of Bakala in Punjab.

Sarup Das Bhalla, in *Mehma Parkash*, has dealt with the period of Guru Harkrishan in just four (4) sakhis and not much has been written about his stay in Kiratpur and even in Delhi. The work being a contemporary document is still relevant for those engaged in Sikh Studies.

The period of Guru Harkrishan was short (2 years, 5 months and 26 days) but is significant in the development and program of Sikh faith. It established an landmark for propagation of Sikh faith in Delhi and surrounding areas for advancing Sikh values and also gave an important place for its propagation where a massive Gurdwara Bangla Sahib now stands. Sikhs refer to Harkrishan with utmost respect:

ਸ੍ਰੀ ਹਰਕਿਮਸ਼ਨ ਧਿਆਈਐ
ਜਿਸ ਡਿਠੈ ਸਭ ਦੁੱਖ ਜਾਏ ॥

Sarupdas Bhalla in his work *Mehma Parkash* describes the pontification of the 8th Sikh Guru, Guru Harkrishan (1656-1664) and his contribution to the the promotion of Sikh Guru’s gospel in four Sakhis (episodes) in his poetical expression. This ancient text describes the peculiar circumstances in which this infant son of Guru Harrai was conferred Guruship and sent to Delhi with a command not to commit any act of sacrilege and appeasement of the then ruling Mughal emperor as has been committed by his elder brother who had been sent to Delhi on a similar mission. These four episodes bring out the Divine majesty of the infant Guru through his spontaneous utterances.

This version of *Mehma Parkash*, though based on Jaman Sakhis and *Guru kian Sakhian*, suffers from inadequate information and some distortion about Guru Harkrishan. Some later accounts like Kavi Santokh Singh’s *Gurpartap Suraj Granth* epic volume provides a more detailed and reliable account about the life and contribution of Guru Harkrishan.

JAPUJI
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PAURI/ STANZAS 20 TO 23

PROF KULWANT SINGH*

JAPUJI

ਭਰੀਐ ਹਥੁ ਪੈਰੁ ਤਨੁ ਦੇਹੁ ॥
ਪਾਣੀ ਧੋਤੈ ਉਤਰਸੁ ਖੇਹੁ ॥
ਮੂਤ ਪਲੀਤੀ ਕਪੜੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
ਦੇ ਸਾਬੂਣੁ ਲਈਐ ਓਹੁ ਧੋਇ॥
ਭਰੀਐ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਕੈ ਸੰਗਿ॥
ਓਹੁ ਧੋਏ ਨਾਵੈ ਕੈ ਰੰਗਿ ॥
ਪੁੰਨੀ ਪਾਪੀ ਆਖਣੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਣਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਲੈ ਜਾਹੁ ॥
ਆਪੇ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਹੁ ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਹੁਕਮੀ ਆਵਹੁ ਜਾਹੁ ॥ ੨੦ ॥
bharee-ai hath pair tan dayh.
paanee Dhotai utras khayh.
moot paleetee kaparh ho-ay.
day saaboon la-ee-ai oh Dho-ay.
bharee-ai mat paapaa kai sang.
oh Dhopai naavai kai rang.
punnee paapee aakhan naahi.
kar kar karnaa likh lai jaahu.
aapay beej aapay hee khaahu.
naanak hukmee aavhu jaahu. ||20||

ਤੀਰਥੁ ਤਪੁ ਦਇਆ ਦਤੁ ਦਾਨੁ ॥
ਜੇ ਕੋ ਪਾਵੈ ਤਿਲ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ॥
ਸੁਣਿਆ ਮੰਨਿਆ ਮਨਿ ਕੀਤਾ ਭਾਉ ॥
ਅੰਤਰਗਤਿ ਤੀਰਥਿ ਮਲਿ ਨਾਉ ॥
ਸਭਿ ਗੁਣ ਤੇਰੇ ਮੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਵਿਣੁ ਗੁਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ॥

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TRANSLATION

In case our hands, feet and human body,
 Happen to get soiled and smeared with dust,
 With a splash of water can these be washed,
 And cleaned thoroughly of all dust particles.
 In case of human dress getting soaked,
 Drenched all over with urine, perchance,
 With the application of detergent soap,
 It can be washed and cleaned indeed.
 In case of human mind getting contaminated,
 With the onslaught of sinful thoughts,
 It can only be cleansed of all toxins,
 By concentrating upon the Divine Sacred Name.
 Terms such as virtuousness and sinfulness,
 Are not just abstract empty words.
 Each human deed wether good or bad,
 Gets invariably recorded in our life's account.
 Whatever kind of crop of human deeds we sow throughout our life,
 So shall we harvest at the end of life.
 Nanak, it is as per the Divine will and its cosmic laws,
 That we keep on transmigrating between life and death. ||20||

Going on pilgrimage, undergoing penances;
 Displaying compassion, making donations in Charity,
 May bring some honour to the practitioner of these acts,
 Which is of little merit in Divine Lord's estimation.
 It is through listening to and believing in the Divine,
 And remaining in awe of the Divine Lord indeed,

ਸੁਅਸਤਿ ਆਬਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਬਰਮਾਉ ॥
 ਸਤਿ ਸੁਹਾਣੁ ਸਦਾ ਮਨਿ ਚਾਉ ॥
 ਕਵਣੁ ਸੁ ਵੇਲਾ ਵਖਤੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਬਿਤਿ ਕਵਣੁ ਵਾਰੁ ॥
 ਕਵਣਿ ਸਿ ਰੁਤੀ ਮਾਹੁ ਕਵਣੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਹੋਆ ਆਕਾਰੁ ॥
 ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥
 ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥
 ਬਿਤਿ ਵਾਰੁ ਨਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਜਾਣੈ ਰੁਤਿ ਮਾਹੁ ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ॥
 ਜਾ ਕਰਤਾ ਸਿਰਠੀ ਕਉ ਸਾਜੇ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਸੋਈ ॥
 ਕਿਵ ਕਰਿ ਆਖਾ ਕਿਵ ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਕਿਉ ਵਰਨੀ ਕਿਵ ਜਾਣਾ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਆਖਣਿ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਆਖੈ ਇਕ ਦੂ ਇਕੁ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥
 ਵਡਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਵਡੀ ਨਾਈ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਕਾ ਹੋਵੈ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਜੇ ਕੋ ਆਪੋ ਜਾਣੈ ਅਗੈ ਗਇਆ ਨ ਸੋਹੈ ॥੨੧॥
 tirath tap da-i-aa dat daan.
 jay ko paavai til kaa maan.
 suni-aa mani-aa man keetaa bhaa-o.
 antargat tirath mal naa-o.
 sabh gun tayray mai naahee ko-ay.
 vin gun keetay bhagat na ho-ay
 su-asat aath bancee barmaa-o.
 sat suhaan sadaa man chaa-o.
 kavan so vaylaa vakhat kavan kavan thit kavan vaar.
 kavan se rutee maahu kavan jit ho-aa aakaar.
 vayl na paa-ee-aa pandtee je hovai laykh puraan.
 vakhat na paa-i-o kaadee-aa je likhan laykh kuraan.
 thit vaar naa jogee jaanai rut maahu naa ko-ee.
 jaa kartaa sirthee ka-o saajay aapay jaanai so-ee.
 kiv kar aakhaa kiv saalaahce ki-o varnee kiv jaanaa.
 naanak aakhan sabh ko aakhai ik doo ik si-aanaa.
 vadaa saahib vadee naa-ee keetaa jaa kaa hovai.
 naanak jay ko aapou jaanai agai ga-i-aa na sohai. ||21||

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥
 ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥
 ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸੁਲੂ ਇਕੁ ਧਾਤੁ ॥
 ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਵਡਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੁ ॥੨੨॥

It is through an internal spiritual pilgrimage,
 That one is cleansed of all the cerebral toxins/ pollution
 Divine Lord, You are the fountain head of all virtues;
 Whereas, I being a human being, am bereft of all these.
 It is not possible to meditate upon your sacred name,
 Unless I imbibe and cherish your Divine virtues.
 Salutations be to him, the creator of entire Universe;
 The sacred Word/ symphony of spheres and eternal bliss;
 Whose continuous remembrance/ and consciousness ensures,
 Eternal sense of beautiful joy and blissfulness.
 Which happened to be the time of the day or an occasion?
 Which happened to be the lunar date or day's name?
 Which happened to be the name of month or season?
 When the created Universe came into Being indeed?
 Had the Brahmins known about the timing of the creation,
 They would have described it in their Pauranic scriptures.
 Had the Islamic clerics known about the creation's timing,
 They would have described it in their Quranic verses.
 The fact is that even the yogis do not have any idea.
 About the day, lunar date, month or season of Divine creation.
 It is the Divine Creator himself who alone knows,
 When He created His creation indeed.
 How should I express and admire His majestic Being,
 How should I describe the measure and extent of His majesty;
 When there is a surfeit of alleged knowers and admirers, Nanak;
 Where each one of them claims to be wiser than the other?
 Supreme is the Divine Lord, Supreme is His sacred Name;
 Who is the creator of everything that happens to materialize.
 Nanak, anyone else claiming himself to be the Doer of anything;
 Shall not cover himself with glory in the Divine Court. ||21||

There exist million of nether worlds beneath;
 So do millions of skies exist in space above.
 Every attempt at reckoning their number ended in despair;
 As the four vedas have unanimously confirmed this fact indeed.
 Even as the Islamic scriptures keeping their count at eighteen thousand;

paataalaa paataal lakh aagaasaa aagaas.
 orhak orhak bhaal thakay vayd kahan ik vaat.
 sahas athaarah kahan kataybaa asuloo ik Dhaat.
 laykhaa ho-ay ta likee-ai laykhai ho-ay vinaas.
 naanak vadaa aakhee-ai aapay jaanai aap. ||22||

ਸਾਲਾਹੀ ਸਾਲਾਹਿ ਏਤੀ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ॥
 ਨਦੀਆ ਅਤੈ ਵਾਹ ਪਵਹਿ ਸਮੁੰਦਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੀਅਹਿ ॥
 ਸਮੁੰਦ ਸਾਹ ਸੁਲਤਾਨ ਗਿਰਹਾ ਸੇਤੀ ਮਾਲੁ ਧਨੁ ॥
 ਕੀੜੀ ਤੁਲਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਨੀ ਜੇ ਤਿਸੁ ਮਨਹੁ ਨ ਵੀਸਰਹਿ ॥੨੩॥
 saalaahie saalaahi aytee surat na paa-ee-aa.
 nadee-aa atai vaah pavahi samund na jaanee-ahi.
 samund saah sultaan girhaa saytee maal Dhan.
 keerhee tul na hovnee jay tis manhu na veesrahi. ||23||

Have acknowledged the presence of a single essence behind these.
The whole expanse is so vast and infinite
That every pursuit of keeping its count ends in vain.
Nanak, the Divine cosmic power is so supreme;
That it alone knows the extent of its expanse. ||22||

No amount of laudation of the Divine Lord by a devotee;
Can enable him to comprehend the extent of His Majesty;
As all streams and rivers falling into the ocean;
Do not know the expanse of the ocean.
Even if one is an emperor ruling over vast oceans;
And possesses mountain heaps of worldly wealth;
One has no merit in comparison to an ant's worth;
Whose consciousness is never bereft of God's name. ||23||

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## INTERPRETATION OF PAURIS/STANZAS 20 TO 23 OF GURU NANAK'S JAPUJI

### INTERPRETATION

In these four Pauris / Stanzas (20-23) of Japuji Guru Nanak brings about a contrast between the contemporary ways of worship, meditation and his own spiritual process of internal mystical spring cleaning of self; and his vision of about the creation of universe by the Divine Cosmic power, and his spontaneous edification of its otherwise inscrutable Divine identity.

In Pauri/ Stanza 20, Guru Nanak lays greater stress on cleaning of human mind and soul than on the cleaning of the human body. Illustrating that as human body and clothes are cleaned through the application of detergents, human mind and soul can only be cleaned through the regular intake of spiritual inputs through repeated remembrance of God's sacred name.

Maintaining personal hygiene, though desirable and essential for maintaining good health is only a physical activity. For mental and spiritual spring cleaning, it is indispensable to rid human heart, mind and soul of all vices and subjugation of vicious feelings and thoughts. Guru Nanak's own tested and tried process is continuous dwelling upon the sacred name (Naam) of the Divine. Like the administration of the medical antidote to a person who has consumed some poisonous substance to rid him of its toxic effects, similarly, repeated remembrance of Divine Name with utmost faith and devotion brings about spiritual rejuvenation. Moreover, virtues and sins are not vague, abstract terms nor are leading a virtuous and sinful life without their reciprocal consequences. As the adage goes. As you sow so shall you reap, the quality of life is determined by the nature of thoughts and deeds that one cultivates, albeit destined by the Divine Will. Thus, the moral imperative has a far greater bearing on human life than external processes of purification. The kind of thoughts and kind of deeds one nurses in one's mind and kind of deeds one accomplishes through one's body and life also determine the transmigration of

human soul to next life after this life as a kind of cause and effect, so to say. So in Guru Nanak's estimation purity of thoughts is preferable to purity of body.

As in Pauri / Stanza 20, so in Pauri/ Stanza 21, Guru Nanak does not find any worthwhile benefit in undergoing acts of pilgrimage, undergoing self-imposed penances, performing acts of charity without love and faith as acts of emancipation or spiritual rejuvenation. Contrary to these traditionally emancipatory processes, Guru Nanak stresses upon the efficacy of his own tested and tried gradual meditative process of listening with concentration to the recitation on the Divine Name (Naam) and strengthening one's devotion and faith in the Divine entity. Instead of pilgrimages etc regular cultivation and imbibing of this process of spiritual nurturing cleans the human mind and soul of all the dross and toxicity. Since Divine cosmic power is the source of all virtues, it is through the embedding His image and his qualities which will lead to human emancipation. It creates an ambience of enduring bliss, positivity and optimism.

In the second part of this stanza, Guru Nanak refers to the futility of all the astrological, scientific and astronomical calculations and speculations made in the several oriental and Semitic canonical texts about the creation of the universe by the Divine cosmic power. Contrary to these cumbersome and fragmentary calculations, is Guru Nanak's faith in the inscrutability of the Divine Cosmic power and its exact timing and power of creation. In a single leap of faith and mystical realization, the mystic in Guru Nanak realizes the full extent of Divine cosmic power and its irreversible will and command. Whosoever, tries to defy this Divine command will realize the futility of his audacious pursuit in the final moment of truth.

Carrying on his mystical insight into the limitless, innumerable and inscrutable vast extent of the Divine cosmic power, Guru Nanak in Pauri/ Stanza 22 envision millions of heavenly bodies and nether worlds in space which reflect the presence of some mysterious energy which expands, contracts, destroys and creates these object at its own will and command. All the oriental and semitic scriptures including Vedas, Islamic sacred texts which estimate the number of these celestial

bodies to be eighteen thousand in number have failed to realize that the real source of all these objects is only one. The fact is that all the logicians, scientists, astronomers, speculators and scriptural savants have not succeeded in measuring the size extent of the Divine cosmic power because only what is measurable and fathomable can be assessed correctly. Whatever is beyond limit can only be felt and experienced. Instead of entering into such a futile pursuit of enquiring and verifying, Guru Nanak's way is one of feeling ecstatic and enlightened and being an admirer and votary of this Grand Design. Poetry, lyrical and singing in ecstasy can be the only medium of expression of this unique experience. And that is Guru Nanak's way.

In Pauri/ Stanza 23 also, Guru Nanak prescribes the benefits and efficacy of the experiences of spiritual ecstasy and singing eulogies/ paeans to the Divine cosmic power. While ecstatic and elated feelings may provide the devout seeker with a slice of Divine flavor and a glimpse about the essential nature of the Divine, this sense of spiritual euphoria also cannot equip him with the full knowledge about the extent and mysterious majesty of the Divine. Such a devotee is like one of the streams, rivulets and rivers falling into and merging with the vast, profound ocean without knowing the depth and vastness of the ocean replete with precious gems and stones.

Similarly, a mighty emperor whose writ runs over vast oceans and who possesses mountain heaps of worldly wealth is worth nothing in comparison to a tiny ant which is imbued with the Divine Name and His grace. To sum up, continuous remembrance of the Divine sacred name supercedes all external rituals, pilgrimages for self purification and firm faith in the existence of Divine power and its inscrutability is more efficacious than futile calculations about the moment of Divine creation of universe and its extent.

## GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB: LIFE AND WORKS

HARNEET KAUR\*

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The word “Talib” attached to Gurbachan Singh’s name is certainly a reflection of the inquisitive learner, seriousness and the magnitude of his study and teaching, and among the stalwarts who graced the august post of professorship, his name will forever shine in the sphere of Sikh philosophy and teaching. Even at the age of 75, Talib’s tireless work, perseverance, and scholarship were a source of deep inspiration for many talented individuals. Education was his greatest asset, on the strength of which he gained a lot of name and fame in the educational world.

Gurbachan Singh Talib was born on April 7, 1911, to Sardar Kartar Singh and Mata Jai Kaur in the small town of Munak, which falls under the present-day Sangrur district. His father was a government employee of the princely state of Sangrur the then capital of the princely state Jind. He passed his higher education from the government high school in Sangrur. In 1927, Talib excelled in his matriculation examination at Raj High School, Sangrur, earning a merit scholarship.<sup>1</sup> He learned a lot from his teachers and appreciated their efforts in shaping his education. Learned Urdu from Munshi Mullar Singh and Persian from Maulvi Manzoor Ahsan. Giani Parakram Singh, an experienced scholar, who introduced the students to Gurmat and provided them with knowledge about Indian philosophy and culture.<sup>2</sup>

In 1933, he achieved top ranking position at the Panjab University, Lahore, after obtaining his Master’s degree in English literature from Khalsa College, Amritsar. Commencing his illustrious career as a lecturer in the same college, Professor Talib’s remarkable achievement

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garnered immediate respect both from his colleagues and students alike. After departing from Khalsa College in 1940, he took up a position at the newly established Sikh National College in Lahore, where he lectured in the Department of English for several years.<sup>3</sup>

During his time, Gurbachan Singh Talib remained an zealous advocate of Punjabi education. Although he rarely expressed it verbally, he possessed an extensive understanding of Punjabi culture and literature. His interpretations of Punjabi literature were both insightful and meaningful, leading the Punjabi literary tradition to achieve new heights in terms of critical techniques and standards. Talib's contribution was further recognized when he organized the first conference of Punjabi writers in 1952 at Lyallpur Khalsa College in Jalandhar. The conference saw participation of distinguished literary figures such as Nanak Singh, a renowned novelist, and Lala Dhani Ram Chatrik, a leading light in Punjabi poetry.<sup>4</sup>

Throughout his illustrious career, he held eminent positions in academia. He served as the principal at Lyallpur Khalsa College in Jalandhar, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College in Delhi, Khalsa College in Bombay, Guru Gobind Singh College in Patna, and National College in Sirsa from 1949 to 1962. Following this, he held the position of Reader in English at Kurukshetra University from 1962 to 1969 before assuming the role of Professor of Sikh Studies in the Guru Nanak Chair at Panjab University in Chandigarh until 1973. He experienced his most productive years at Punjabi University in Patiala. Later, due to health reasons, he had to relinquish his brief tenure as the Guru Nanak Chair of Sikh Studies at Banaras Hindu University.<sup>5</sup>

Professor Gurbachan Singh Talib joined the Punjabi University in 1976, where he set out on a remarkable mission to translate the entire text of Sri Guru Granth Sahib into English. His exceptional contributions earned him the prestigious Padma Bhushan award from the Government of India in 1985. Later that same year, Professor Talib resigned from his fellowship at the Punjabi University to accept the National fellowship awarded by the Indian Council of Historical Research in New Delhi. He has also associated with the Indian Sahitya Academy since 1958 and he also had the honour of being a member of the selection committee of the Bhartiya Jnanpeeth. Apart from

being a member of the Senate of Punjab University and the Senate and Syndicate of Punjabi University, he was also a member of the Language Advisory Committee of Punjab several times.<sup>6</sup> A polyglot linguistic genius, Professor Talib was proficient in English, Punjabi, Persian, and Urdu. His prolific writing profoundly influenced the study and understanding of Sikhism, and his extensive works continue to inspire and educate new generations of Sikh scholars and practitioners, even after his passing away at the age of 88. Professor Talib's legacy as one of the most significant figures in the history of Sikh philosophy and literature is firmly established, and His remarkable contribution to the field earned him a well-deserved Padma Bhushan award in 1985.<sup>7</sup>

#### **TRANSLATION WORK OF SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB**

Gurbachan Singh Talib was a distinguished scholar of English literature and a prominent theologian within the Sikh community. He was given the formidable task of translating the entire text of Sikh Scripture into poetic English. His proficiency in multiple languages, including English, Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Sanskrit, and Punjabi enabled him to gain a deep understanding of classical texts and sacred scriptures from various cultures. His extensive knowledge of Islam, Sufi literature, the Bible, and Hindu philosophy and mythology made him uniquely equipped for the task of translating the Sri Guru Granth Sahib.<sup>8</sup>

Professor Talib possessed exceptional literary sensitivity and was well-versed in the Sikh sacred literature and tradition. His diligent efforts and profound understanding of Sikh doctrines enabled him to translate the Scripture with remarkable ease. Notably, his translation is marked by lucidity and coherence, highlighting the seamless connection between his pen and his thoughts. These remarkable qualities were particularly valuable for Professor Talib, who despite being a cardiac patient, remained wholeheartedly committed to the noble cause of translating Gurbani. With his strong willpower and determination, he decided to undertake his long cherished monumental project of translating the entire Guru Granth into English. In the year 1977, the Punjabi University Syndicate, Patiala, conferred a Fellowship upon him for undertaking this daunting task of translating the Scripture. He took up this challenging responsibility single-handedly with

continuous perseverance and diligence.

The work was published by Punjabi University in 1984. Before translation, Talib provides a scholarly introduction of about 100 pages, in which he provides a comprehensive summary of the various aspects of Guru Granth Sahib's text. He provides a detailed general history of the compilation of the Canon, including its language and other theological, and doctrinal aspects. It is an informative prologue for the readers of this Scripture in English. It has been also published by the Punjabi University in book form, *An Introduction to the Guru Granth Sahib*.

The translated text in English on the left carries the corresponding pages of the original text in the right-hand margin. The numbering of hymns also follows the original pattern. The scheme of presentation is identical in all the volumes. The first volume ends with Raag Gauri the second with Raag Tilang, the third with Raag Maru and the last with Raag Maala. A glossary of important terms has been appended in the first volume.

Talib provides appropriate definitions to the hymns like Rahrās Sahib, and Kirtan Sohila as 'Paeon of Laudation: The later text consisting of five hymns, is recited before retiring for the night. It also marks the finale of the service for the dead, at the time of cremation. It is called paeon of joy, because of the individual self's union with the Creator envisaged in it.'<sup>9</sup> Some definitions are longer as in the case of Rahrās, Barā Maha, Majh, Sukhmani etc. Talib has cared to give notes explaining the traditionally accepted connections of certain hymns with historical events. The translation provides clues to the origin of ragas and interprets the mythical references as and when required.

### **CRITIQUE OF G. S. TALIB'S TRANSLATION**

A literal translation of this Scripture fails to capture its mystical import. Modern thinkers of linguistic analysis are of the unanimous view that it is very difficult to express the Ineffable through ordinary language. Our religious language is conditioned by its space-time regional factors of folk beliefs. This language of signs involves contextualized interpretation of the sacred scripture. It requires

transcendence from the contours of regional culture to divine mystical meanings of the verses. It can be possible only with the help of symbols which decontextualize and transcend the phenomenal realm. It requires symbolic and metaphorical language. Talib viewed Gurbani as a blend of Islamic and Hindu spiritual concepts. It seems his sojourns to Kurukshetra, Varanasi, and Chandigarh universities had their respective influences on the dynamic and receptive mind of Prof. Talib. But he also recognizes its distinctive character in contrast to the spiritual literature of Indian and other religious traditions of the world. He tries to present this distinctive Sikh world-view which is enshrined in this Canon. He correctly emphasizes its ecumenical thrust in his English rendering of Gurbani. It would be pertinent to point out that the Sikh Canon contains ample material for the comparative and phenomenological study of different religious phenomena.

Researchers often face challenges when dealing with certain words. For example, in the Hebrew script of the Old Testament, the personal name of God, which is either Jehovah or Yahweh, is translated into English as 'Lord' in most cases.<sup>10</sup> Talib translates 'Guru' as 'Master' and 'Daas' as 'Slave' which Gurbhagat Singh states that "The sign 'Master' brings into mind the entire debate about the master-slave dialectic from Nietzsche through Hegel, Marx and Kojève."<sup>11</sup> Talib seems to follow the biblical tradition while referring to the supreme Reality. In the Sikh Canon epithets for the supreme Reality are taken from divergent religious traditions. Talib tries to club all such epithets into one generic term 'Lord'. In such cases when a suitable word of the original text is not available in English, then as a matter of rule and practice, the original word may be physically transported and adopted into a transliterated form and its history and meaning explained in a footnote. Every word has its own history and cultural glow.

Talib's writing lacks detailed footnotes and contains many mythical allusions that may require the help of reference books like dictionaries or encyclopaedias. Without such resources, it may be challenging for an English-knowing reader to understand the text's esoteric allusions.

### WORKS OF GURBACHAN SINGH TALIB

Besides this landmark translation, there is a long list of Professor Talib's works written both in Punjabi and English language as mentioned below:

#### **IN PUNJABI:**

1. *Anapachbate Rab* 1952
2. *Adhunik Punjabi Sahit* (Punjabi Kav) 1955
3. *Pavittar jivan Kathan* 1971
4. *Baba Sheikh Farid* 1975

#### **IN ENGLISH:**

1. *Muslim League Attack on the Sikhs and Hindus in Punjab*, 1947 (1950)
2. *Guru Nanak and national integration*, Journal of Sikh Studies, 1984.
3. *The Impact of Guru Gobind Singh on Indian Society* (1966)
4. *Guru Nanak: His Personality and Vision* (1969)
5. *Guru Nanak: A study of his creed*, Journal of Sikhism and comparative religion, April 1990
6. *Divine bard Guru Nanak viewed as a poet*, Spokesman Weekly, 1969.
7. *Guru Amar Das: The apostle of service and humility*: Spokesman weekly, 1986.
8. *Thus Spake Guru Amar Das*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1979.
9. *Bhai Vir Singh: Life, Times and Works* (1973)
10. *Baba Sheikh Farid: His Life and Teachings*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1973.
11. *Baba Sheikh Farid: A study of his mystical experience* (1987)
12. *Guru Tegh Bahadur: Background and Supreme Sacrifice* (1976)
13. *Japuji: The Immortal Prayer chant* (1977)
14. *Guru Gobind Singh: Creator of new order*, Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, 1991.
15. *An Introduction to Guru Granth Sahib*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1991.
16. *Translation in English of Sri Guru Granth Sahib* published in Four Volumes by Punjabi University, Patiala (1984).
17. *Bhagat Namdeva: A brief study of his spiritual experience*, Journal

- of Religious studies, 1976.
18. *Sikhism and Yoga: Studies in Sikhism and comparative religion*, 1982.
  19. *Sikhism: Some fundamental doctrine*, Journal of Religious Studies, 1982.
  20. *Sewa Singh Thikriwala: A brief Sketch of his life and works*, Pbi Univ, Patiala, 1971.
  21. *Nitnem*, Guru Nanak Foundation, New Delhi, 1983.
  22. *Kbalsa*, Sikh Review, 25 (280), April 1977.
  23. *Rana Surat Singh as an allegorical epic*, Studies in Sikhism and Comparative Religion, Oct 1985.
  24. *Concept and tradition of martyrdom in Sikhism*, 1976.
  25. *Worship in Sikhism*, Bulletin of Christian Institute of Sikh Studies, 1983.
  26. *Jainism*, (edi.), Punjabi University Patiala, 2009.

Gurbachan Singh Talib was a pioneering figure in Sikh philosophy and literature, whose life and works have had a lasting impact on the Sikh community and the world at large. Through his extensive research and writing, he has helped to preserve and promote the teachings of the Sikh Gurus, and his contributions to the field of Sikh studies continue to be widely recognized and appreciated. His legacy serves as a testament to his deep commitment to the Sikh faith and his unwavering dedication to spreading its message of love, compassion, and justice to the world.

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2. ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ (ਡਾ.), ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਲਿਬ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਚਨਾ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, 1988, ਪੰਨਾ- 2.
3. Harbans Singh (Edi.), Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, p-128.
4. ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ (ਡਾ.), ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਲਿਬ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਚਨਾ, ਪੰਨਾ- 7.
5. Harbans Singh (Edi.), Encyclopaedia of Sikhism, p-128.

6. ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ (ਡਾ.), ਗੁਰਬਚਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਤਾਲਿਬ ਜੀਵਨ ਅਤੇ ਰਚਨਾ, ਪੰਨਾ- 16.
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8. Nirbhai Singh, The Journal of Religious Studies, Vol. XXI, Spring 1992, No. 1, p- 155.
9. Gurbachan Sigh Talib (Trans.), Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1984, p- 31.
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11. Gurbhagat Singh, Interpreting A Small Cultural Problem in Translating Gurbani, Jaswinder Singh (edi.), Essays on Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Naad Pargaas, Sri Amritsar, 2015, p- 80.

**HWPL**  
**HEAVENLY CULTURE WORLD PEACE &**  
**RESTORATION OF LIGHT**

**COL J.S. MULTANI\***

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Heavenly Culture World Peace & Restoration of Light (HWPL) is an international NGO established for promotion of world peace and cessation of Wars. Headquartered in Seoul, South Korea, it builds relationship and partnerships with leaders of governments, faiths and civil society through many peace tours, expanding a global network for devising concrete measures for peace based on Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW). Recently, HWPL conducted a World Peace Summit at Seoul, South Korea from 18 to 21 Sep 2023 which was attended by Secretary General Col. J.S. Multani on Invitation from HWPL. HWPL has been undertaking following major activities:-

**1. INTERNATIONAL LAW FOR PEACE**

Through the collaboration of world-renowned international law experts, HWPL drafted and announced 10 articles and 38 clauses of an International Law for Peace called as Declaration of Peace and Cessation of War (DPCW). The declaration aims to restore and uphold the spirit which gave birth to the United Nations and promote the universal value of the global community, which will lead to the realization of sustainable peace.

The DPCW embodies the principles and measures to prevent and resolve conflicts and sustain a peaceful global society. It got the support of 176 countries which has prompted HWPL to submit the DPCW as a draft resolution to UN General Assembly. Such efforts

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are expected to help peace become anchored as a common value across the global community.

## **2. INTERFAITH HARMONY**

HWPL WARP (World Alliance of Religions' Peace) Office is a place for religious leaders to discuss the shared values of faiths based on religious texts. Currently HWPL operates 282 WARP Offices in 131 countries. WARP Offices aim at serving as forums where participants reaffirm their role as faith leaders, discover directions and paths towards building peace and prevent religious conflicts. HWPL will continue to provide such forums that strengthen the global network of civil society and religious communities to establish interfaith harmony which helps in conflict resolution.

## **3. PEACE EDUCATION**

To spread the spirit and culture of peace, HWPL developed the peace education curriculum which conceptualises peace and its value. It has been provided to schools and educational institutions around the world and consistently training and appointing teachers as "Peace Educators".

HWPL designated 379 schools across various countries - India, USA, Philippines and more-as an HWPL Peace Academy and signed MOA with the ministries of education in 12 countries - Guatemala, Ethiopia and more. HWPL has signed MOUs with National Commissions for UNESCO and is spreading peace education internationally. Those who receive peace education will play a critical role in spreading a culture of peace and the resolution of war and conflict.

## **4. INTERNATIONAL PEACE YOUTH GROUP (IPYG)**

IPYG is a global youth network that urges for the cessation of war and spreads a culture of peace.

IPYG is working with about 1000 youth organizations in 119 countries. With 5 million youth around the world, the IPYG holds a Peace Walk calling for peace on every 25th of May. Since 2018, they have sent Peace Letters urging Heads of States to support the DPCW

IN 192 countries and the responses have been positive. They take the lead to organize youth workshops, peace music festivals, peace sporting events and more to build and spread a culture of peace. In its goal to achieve lasting world peace, the IPYG is making efforts to achieve unification of Korean Peninsula.

### **5. MEDIA - (THE EYES AND EARS OF THE GLOBAL FAMILY)**

HWPL is running a global journalist network, Media Association for Global Peace (MAGP) so that journalists around the world can share news of peace and communicate with each other.

All the journalists from different countries can participate in this media network. They are cooperating to deliver the news of peace quickly and monitor news of war. HWPL has developed a partnership with 78 media agencies in 32 countries as of 2023 and is reporting the news of world peace to about 150 million viewers all over the world.

Col JS Multani, Secretary General ISC was invited as religious leader of the Sikh faith from India, being Secretary General of ISC to attend the World Peace Summit from 18th to 21st December 2023. We had close interaction with religious leaders from Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Saudi Arabia, USA, UK and Australia & many more and the management. I gave a small talk on fundamental Sikh tenets of kirat karo, wand chhako, naam japo meaning earn your livelihood through earnest means, share your income with the needy and meditate on God's sacred Name and highlighted the major Sikh principles creating co-operation and peace within the country and the world as whole.

Memorandum of understanding was signed between Global O3 Branch, Heavenly Culture, World Peace and Restoration of Light (HWPL) and International Sikh Confederation (ISC) Chandigarh on 19th September 2023 with an understanding to co-operate & work together on the activities highlighted above.

## ਸਤਲੁਜ, ਰਾਵੀ ਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ : ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਤੱਥ\*

ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਖਹਿਰਾ

### ਲੇਖਾ-ਜੋਖਾ

ਪਾਣੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸਾਡਾ ਖਿੱਤਾ ਖੇਤੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਸਦੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਲੋਕ ਦਰਿਆਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਰਭਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮਸਲਾ ਫਿਰ ਉੱਭਰਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਲੇਖ ਸਤਲੁਜ, ਰਾਵੀ ਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਤੱਥਾਂ ਸਹਿਤ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਇਕ ਵਾਰ ਫਿਰ ਭਖ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ 1981 ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹਾਂ ਅਤੇ 1982 ਵਿਚ ਮੈਂ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਦੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ 1981 ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ ਐਵਾਰਡ ਨੂੰ ਚੁਣੌਤੀ ਦੇਣੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ। ਇਕ ਰਿੱਟ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨ ਦਾਇਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਜਿਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਮਿੱਤਰ ਮਰਹੂਮ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਰਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਕਾਲੇਕਾ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ ਦੇ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਹਰਿਆਣਾ, ਦਿੱਲੀ, ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ, ਭਾਖੜਾ ਬਿਆਸ ਮੈਨੇਜਮੈਂਟ ਬੋਰਡ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਜਵਾਬਦੇਹ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਧਿਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨਰਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਇਹ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨ ਦਾਇਰ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਵਾਹ ਵਾਸਤੇ (Locus standi) 'ਤੇ ਕਿੰਤੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਉਦੋਂ ਹਾਲੇ ਜਨਹਿੱਤ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਆਦਾ ਚਲਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।

ਅਜਿਹੀ ਰਿੱਟ ਕੋਈ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸ਼ਖ਼ਸ ਹੀ ਦਾਇਰ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਉਪਲੱਬਧਤਾ ਦੀ ਮਿਕਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਸਰਪਲੱਸ ਕਰਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਰਿੱਟ 'ਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਰਵਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸ. ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਾਦਲ ਦੇ ਚਾਚਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰਿੱਟ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨ ਦਾਇਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਕਾਮਰੇਡ ਹਰਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਆਪਣੀ ਪਾਰਟੀ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਵਿੰਗ ਦੀ ਤਰਫ਼ੋਂ ਇਕ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨ ਮੇਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਦਾਇਰ ਕਰਵਾਈ ਸੀ। ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ

\* (Courtesy: Punjabi Tribune, October 15, 2023) ਲੇਖਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਹਾਈ ਕੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਸੀਨੀਅਰ ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ ਹਨ।

ਵੱਧ ਇਹ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਲੰਬਿਤ ਪਈਆਂ ਰਹੀਆਂ। ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਜਿਸ ਵੀ ਡਿਵੀਜ਼ਨ ਬੈਂਚ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਇਕ ਜੱਜ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਲਾਂਭੇ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। 14 ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਚੀਫ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਐੱਸਐੱਸ ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਆ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੈਂਚ ਕੋਲ ਤਬਦੀਲ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ ਤੇ ਡੇਢ ਕੁ ਦਿਨ ਦੀ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਤਿੰਨ ਜੱਜਾਂ ਦੇ ਬੈਂਚ ਕੋਲ ਪੱਕੀ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਲਈ ਭੇਜ ਕੇ ਦੋ ਹਫ਼ਤਿਆਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਦੀ ਤਰੀਕ ਮੁਕੱਰਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਸੋਮਵਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਇਕ ਦਿਨ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਚੀਫ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਸੰਧਾਵਾਲੀਆ ਦਾ ਪਟਨਾ ਹਾਈਕੋਰਟ ਵਿਚ ਤਬਾਦਲਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਸੁਪਰੀਮ ਕੋਰਟ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਕੇਸ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਲਈ ਆਪਣੇ ਕੋਲ ਮੰਗਵਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਸ 'ਤੇ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਆ ਸਕਿਆ; ਪਟੀਸ਼ਨਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਬਗ਼ੈਰ ਹੀ 1986 ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਕੇਸ ਨੂੰ ਖਾਰਜ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

24 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1985 ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜੀਵ-ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਉੱਪਰ ਸਹੀ ਪਾਈ ਗਈ ਸੀ ਜੋ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਜਾਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦੀ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਬਾਬਤ ਮੱਦ ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਰ ਹੈ:

9.1: ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ 21.7.1985 ਨੂੰ ਜਿੰਨਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਓਨਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਖ਼ਪਤ ਦੇ ਮੰਤਵਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ। ਵਰਤੋਂ ਦੀ ਮਿਕਦਾਰ ਬਾਰੇ ਦਾਅਵਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਸਦੀਕ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨਲ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਧਾਰਾ 9.2 ਵਿਚ ਇੰਝ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ:

9.2: ਬਾਕੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ (Their remaining waters) ਬਾਬਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਦੀ ਹਿੱਸੇਦਾਰੀ ਬਾਬਤ ਦਾਅਵਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਾਲਸੀ ਲਈ ਸੁਪਰੀਮ ਕੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਜੱਜ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਗੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਕ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨਲ ਕੋਲ ਭੇਜਿਆ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ। ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨਲ ਦਾ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਛੇ ਮਹੀਨਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਵੇਗਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਧਿਰਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਾਬੰਦ ਹੋਣਗੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਕਦਮ ਤੇਜ਼ੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ।

9.3: ਐੱਸਵਾਈਐੱਲ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਹੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ 15 ਅਗਸਤ 1986 ਤੱਕ ਪੂਰੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ।

ਅੱਜ ਤੱਕ ਇਹ ਭੇਤ ਬਣਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਖਰੜੇ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਪਾਣੀ (The Waters)' ਦੀ ਥਾਂ 'ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪਾਣੀ (Their Waters)' ਕਿਉਂ ਤੇ ਕਦੋਂ ਪਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਧਾਰਾ ਦਾ ਮਤਲਬ ਇਹ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕਿ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਜੋ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਸੀ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅਸਲੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ, ਨਾ ਕਿ ਜਿੰਨੀ 21 ਜੁਲਾਈ 1985 ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ।

ਬਾਕੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਤੈਅ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸੁਪਰੀਮ ਕੋਰਟ ਦੇ ਸੇਵਾਮੁਕਤ ਜੱਜ ਜਸਟਿਸ ਵੀ. ਬਾਲਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਨ ਇਰਾਡੀ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨਿਯੁਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਲੰਮਾ ਚਿਰ ਚੱਲੀ ਸੁਣਵਾਈ ਤਹਿਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਮਾਹਿਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਟੀਮ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਸਹਿਤ, ਚੰਗੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਕੇਸ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ ਕੇਸ ਇਹ ਸੀ ਕਿ 21 ਜੁਲਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਤੈਅ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਰਾਹ ਸਨ: ਪਹਿਲਾ, 21 ਜੁਲਾਈ ਤੱਕ ਵਰਤੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਮਿਕਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ 365 ਨਾਲ ਗੁਣਾ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ; ਦੂਜਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਜਲ ਵਰ੍ਹੇ (ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ 1 ਜੂਨ ਤੋਂ 31 ਮਈ ਤੱਕ) ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਪਾਣੀ ਕੁੱਲ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਤੀਜਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਕੈਲੰਡਰ ਸਾਲ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਕੁੱਲ ਪਾਣੀ ਕਿੰਨਾ ਹੈ। ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਉਦੋਂ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨੇ ਆਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਹੀ ਗੌਰ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਹ ਰਾਜੀਵ-ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦੀ ਮਨਸ਼ਾ ਜਾਂ ਮੰਤਵ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਮੁੱਢਲੀ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼ ਦਾਇਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਦੋਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰਪਤੀ ਰਾਜ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਮਾਮਲਾ ਰਾਜਪਾਲ ਐੱਸ.ਐੱਸ. ਰੇਅ ਕੋਲ ਉਠਾਇਆ। ਰਾਜਪਾਲ ਨੇ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਖਰੜਾ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਆਖਿਆ ਜੋ ਮੈਂ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼ਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਦੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਦਾਇਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ 30 ਸਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਚੱਲਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ, ਪਰ ਹਾਲੇ ਤੱਕ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅੰਤਿਮ ਫੈਸਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ 'ਤੇ ਦਬਾਅ ਪਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਐੱਸਵਾਈਐੱਲ ਨਹਿਰ ਬਣਾਏ।

### ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਿਛੋਕੜ

ਭਾਖੜਾ ਡੈਮ ਦੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਵੇਲੇ ਬਣੀ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਆਂਪੂਰਨ ਵੰਡ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੌਜੂਦਾ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਲਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਅਜੀਬ ਗੱਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਾਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ ਹੋਣ ਅਤੇ ਇਕ ਸੁਰੰਗ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਬਿਆਸ ਦਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਭਾਖੜਾ ਝੀਲ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਏ ਜਾਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਸਮੁੱਚੀ ਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਨਵੇਂ ਸਿਰਿਓਂ ਖੋਲ੍ਹ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ 1947 ਵਿਚ ਪੂਰਬੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਉਦੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਪੱਛਮੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਈ ਨਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸਪਲਾਈ ਰੋਕ ਦਿੱਤੀ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਅੰਦਰ ਹਾਹਾਕਾਰ ਮੱਚ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ 4 ਮਈ 1948 ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਯਥਾਸਥਿਤੀ (Status quo) ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਸਹੀਬੰਦ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਉੱਪਰ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀ ਤਰਫੋਂ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਜਵਾਹਰਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ, ਐੱਨਵੀ ਗਾਡਗਿਲ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਸਵਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੀ ਤਰਫੋਂ ਵਿੱਤ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਨੇ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਤਹਿਤ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਹਰੀਕੇ ਪੱਤਣ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਇਕ ਸਾਲ ਲਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਛੱਡਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਸੀ। ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਨਾ ਸੁਲਝ ਸਕਿਆ ਤਾਂ

ਲੜਾਈ ਭੜਕਣ ਦੇ ਖਤਰੇ ਦੇ ਮੱਦੇਨਜ਼ਰ ਅਮਰੀਕਾ, ਬਰਤਾਨੀਆ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲਕਦਮੀ 'ਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਬੈਂਕ ਇਹ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਸੁਲਝਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਮਦਦ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਅੱਗੇ ਆਇਆ। ਵਾਸ਼ਿੰਗਟਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਾਰਤਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਨੇ ਆਪੋ ਆਪਣੀਆਂ ਟੀਮਾਂ ਭੇਜੀਆਂ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਇੰਜਨੀਅਰ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ।

ਭਾਰਤੀ ਟੀਮ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਇੰਜਨੀਅਰ ਐੱਨ.ਡੀ. ਗੁਲਾਟੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਸਮੇਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਟੀਮ ਦਾ ਮੋਹਰੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਵਾਰਤਾ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਜਲ ਅਤੇ ਊਰਜਾ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਨਾਲ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਦੇ ਡਾ. ਆਰ.ਸੀ. ਹੂਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਨਹਿਰ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਰਿਪੋਰਟ ਤਿਆਰ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਰੇਗਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਜ਼ਮੀਨੀ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ, ਪਰ ਇਹ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਸਿੰਧ ਦਰਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ (ਬੇਸਿਨ) ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਮੱਤਭੇਦ ਸਨ, ਪਰ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਬੈਂਕ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਤਹਿਤ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੀ ਹੱਦਬੰਦੀ ਦੇ ਸਵਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਓਝਲ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਡਾ ਲਾਹਾ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਲਾਟੀ ਨੇ ਆਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਬਣਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਮਿੰਟਗੁਮਰੀ ਗੁਆਚਣ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੀਆਂ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਬਸਤੀਆਂ ਬਣਨਗੀਆਂ। ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਉੱਜੜ ਕੇ ਆਏ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਹੁਤ ਭਾਰੀ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਝੱਲਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਆਸ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਜਲਦੀ ਹੀ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਰਪਾਈ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਗੁਲਾਟੀ ਨੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਹਿੰਦ ਫੀਡਰ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਨਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਮਨਜ਼ੂਰੀ ਲਈ ਠੋਸ ਕਦਮ ਪੁੱਟਣ ਦੀ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਜਨਵਰੀ 1955 ਜਦੋਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਬੈਂਕ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਦੇ ਸਟੱਡੀ ਟੂਰ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ, ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੀਆਂ ਲੋੜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸਿੱਧ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕੇ। ਗੁਲਾਟੀ ਨੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਬਤ ਇਕ ਅੰਤਰਰਾਜੀ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਰਨ 'ਤੇ ਵੀ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ।

ਜਦੋਂ ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਬੈਂਕ ਦੀ ਟੀਮ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਲਈ ਪਹੁੰਚੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜੀਪਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਿਠਾ ਕੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਟਿੱਬਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਘੁਮਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਟੂਰ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਮਿੰਟਗੁਮਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਨਹਿਰੀ ਬਸਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਉੱਜੜੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਉਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੜ ਵਸਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨੂੰ ਰੇਖਾਂਕਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਨਵਰੀ 1955 ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਤੱਕ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਅਤੇ ਊਰਜਾ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਗੁਲਜ਼ਾਰੀ ਲਾਲ ਨੰਦਾ ਨੇ ਰਾਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਬਾਬਤ ਇਕ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਰਾਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਲਈ ਸਿਰਫ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਿੰਜਾਈ ਸਕੱਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਦਸਤਖਤ ਕਰਵਾ ਲਏ ਗਏ।

ਇਸ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਤਹਿਤ ਕੁੱਲ ਉਪਲੱਬਧ 15.85 ਐੱਮਏਐੱਫ ਪਾਣੀ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ 8 ਐੱਮਏਐੱਫ ਪਾਣੀ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਨੂੰ, 0.65 ਐੱਮਏਐੱਫ ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਅਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਪੈਪਸੂ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ 7.2 ਐੱਮਏਐੱਫ ਪਾਣੀ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਸਤਾਵ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਵਹਾਅ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਵਸਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਬਿਹਤਰੀ ਨੂੰ ਉੱਕਾ ਹੀ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਸੰਧੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਣਨੀਤਕ ਚਾਰਜੋਈਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਮੁੱਢਲੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਲਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਹਾਸਲ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਦਾਇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਉਦੋਂ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਵੀ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਵਿਸ਼ਵ ਬੈਂਕ ਦੀ ਮੰਨ ਮਨਾਈ ਸਦਕਾ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਲਈ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਆਸ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਲਈ ਜੰਗ ਵਰਗੀ ਨੌਬਤ ਦਾ ਸਾਹਮਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਨਾ ਪਵੇਗਾ ਜੇ ਭਾਰਤ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਹਰੀਕੇ ਪੱਤਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਲਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਰੋਕ ਦੇਣ ਨਾਲ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਸੀ। ਤਿੰਨ ਦਰਿਆਵਾਂ (ਸਤਲੁਜ, ਰਾਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਿਆਸ) ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਭਾਰਤ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਦਰਿਆਵਾਂ (ਸਿੰਧ, ਜੇਹਲਮ ਅਤੇ ਚਨਾਬ) ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਭਵਿੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮੱਸਿਆ ਪੈਦਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

### ਕੀ ਕਰਨਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ?

ਉਂਝ, ਭਾਰਤ ਵਿਚ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦਰਮਿਆਨ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਲਾਅ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ ਅਗਸਤ 1966 ਨੂੰ ਹੈਲਸਿੰਕੀ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਈ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਵਿਚ ਤੈਅਸ਼ੁਦਾ ਅਸੂਲਾਂ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ। ਇਹ ਨੇਮ ਮੁੱਖ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਵਾਟਰਸ਼ੈਡ/ ਨਦੀ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਲਈ ਤੈਅ ਕੀਤੇ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਵਾਟਰਸ਼ੈਡ (ਜਲਮੋੜੇ) ਜਾਂ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ 'ਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਪਾਣੀ ਕੱਢਣ ਬਾਬਤ ਕੋਈ ਨੇਮ ਤੈਅ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। 2004 ਵਿਚ ਜਲ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਤਿਆਰ ਕਰਨ ਹਿੱਤ ਇੰਟਰਨੈਸ਼ਨਲ ਲਾਅ ਐਸੋਸੀਏਸ਼ਨ ਦੀ (ਬਰਲਿਨ ਜਰਮਨੀ) ਵਿਖੇ ਮੀਟਿੰਗ ਹੋਈ। ਇਸ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਤਫ਼ਸੀਲ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਸ਼ਬਦ 'ਸਟੇਟ' ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾਪੂਰਨ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਲਈ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਉਂਝ, ਜਿੱਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਭਾਰਤ ਦਾ ਤਾਅਲੁਕ ਹੈ, ਸਾਡੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਤਿੰਨ ਸੂਚੀਆਂ ਬਣਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਸੂਬਾਈ ਸੂਚੀ ਵਿਚ 17ਵੇਂ ਨੰਬਰ 'ਤੇ ਹੈ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ "ਪਾਣੀ ਭਾਵ ਪਾਣੀ ਸਪਲਾਈਜ਼, ਸਿੰਜਾਈ, ਨਹਿਰਾਂ, ਡਰੇਨੇਜ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨ, ਪਾਣੀ ਭੰਡਾਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਪਣ ਬਿਜਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਪਰ ਇਹ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੂਚੀ ਵਿਚ 56 ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ।" ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੂਚੀ ਦੇ 56 ਇੰਦਰਾਜ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਦਰਜ ਹੈ "ਅੰਤਰਰਾਜੀ ਦਰਿਆ ਦਾ ਨਿਯਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਉਸ ਹੱਦ ਤੱਕ ਹੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਸੰਘ ਦੇ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ ਅਧੀਨ ਨਿਯਮਨ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨੂੰ ਪਾਰਲੀਮੈਂਟ ਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਜ਼ਰੀਏ ਜਨ ਹਿੱਤ ਲਈ ਸੁਵਿਧਾਜਨਕ ਐਲਾਨਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ।" ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਵੇਂ ਇੰਦਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੜ੍ਹਤ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸੂਬਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇ ਸੁਆਲ 'ਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਤਾਸੰਪੰਨ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਵਾਦੀ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਅੰਦਰ ਹੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਜਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ।

ਸਿੰਧ ਜਲ ਸੰਧੀ ਲਈ ਚੱਲ ਰਹੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਚਰਚਾ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਵੱਧ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਲਾਹਾ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ (basin) ਦੀ ਹੱਦਬੰਦੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਲੰਘ ਕੇ 1955 ਦਾ ਉਹ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ ਜਦੋਂਕਿ ਇਕ ਸਕੱਤਰ ਕੋਲ ਅਜਿਹਾ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਸਹੀਬੰਦ

ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨਕ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਬਾਬਤ ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ-ਚਰਚਾ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸਟੈਂਡ ਨੂੰ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਾਰਤਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ 1947 ਵਿਚ ਭਾਰਤੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਏ ਵਿਵਾਦ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਲਝਾਉਣਾ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦਾ ਪਾਬੰਦ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਕਾਨੂੰਨੀ ਜਾਂ ਨੈਤਿਕ ਵਾਜਬੀਅਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਣਦੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਧਾਨ ਸਭਾ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪਾਸ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਰੱਦ ਕਰਨ (ਟਰਮੀਨੇਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ ਐਗਰੀਮੈਂਟਸ) ਐਕਟ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਹੋਰ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਬਤ ਕੋਈ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨਲ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ 'ਤੇ ਅੱਪੜਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਈ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦੇ ਬਣਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸਥਿਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਪੜਾਅ ਬਾਰੇ ਉੱਪਰਲੇ ਪੈਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੋਰ ਵਜਾਹਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਹੈ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਆਏ ਹੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੀ ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਜਲ ਖੇਤਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਿਜਾਇਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ। ਹਰਿਆਣਾ (ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਗਏ 1700 ਕਿਊਸਕ 'ਚੋਂ 1500 ਕਿਊਸਕ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਪਾਣੀ ਲੈਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ) ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਨੇ ਸੰਭਾਵੀ ਹੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਤਰੇ ਦਾ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਦਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਹੀ ਲੈਣ ਤੋਂ ਇਨਕਾਰ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਹੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਥਾਹ ਨੁਕਸਾਨ ਝੱਲਣਾ ਪਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਸਾਫ਼ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਹੜ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਾਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਝੱਲਣੀ ਪਵੇਗੀ ਜਦੋਂਕਿ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਗ਼ੈਰ-ਬੇਸਨਿ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜਦੋਂ ਲੋੜ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਪਾਣੀ ਲੈ ਲੈਣਗੇ। ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਕੌਮੀ ਜਾਂ ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਮਨਸ਼ਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ।

ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਆਗੂ 'ਰਾਇਪੇਰੀਅਨ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ' ਦੇ ਨਾਮ ਨਿਹਾਦ ਨੇਮ ਦੀ ਦੁਹਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਭਾਰਤ ਦੇ ਸੰਵਿਧਾਨ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਯੁਕਤ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਦੀ ਰਹਨੁਮਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਘੜੇ ਗਏ ਕੌਮੀ ਜਾਂ ਕੌਮਾਂਤਰੀ ਨੇਮਾਂ 'ਚੋਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਨੇਮ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਇਆ। ਸਾਰੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਮ ਵਾਟਰਸ਼ੈੱਡ ਨਦੀ ਖੇਤਰ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਡਰੇਨੇਜ ਖੇਤਰ ਆਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਅੰਦਰ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਦੇ ਨੇਮ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਮੁਤਾਬਕ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਕਾਨੂੰਨ ਅਤੇ ਨੇਮਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਅਣਜਾਣਤਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਅਣਇੱਛਤ ਨਤੀਜੇ ਅਤੇ ਭਰਮ ਭੁਲੇਖੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿਤਮਜ਼ਰੀਫੀ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਲੋਕ ਵੀ ਇਕੋ ਸੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਲਹਿਜੇ ਵਿਚ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹਾ ਕੌਣ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਪੂਰੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਿਆਨਤਦਾਰੀ ਨਾਲ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕੇਸ ਦੀ ਪੈਰਵੀ ਕਰੇਗਾ? ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਣੀ ਵੀ ਇਹੋ ਜਿਹੀ ਹੈ। ਅਕਸਰ ਸਿਆਸਤਦਾਨ ਉਦੋਂ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਦੇ ਉਠਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਜਦੋਂ ਸੱਤਾ 'ਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਪਰ ਇਕੋਰਾਂ ਵੋਟਾਂ ਪੈਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਉਹ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਭੁੱਲ ਭੁਲਾ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਅਣਵੰਡੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਯਮੁਨਾ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਰਤੋਂ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਸੀ। ਪਰ ਹੁਣ ਉਹ ਸਾਰਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੀ ਗੱਲਬਾਤ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਸ ਪਹਿਲੂ ਨੂੰ ਕਦੇ ਛੋਹਿਆ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਗਿਆ। ਪਰ ਦੂਜੇ ਬੰਨੇ, ਜੰਮੂ-ਕਸ਼ਮੀਰ 'ਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਅਤੇ ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਹੋ ਕਿ ਰਾਵੀ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਉਝ, ਆਦਿ ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਗੋਂ ਰਿਮ ਸਟੇਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੀਂਹ ਦੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਅਕਸਰ ਹੜ੍ਹ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਖਾਤੇ ਪਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਪਿਛਲੇ 37 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਆਗੂ ਨੇ ਸੰਸਦ ਜਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਜਨਤਕ ਮੰਚ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਮੁੱਦਾ ਕਦੇ ਵੀ ਪੂਰੀ ਗੰਭੀਰਤਾ ਤੇ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਸਹਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਉਠਾਇਆ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਧ ਸਿਤਮਜ਼ਰੀਫੀ ਕੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਰਾਜੀਵ-ਲੋਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦੀ ਇਕਮਾਤਰ ਮੱਦ ਜੋ ਨਹਿਰ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੀ ਹੈ, ਉੱਪਰ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ ਜਦੋਂਕਿ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ, ਆਲ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਸਿੱਖ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਐਕਟ ਜਿਹੇ ਮੁੱਦਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਸਮਝੌਤੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਅਹਿਮ ਮੱਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।

ਆਸ ਅਤੇ ਉਡੀਕ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਣੀ ਚਾਹੀਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਪਾਰਟੀਆਂ ਇਕਮੁੱਠ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਕੋਈ ਸਾਰਥਕ ਨਤੀਜਾ ਕੱਢਣਗੀਆਂ।

**ON THE ISC FRONT**  
**(16<sup>TH</sup> SEPTEMBER TO 15<sup>TH</sup> DECEMBER 2023)**

**COL J.S. MULTANI\***

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The third quarter remained very busy with the World Peace Summit attended by Col. JS Multani, Secretary General at Seoul, South Korea.

**16-22 September 2023** - On the invitation of Heavenly Culture World Peace & Restoration of Light (HWPL) South Korea, Col. J.S. Multani Secretary General ISC, visited Seoul, South Korea from 16-21 Sept 2023 to attend the World Peace Summit held from 18-21 September 2023. Col. Multani informed that it was a world Class Conference in which about 450 representatives from all major religions i.e. Christianity, Hinduism, Sikhism, Islam and Buddhism participated in the 4- day conference. A paper on Sikh Religion highlighting how the tenets of Sri Guru Granth Sahib ji promote peace by shedding the 5 major reasons of war i.e. *Kaam Krodh, Lobh, Moh* and *Abnkar*, was presented by Dr. Bhai Sahib Satpal Singh Khalsa who represented Western Hemisphere (came from USA), which was highly appreciated by all. Col. Multani signed a Memorandum of Understanding on behalf of ISC with HWPL to work together in tandem with their shared goals of promoting world peace.

Col. Multani also visited War memorial (of 2<sup>nd</sup> World War) where names of 3 Indians were inscribed. He also visited local Gurudwara Sahib and paid his obeisance there. Secretary General informed that the hospitality as well as boarding lodging arranged by the organizers was superb.

**On 24<sup>th</sup> September 2023** - A team comprising Sardar Bhupinder Singh Kohli from Mumbai & Sardar Charanjit Singh Khalsa from

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Jammu visited the ISC Headquarters. Mr. Kohli is running an NGO in the name of BKKMF dedicated to the cause of promotion of Sikhi. He visits various schools run by Akaal Academy Baru Sahib from time to time and delivers lectures on principles of Sikh Faith and how to follow Sikhism while doing routine work in life. His website Sikhiwiki.org is just like an encyclopedia of Sikhism with great content, illustrations and videos full of knowledge about Sikh religion. The website is worth visiting by every Sikh.

Commemoration of 150 years of Foundation of Singh Sabha Lehar at Fategarh Sahib on 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

The entire team of ISC comprising Col. JS Multani, Sher Jagjit Singh, S. Kanwal Pal Singh, Mr. Manmeet Singh (Media Head), Aproorva Singh, Sukirti Taneja and Meenu participated in the 2-day All India Singh Sabha Conference organized at Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Engineering College, Fategarh Sahib. About 100 students and a few teachers from our HWTCs also attended it. Prominent Sikh Scholars, Missionaries, Sikh Welfare Institutions, Educationists, Seminaries, Thinkers and Heads of all apex Sikh Organizations working across India participated not only to pay tributes to the great founders/pioneers of Singh Sabha Lehar of 1873 but also to recognize their missionary zeal and determination for the Sikh Panth to achieve two major goals in their mind:-

- a) Bringing the youth who were being converted to other religions like Christianity or Hindu Arya Samaj, back to the fold of Sikhi.
- b) Initiating Gurdwara Sudhar movement to allow all Castes/Creeds to enable them to worship inside the some Gurudwaras.

The Singh Sabha Founders like Giani Ditt Singh and his team toiled so hard that both the goals were achieved i.e. the Sikh youth started adopting the Sikhi principles resulting in significant increase in Sikh population which had drastically declined after the end of Khalsa Raj. They also succeeded in getting permission for the Dalit Sikhs to enter Gurdwaras and offer their Prashad Thali and pay their obeisance to Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

The conference served as an excellent platform to deliberate

about the current challenges faced by Sikh Panth and how to overcome these through suitable corrective measures in order to spread the message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib across the world. An other historic decision was also taken when it was resolved to set up a National Sikh Education Board meant for overall growth & development of Sikh Children by imbibing the teachings of Sikh Guru Sahiban to adopt sikh moral values besides studying the normal academic curriculum up to 12<sup>th</sup> standard in eminent schools affiliated to this board. To give final shape to this board, National Sikh Commission would be established as an apex governing body to guide and govern the Education Board.

A draft document of the Sikh Education Board has already been submitted to the Panthik Talmel Committee & various other stake holders for brain storming to finalize the same.

**On 23rd October 2023** S. Rajinder Singh, President Guru Nanak College and Gurudwara Nanak Darbar Chennai visited International Sikh Confederation Head Quarters at Plot No.1, Sector 28 Chandigarh on 23rd October 2023. Had discussion on Gurudwara Management and Training of Gurudwara Managers being the requirement of Sikh Community in India and abroad. He was honored with memento & Saropa by Col Jagtar Singh Multani, Secretary General.

**On 24th October 2023** Mr. Dominick Dendooven, Curator & Govt official of war memorial of Belgium, visited International Sikh Confederation Head Quarters. He informed about the Sikh soldiers who laid their life during First World War 1914-18. Everyday commemoration is offered at retreat last bugle and the people of Belgium bow their heads to those souls. He offered that if 3rd or 4th generations of those martyrs want to visit the site at IEPER City. He may help arranging visa for them in a group. ISC will do the paper work for this project.

**On 25th October 2023-** S Gulbarg Singh Bassi from U.S.A visited International Sikh Confederation Head Quarters at Plot No.1, Sector 28 Chandigarh and shared the work / activities being performed by Global Sikh Council, USA. He discussed on how to coordinate work of schools run by Global Sikh Council and International Sikh

Confederation in Punjab. It was suggested to have a cluster coordinator to serve as a bridge between ISC and Global Sikh Council to avoid duplicacy of work and to help each other whenever required by each organization.

### **VISIT TO NEW DELHI**

**From 31st October to 3rd November, 2023** - Col. J.S. Multani, Secy General alongwith Sher Jagjit Singh, Secretary (Administration) visited New Delhi on the invitation of HWPL, South Korea from where a four member delegation comprising Ms. Elly Yoon, General Director, Dept. of Religion and Ms. Helen Kim, Chief Branch Manager, Ms. Tarry had come.

During the visit, we attended the following four events:-

1. **On 1st Nov, 2023** - We had a meeting with S. Bhupinder Singh, Manager, Sri Bangla Sahib Gurdwara. Ms. Jagjit Kaur I/c International tourist Centre of Gurdwara Sahib explained very nicely about the history of Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. Later the entire team visited Baba Baghel Singh Sikh Museum which was highly appreciated by the HWPL Team.
2. Same day, in the afternoon, we had a meeting with S. Harmeet Singh Kalka, President Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee, who agreed to
  - a) arrange minimum 10 Sikh Scholars who can explain in English, the teachings of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji about the message and principles of Sikhism i.e. of Love & Respect for different religions, Respect for women and Equality for everyone without discrimination about caste, color, religion, gender, rich or poor and how to maintain international peace amongst various countries & communities.
  - b) Arrange International Peace March at India Gate in May 2024 for a big gathering.
  - c) To search and select one prominent site to display the Logo of HWPL in Delhi.

Mr. Kalka agreed to all the three demands and assured to look into the matter.

**3. On 2nd Nov, 2023** - We had a meeting with Prof. Vishav Dutt, Asstt. Prof. Dep't of Buddhist Studies, Delhi University.

**4. On 3rd November, 2023** we had a Peace March at Deer Park, Hauz Khas, New Delhi in which more than 100 people participated and joined the march with full zeal and zest followed by Tea and Snacks arranged by Mr. Shyam Sunder Rudra and Family. One Centenarian also participated whose 100th Birthday was also celebrated by all with great enthusiasm, which made the programme more colorful and joyful.

**On 11th November, 2023** S. Gulbarg Singh Bassi of Global Sikh Council along with Col. Manmohan Singh visited Headquarters of ISC at Chandigarh and held meeting for co-ordination between ISC and GSC for better management of Homework Tution Centres run by both organizations

**November 11, 2023** - Held a very productive meeting with Col. Multani Ji and his International Sikh Confederation (ISC) staff. Having known that three organizations with similar objectives have opened up centers in villages at quite a distance from each other. Discussed cooperation between the three organizations: ISC, Living Successfully Foundation, and PEHEL project of Global Sikh Council to manage the centers better.

Main decisions taken are:

- 1) Each organization will continue to function as a independent organization and fund their own centers.
- 2) Each one will share resources to develop a common repository of contents. E.g. Free or reduced cost services available from various Sources hosted on GSC Website. E.g. Daily Sikhi message for the center managers to be taught at the PEHEL centers.
- 3) All centers will have common management at the top. Divided into areas consisting of one or more districts.
- 4) The current centers are grouped into three areas.
  - a. Centers in the Ferozepur border area and nearby Districts to be managed by Living Successfully Foundation.
  - b. Centers in Patiala, Sangrur, Moga and nearby districts to be

managed by ISC.

- c. Centers in Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Kapurthala, Jalandhar and nearby Districts to be managed by PEHEL, a project of GSC.
- 5) As a result, some centers will move from being managed by one organization to being managed by the other.

This was conveyed on 16th Nov, 2023 to S. Jatinder Singh, ISC Amritsar Chapter to identify the centres to be handed over to Global Sikh Council.

**On 11th November, 2023** Sardar Harjinder Singh, International Taekwondo Coach visited Headquarters of ISC alongwith his wife. He was requested to give us a list of players whom he trained for National/ International tournaments to know their profile and any assistance required by them.

**On 14th November, 2023** Sardar Tarsem Singh Sonipat visited ISC Headquarters and informed that he is working for welfare of Sikligars living in 4-5 villages near Sonipat.

Visit to Mukandpur, Gurdaspur, Amritsar & Khadoor Sahib (20-23 Nov 2023)

**On 20th Nov, 2023**, Col. Multani and Sher Jagjit Singh left for Mukandpur to see the functioning of our coaching centre for students' entry to Engineering and Medical Colleges. Here we met School Headmistress Mrs. Daljeet Kaur and addressed the students to focus on their studies to achieve their goal.

Mr. Shamshad, Principal Amardeep College who is doing excellent job in running school and college efficiently. We addressed the student to work and focus on their study and achieve better result.

Then we left for Gurdaspur where we met S. Sukhjinder Singh and he accompanied us to nearby Village Taragarh/New Begowal to open a new HWTC there in a local Mandir. There we came across Mr. Ajaib Saroop Saini, member of Mandir Committee, who was highly impressed with this venture and assured to get the centre opened soon after talking to the Mandir Committee. We handed over the HWTC Banner for displaying on the Mandir premises. He assured that the HWTC may start shortly after finalizing the teacher.

**On 21st Nov, 2023**, our team left for Riarki, a unique Girls' College which is purely working on the principles of Guru Nanak. We met Principal Swaran Sing Virk who apprised us that all the girl students besides excelling in their studies do entire day-to-day household work themselves including Cleaning/sweeping, White-washing of campus, washing clothes, cooking Food/Langar for everyone, growing Organic vegetables, pulses, food grains, cereals, extracting Gur and Shakkar from their own Sugarcane crop. No pesticide or fertilizer is used. More than 3000 girl students are enrolled in this college.

All the girls wear only white dress fully covered and recite Gurbani as part of Nitnem prescribed under Sikh Rehat Maryada. We addressed a group of girl students to focus on their studies and be true to themselves to achieve their aim. The Principal honored our team with Siropas and a bag of organic wheat for each member.

In the afternoon, we visited Quadian Headquarters of Ahmadiyah and met Mr. Naseer Acharya who facilitated our visit to sacred places in their shrine and memorial. He apprised us about the principles of Ahmadiyah Sect of Islam and how it differed from other two sects of Sunni and Shias.

Thereafter, we left for Sri Amritsar Sahib around 2.15 PM to pay obeisance to Sri Darbar Sahib at Amritsar we met S. Jatinder Singh Coordinator ISC, Amritsar chapter who is supervising our Rural HWTCs in this area. He insisted that we may not handover any centre to GSC in Amritsar area as our centers are working efficiently.

From Amritsar, we left for Khadoor Sahib and had a comfortable night stay there. Baba Baldev Singh ji informed that Chief Administrator Baba Sewa Singh ji would meet tomorrow on 22nd November, 2023.

**On 22nd Nov, 2023 morning**, we met Baba Sewa Singh ji, Chief Administrator of Nishan-e-Sikhi International School and Nishan-e-Sikhi Institute of Science and Training, imparting world-class education and coaching to students for entry in Engg and medical Colleges/Institutions. The success rate is exceptionally high. Apart from this they are coaching boys and girls for entry into Police, CRPF, BSF as Constables, Sub-Inspectors etc. So far 600 students trained

here got selected to various police forces of Punjab, Haryana, Chandigarh and Delhi. **At least 5 Sikh girls selected as Sub-Inspectors are maintaining Keski on their heads.**

This institute also imparts training/coaching for entry to Defense Services through NDA & IMA. 15 candidates have already qualified the NDA exam, this year and now preparing for SSB/Interview. Col Multani addressed and gave some tips to a batch of about 50 candidates who were well dressed and greeted us with lot of enthusiasm.

Further, this institute also imparts training/coaching for UPSC/ State Civil Services exam.

**On 28th November 2023**, Sardar Jagtar Singh Multani Secretary General ISC was honoured by an NGO named Gray Shades by conferring a prestigious **“KIRAT KAMAI AWARD-2023”** for exemplary work for the upliftment of poor and underprivileged children of Rural Punjab by arranging minority scholarships valuing around Rs. 300 Crores per year and also for running 23 free Homework Tuition Centres enrolling about 500 students from 1st to 10th class.

Visit to Hyderabad (28th November to 1st December 2023)

Col. Multani visited Hyderabad from 28th November to 1st December 2023 where he visited Happy Learning School run for Sikligar boys. Keeping in view good performance of the Computer centre, one more Computer Centre was opened there.

Visit to Ludhiana/Moga on 12-13 December 2023:-

**On 12th December 2023** Col. Multani and Sher Jagjeet Singh visited Ludhiana and held a meeting with Dr. Sardara Singh Johal, S. Sukhdev Singh Laaj, Dr. Pushpinder Singh, Dr. Surinkurbir Singh, Ex-Principal, GNE College and S. Gurkirpal Singh, Teacher and had detailed discussion about setting up of National Sikh Education Board and Sikh Education Commission as decided during 2-day Conference to celebrate 150th year of Singh Sabha Lehar at Sri Fathehgarh Sahib. It was decided to collect data about all Sikh institutions/schools affiliated currently with PSEB, CBSE, ICSE Boards to take further action in this regard.

**On the same day**, we visited Village Dhurkot Ransinh (Nihal Singh Wala) to ascertain the working status of Baba Farid Wrestling Akhara run by Dr. Gurpartap Singh, his team and the village panchayat where about 30 girl players of class 5th to 10th are taking coaching from S. Jagdeep Singh, a professional Coach. Prominent persons from the village were also present who gave us a warm welcome. Col. Multani addressed the children and advised them to learn finger tips of the game from the coach and focus on their practice to enable them to win national and International level completions to earn name & fame not only for themselves but for the Centre also. Col. Multani also announced Rs. 5000/- financial help from his pocket for the Centre to buy Wrestling Kits for outstanding players.

**On 13th December 2023**, we visited ITI (BOYS AND GIRLS) at Moga and met Ms. Shilpa Garg, Principal ITI (boys) and Sardar Jagtar Singh, Principal ITI (girls) who apprised us about the progress of these institutions and how to improve the working of these ITIs. A green park in name of S. Jugraj Singh Gill, Ex-MLA Moga is under development.

**Later on the same day**, we visited De-addiction Centre established by Late S. Jugraj Singh Gill, ex-MLA Moga and now being run by Red Cross Society. The board lying in the room was got re-installed at the Centre. Mr. Harpreet Singh, Director explained the functioning of the centre as well as profile of patients undergoing treatment / rehabilitation there. We interacted with the patients and distributed snacks and sweets to boost their morale. To help rehabilitation, employment offered by ISC was well taken by the patients. The De-Addiction Center has been named as Jugraj Singh Gill De-Addiction Center through a notification issued by DC Moga.

## KNOWING GURU NANAK

A REVIEW BY JAGMOHAN SINGH\*

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*Book: Guru Nanak – A Reader*

*Edited by: Tejwant Singh Gill*

*Publishers: Sahitya Academy, Delhi*

*Pages: 229; Price 350*

In commemoration of the 550th birth anniversary of Guru Nanak, The Sahitya Akademi, one of India's premier institutions, engaged in the promotion of Indian languages and literature, decided to get a book published on the various aspects of Guru Nanak's life, philosophy and teachings and the scholarly Dr. Tejwant Singh Gill was offered the coveted task, which he readily accepted. Dr. Tejwant Singh Gill belongs to the land where the Sikh religion was born and evolved into its present form. He performed the task entrusted to him to the best of his ability, employing all the sources at his command. The compendium "*Guru Nanak: A Reader*" is a fruit of his labour. The book is a collection of 26 essays written by erudite persons, men/women of letters who have excelled in their respective fields. The book contains translated version of three verses, one of which "Tribute to Guru Nanak" is a composition by Bhai Gurdas whose account of Guru Nanak's life, being contemporary to the Guru, is considered most trustworthy. The other two verses "Genuine Sage" and "In Kartarpur" are from the pen of the celebrated Punjabi poet Shiv Kumar Batalvi. All the three poems have been very cogently translated by the editor of the compendium Dr. Tejwant Singh Gill himself. The translated versions of the two key Banis of Guru Nanak "*Japuji*" and "*Asa Di Vaar*" have also been made a part of this volume. Japuji also referred as Japuji Sahib is the very first composition of Guru Nanak

and is central to the Sikh thought. *Asa Di Vaar* meaning “A ballad of hope” lays emphasis upon truthful conduct. Both the Banis under reference have been meticulously translated by the stalwarts in the field of language and literature Dr. Teja Singh and Principal Sant Singh Sekhon respectively.

Though there are many sources which provide an insight into the life and teachings of Guru Nanak, the reviewer after going through the contents of the compendium under reference has arrived at the conclusion that the best way to know Guru Nanak is through his ‘Bani’ as available in the ‘Adi Granth’, compiled at the first instance by Guru Arjan and later edited by Guru Gobind Singh at Talwandi Sabo by incorporating the Bani of Guru Teg Bahadur. It may be pertinent to point out here that the bound volume of Adi Granth after its editing by Guru Gobind Singh came to be known as ‘*Damdami Beerh*’. This volume of *Adi Granth (Damdami Beerh)* was proclaimed as “Guru” by Guru Gobind Singh, and it came to be known in the popular parlance as ‘Guru Granth Sahib’. The followers of the ‘Sikh Panth’ bow in reverence before Guru Granth Sahib though the written word or the text entered in it, called ‘Shabad’ is ‘The Guru’ for the Sikhs’ for all intents and purposes.

The concept of *Shabad* (the spoken/written word) as “The Guru” was given by Guru Nanak himself and holds a special place in the Sikh ethos. The Shabad is embodied in Bani. The language of Bani is lehndi Punjabi as against the Sanskrit of Hindu (Sanatan Dharma) scriptures. In his scholarly essay “Guru Nanak and Sant Kabir” in the compendium under reference, the noted historian Jagtar Singh Grewal writes:

“Guru Nanak equates the Shabad with the Guru, and his successors equate his Bani with the Shabad. Guru Ram Das makes the explicit statement that Bani is Guru and Guru is Bani”.

The original *Adi Granth* (which was then called the *Pothi Sahib*) was handwritten in Gurmukhi script, so also is its version edited by Guru Gobind Singh. This very fact makes the only Sikh scripture *Guru Granth Sahib*, different and distinct from Hindu scriptures. Inter-alia the choice of language and the script of the Sikh scripture is a deviation

and departure from the Sanatan Dharma which regards Sanskrit as dev-bhasha (divine language) and its script is Devanagari (literal meaning: divine writing). Another departure is in the form of challenge to authority of 'Brahmin' who is regarded as 'devata' and who holds a central place in all the places of worship, performing all kinds of 'Puja, Havana and Yagnas'. In contrast, in Sikhism, there is no deity, no priest to hold puja, no brahmin to perform Havana or Yagna, there is only a Granthi whose duty is to take care of the Guru Granth, who reads the Bani from the scripture and shares its import with the Sangat. The Granthi can be anyone; even a Shudra occupying the lowest place in the hierarchy of Varna Ashram can fit in the role of a Granthi. Unlike Hindu faith, central to the Sikh faith is the belief that the God (*Onkar*) is just one and formless, having no equal or parallel, Sat is His name (*Satnam*), He is the doer and performer (*Karta Purkh*), He is free from the feeling of fear and has enmity with none (*Nirbhau Nirvair*), He is beyond incarnation, beyond the cycles of death and birth (*Akaal Mural*), He is self-existent and He is the True Guru whose blessings one seeks. The oneness of God is symbolized in the *Mool Mantra* (the basic postulate) of Sikh faith by the digit "ੴ" and the Gurmukhi letter "ੴ". The digit ੴ, coming after *shooniyaa* (Zero) also indicates of 'His' being the first existence in the universe.

The Guru's concept of 'Oneness of God' is universal and inclusive affirmation. It renders God as common (*Sanjha*) to the whole humanity, even to the non-believers and atheists. Guru Nanak and so also his successors did not denounce any religion in their Bani, nor they supported forced conversion from one religion to the other; rather they, through their verses, encouraged the individuals to tread on the path of their choice.

Guru Nanak is believed to have been enlightened by God Himself and his Bani (the verses he composed) is believed to be the God's word (*Dhur Ki Bani*). Guru Nanak identified himself with the lowliest of the low and denounced the caste system. He stood for equality of humankind, claimed brotherhood of human beings, treating them to be the children of One Father (*Ek Pita Eks ke hum barik*). In his Bani,

the Guru portrays himself as a minstrel, who was out of work, whom the 'True-being' Himself put into work (*Houn Dhadee Vaekar Karai Laeia* - page 85, Raag Maajh). In Raag Asa, page 498, the Guru very humbly proclaims himself as a 'low caste minstrel' of the True Lord (*Houn Dhadee Kaa Neech Jaat Hor Uttam Jaat Sadhaaeindhe* / I'm the minstrel having low caste; others yearn to be called high caste). At the cost of being repetitive, it is reiterated that the Guru never proclaimed himself as God though he never refuted his communion with the True-being. In this context the words of the noted historian Jagtar Singh Grewal in the valuable compendium under reference, merit attention. In his scholarly article "Guru Nanak and Sant Kabir" he writes at page 54-55:

"The organizational and institutional axes of the Sikh Panth were provided by Guru Nanak in the form of three Gs: the Guru, the Granth and the Gurdwara. At one level God is the Guru; at another, Nanak is the divinely commissioned Guru. The human Guru is not God but has in him an element of divinity due to His commission. The office is passed on to his successors who remain one with him. The belief is reflected in the use of the epithet 'Nanak' in their own compositions. The office is one and the continuous. What the successors say and do is legitimized by virtue of their office".

Guru Nanak's emphasis on monotheism; his proactive belief in equality of humankind - coupled with his denunciation of caste system; his emphasis on truthful conduct; his unflinching faith in the process of dialogue and his preference to family life over that of renunciation; his choice of Punjabi (called *Jataka* by the Persian historian Mohsin Fani in his book *Dabistan-e-Mazabib*) over Sanskrit, distinguishes him from the other contemporary Shaivite or Vaishnava saints.

Guru Nanak or Guru Nanak Dev: The compendium under reference, does not dwell upon the question of the Guru's name, though there is a reference to it in the very first article "Baba Nanak's Life and Legacy: An Appraisal" by America based Sikh academician Gurinder Singh Mann very emphatically says, "...there is no reference to 'Dev' in the writings of Baba Nanak or those of his successors or early

followers”. Bhai Gurdas in his poems refers the Guru as Baba (Ik Baba Akaal Roop, Dooja Rabaabi Mardana / One is Baba symbol of God and the second is rebeck player Mardana). Another reference from Bhai Gurdas in favor of honorific Baba is: Jithhe Baba Perr Dhare, Puja Aasan Thhapen Soaa / the place where the Guru puts his feet, becomes a place of pilgrimage. It may be worthwhile to point out that in the land of his birth i.e., undivided Punjab, the Guru is popularly known as Baba Nanak. Dr. Harbhajan Singh, in his piece “Letter Addressed to Baba Nanak” (page 145 of the compendium under reference) addresses the Guru as Baba Ji and writes:

“You are our archetypal Baba. Sheikh Farid preceded you in the scale of time. To call him Baba, we learnt only after addressing you by this honorific. Whenever someone utters this honorific, your visage is there before our eyes.”

In literature some of the other names ascribed to Guru Nanak include Nanak Shah, Nanak Peer, Nanak Shah Faqeer. Nanak Lama. In text, he is predominantly referred as Guru Nanak.

**Guru Nanak’s Date of Birth:** The compendium under reference aptly deals with the social and philosophical aspects of Guru’s Bani; aesthetics of his poetry; musical notes in his Bani; political overtones in his verses; his choice of language for communicating with his disciples etc. However, it is mostly silent about his date of birth regarding which an unsettled controversy is raging in intellectual circles. Professor Gurinder Singh Mann does refer to the debate that unfolded on the question in his article, “Baba Nanak’s Life and Legacy: An Appraisal” (page, 20). Most of the historians and academicians find evidence in favor of April 15, 1469 as Baba’s date of birth. However, the Guru’s birthday (*Parikaash Utsav*) is celebrated on the day of full moon night in the lunar month of Katak, though the various authorities on the subject agree on 15th April 1469 as his true date of birth.

**Guru Nanak and Tradition:** With the advent of Guru Nanak on the world scene in 15th century, a new dawn ushered, a new thought emerged, and a new vision developed. Bhai Gurdas in one of his compositions beautifully expresses the scenario, with the help of

appropriate metaphors. He writes: Satgur Nanak pargateyaa miti dhund jagg chaanan hoaa, Jion kar sooraj nikaliaa taare chhape andher paloaa / With the advent of 'Satgur Nanak', the mist got cleared, the world got illuminated, in a way akin to the disappearance of stars and dispel of darkness on the emergence of sun. While the historian W. H. McLeod regards Guru Nanak as a part of the same Sant tradition to which Kabir belonged, the various contributors in the compendium under reference differ. The noted historian Jagtar Singh Grewal in his article "Guru Nanak and Sant Kabir" writes: "Guru Nanak stands distinguished from Kabir in several important ways. He shows much greater awareness of politics and government. His criticism of the traditional social order goes deeper into its very structure. His criticism of the contemporary systems of religious belief and practice springs from a coherent system of ideas which serve as the conscious criteria for judgement. Guru Nanak explicitly claims divine authority for what he says, which makes him patently independent of known earthly authorities. He is categorically opposed to renunciation and mendicancy. His ideal is self-reliance to a degree that enables one to help others. He attaches great importance to ethical life, and his ethical values are meant to be universal. His message is not merely of liberation through the Name but also of social action for and through liberation-in-life. Above all, his concern for institutionalization contrasts Guru Nanak with Kabir. McLeod's definition of the Sant does not apply to Guru Nanak." The authors of the compendium under review are of the view that Guru Nanak is opposed to the idea of incarnation. According to the Vaishnava belief incarnation does take place and Lord Vishnu does descend on earth whenever there is prevalence of sin and loss of Dharma, to wipe out the sinful forces opposed to Dharma. Certainly, the Guru was not a Saint of Vaishnava tradition. He was against all forms of asceticism, renunciation and mendicancy practised by Vaishnav sadhus, yogis and monks. Principal Sant Singh Sekhon in his article "Guru Nanak's Cannon" writes: "Guru Nanak's call against renunciation was a marked feature of his teaching. At the same time, he insisted upon living a householder's life. In normal times, to remain content was advocated. In disturbed times, it is likely to act

as an incentive for historical role”. Guru Nanak and Monotheism: Guru Nanak’s God is one and unique, represented by the digit “g” in Mool Mantra and his Bani. Mool Mantra constitutes the first principle of Sikhism. It is ‘the foundation’ upon which the edifice of Sikhism is built up. The verdict of the Mool Mantra is in favor of monotheism. According to Swarajbir Singh, Mool Mantra very eloquently articulates monotheism which is later elaborated in Guru Granth Sahib. He in his article (Nanak-Bani: Epic of Social Justice) writes: “Monotheism was the core of Guru Nanak’s Bani. Time and again its primacy was asserted by him with very profound arguments. At one place, Guru Nanak observed

about the creator, “He cannot be appointed nor forged / He by himself was free of the material world”. Elsewhere multifarious qualities relating to His identity, appearance, existence, universality, and eternity were voiced with lot of fluency”. The celebrated historian Jagtar Singh Grewal in his article “Guru Nanak and Sant Kabir” writes: “God for Guru Nanak is the unchanging Formless One. He is the only one; there is no second; there is no other. He possesses unqualified power and absolute authority. He can confer rule upon an ant, and he can reduce whole armies to dust. It is His light that shines in the creation. His light is everywhere and in everyone. He is everywhere and there is no other. He is within everything and yet outside the universe. He is immanent and transcendent at one and the same time. He stands revealed in his creation. To attribute all creation to Him is to recognize the Truth”. The America based professor Gurinder Singh Mann describes Baba Nanak as radical monotheist. Dr. Swarajbir Singh is of the opinion that Guru Nanak’s idea of social unity and equality stems from his concept of monotheism. The learned author on page 127 of the volume under reference writes: “The chief relevance of monotheism lay in advancing the view that created by the Creator human beings are equal in all respects. Transcendence strengthened and further affirmed this factor of social unity and equality.” Indeed, polytheism has no relevance in Sikh thought which is essentially monotheistic. Guru Nanak and Pluralism: Guru Nanak’s Bani is a

strong votary of co-existence despite cultural and religious differences in any society. The Bani opposes caste hierarchy, preaches equality, advocates religious freedom, and detests discrimination based on ones' birth and beliefs. Guru is in favor of adequate space for everybody whether low or high, poor or rich, man or woman. Bani espouses a vision of Oneness of God though there may be many paths leading to Him. Guru Nanak says: *suraj eko rut anek, Nanak karte ke kete ves /* The various seasons emanate from One Sun; O Nanak, in just the same way, many forms originate from the Creator. The various contributors to the compendium under reference, through their articles, have brought to the fore, Guru's attitude in favor of equality, inclusivity, tolerance, dialogue, and coexistence despite unbridgeable differences. In nutshell Guru Nanak and his successors stood for inclusive pluralism. The compilation of Guru Granth Sahib, the doctrine of Sarbat Da Bhalla (Welfare of all beings), the practice of Sangat and Pangat, the concept of Seva (Selfless service) are some of the pointers in this direction.

Babar Vani - Poetry of Protest: Babar Vani is a remarkable piece of poetry, comprising of four verses of Guru Nanak, which are pointed and piercing, having wider socio-political connotations. Through the 'Babar Vani', Guru Nanak lays down the foundation of a principle of speaking the truth when the time so demands. (*Sach Ki Bani Nanak Akhai, Sach Sunaiesi Sach Ki Bela /* Nanak utters the 'Word of Truth', he will speak the truth when the moment so

demands). Needless to add that the verses comprising 'Babar Vani' are related to invasions of Babur and the consequent plunder of Punjab. Though '*Babar Vani*' finds mention quite a number of times in the compendium under reference, Sarbjit Singh Professor at Panjab University Chandigarh makes it the primary concern of his article: "Guru Nanak: Speaking Truth to Power". In one of the verses of Babar Vani, the Guru expresses his anguish to his carpenter friend Bhai Lalo, a resident of Saidpur – the town which was plundered and ravaged to the maximum by the army of Babur. He echoes his indignation at the carnage by voicing his protest to God: 'Eti maar

paee kurlaane, Te ki dard naa aiaa / the people were subjected to brutality, they wailed and cried, were you not moved by their pain'.

According to the academician Gurinder Singh Mann, 'Guru Nanak was the only spiritual figure of his time to have taken notice of the Mughal invasion in a set of four compositions which appear in Guru Granth Sahib at pages 360, 417-18, and 722. In his article "Baba Nanak's Life and Legacy: An Appraisal" the historian Mann writes:

"He himself was no pacifist and accepted confrontation between opposing political powers and the ensuing bloodshed as a way of life, but he could not accept violence in which the innocent and the hapless bore the brunt of political conflict (je sakta sakte ko mare ta man rosu na hoi, saktaa sihu mare pai vagai khasmai sa pursai, M1, GG, 360)." English translation of the quote in parenthesis is: 'If the mighty beat the mighty, there is no cause of complaint. When the mighty lion pounds on the herd, the protector is answerable'.

In his well-written article "Guru Nanak's view of Politics and Society", historian Surjit Singh Hans writes:

"Guru Nanak found the social order of his age illegal and illegitimate. His Bani caused an incipient rupture between the system and his belief. So, in his Bani, there are frequent references to the disintegrating effect of the Turkish and Afgan rule."

In nutshell, the verses comprising Babar Vani, to use historian Jagtar Singh Grewal's valuable phrase, are "very powerful verses," they constitute a voice of protest and dissidence against the powers that be, for the excesses committed by them on the hapless populace.

Na Ko Hindu Na Musalman: "Na Ko Hindu Na Muslman" (meaning that the distinction as Hindu and Muslman is non-existent), carries the recognition of being the first sermon of Guru Nanak, which he delivered at the banks of river Bein after three days of his disappearance.

In the compendium under reference, another interpretation has been alluded to this first sermon of Guru Nanak, besides the interpretation referred in the opening lines of this sub-section. According to the other interpretation, Guru gave the message that

‘God is neither Hindu nor Musalman’; He has no religion and so He is common to the whole Humanity. In Raag Dhanaasri (page 13 GGS) the Guru says: ‘Sabh meh Jot Jot Hai Sooe, Tis de chanan sabh meh chanan hoe / Amongst all the same light, which is His light pervades and due to shine of His light, each one is shined’.

Indeed, the first sermon of Guru Nanak is a declaration in favour of equality of humankind. According to it all humans are identical at the level of the soul and the distinction based on caste, colour or creed is meaningless.

#### **EPILOGUE:**

Before winding up his commentary on the valuable compendium under reference, the reviewer would like to profusely laud and thank the laureate Tejwant Singh Gill, formerly Professor and Head, Department of English, Guru Nanak Dev University, presently Fellow Sahitya Akademi for the dedicated efforts he made in compiling and editing the scholarly work on Guru Nanak - the Sage and spiritual guide, whom the poet and author Professor Puran Singh describes as ‘sun of suns’; whom the persons of Punjabi origin revere; whose blessings they invariably seek in everything they do, and who turned the ordinary and dust clad people of undivided Punjab into heroes of history.

Wondrous Arti: In one of his verses in Raag Dhanasri Guru Nanak envisions a wondrous arti taking place all the time in the universe

## THE SIKH GURUS – EMBODIMENTS OF THE SHABDA –

A REVIEW BY PROF HARDEV SINGH VIRK

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*Authored by: Dr Surendra Singh Bhatti, Chandigarh*  
*Published by: White Falcon Publishing, Chandigarh, 2023*  
*(First Edition, Pages: 344; Price: Rs. 2760)*

**Dr Surendra Singh Bhatti** is a versatile genius, whom I called a “*Holistic Scholar*” and “*Creativity Incarnate*” in my earlier reviews.

**The Sikh Gurus: Embodiments of the Shabda** is a *magnum opus* of the author. I reviewed his earlier books on Sikh religion and call them “Rivers of Creativity”. But this volume on the Sikh Gurus defies all definitions and I may call it an “Ocean of Creativity”. At 85, Dr Bhatti has compiled it as a monumental work which includes, in abstract form, all information available about Sikh Gurus in *Janam Sakhis* (hagiographical accounts), Sikh history, Theology, and *Gurbani*. In my view, after Bhai Vir Singh and Prof. Puran Singh, he is the next trailblazer in the Sikh world to project Sikhi and Sikh ethos at the global level.

This volume consists of three Sections: Section I covers “Biographical Notes on Sikh Gurus”; Section II consists of miscellaneous essays as “Support Material” to Section I; and Section III is “Poetic Rendering” of *Gurbani*. I feel myself handicapped to review this in one piece; hence my review is based on Section I and some selected essays from Section II. In the Prologue, the author gives full credit to his father, Balwant Singh Bhatti, for his early psycho-spiritual orientation and later to his training in Architecture which enabled him to have a holistic view of human existence. He writes

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about his mission and motivation: “*This book carries the fragrance of what I have personally experienced in the serious and sustained study of the beauty and bounty of the Sikh Faith that sets it apart as Pragmatic Spirituality embodied in Guru Nanak’s Creative Mysticism. Both terms are my coinages: Creative Mysticism, and Pragmatic Spirituality*”.

The gist of this volume is given in the Prologue. The author pays the highest tribute to Guru Nanak: “Guru Nanak stands apart in a class all his own because he is the one and only one World Prophet who succeeded in expressing as well conveying [via ‘Creative’ means] the joyous wonder that he had experienced as sustained bliss [in Mysticism]. He has called it *Naam-Khumaari Nanaka Charbi Rahey Din Raat* [Nanak, theinebriation that God’s Holy Name provides sustains its kick through night and day as undiminished euphoria]”. Dr Bhatti justifies the sub-title of his book as follows: “The Sikh Faith has Ten *Masters, not human Gurus*, because *Shabda* is the only **Guru** in this distinguished religion. Just the same these rare humans by the Grace of God are the most authentic exemplars as *Embodiments of the Shabda*. I must say that *Shabda* is *not* an ordinary word coined during the torpor of dailiness. It is a priceless word received in Revelation directly from God sanctified by divinity. Guru Nanak has used the epithet ‘*NAAM*’ to encompass the inviolable sovereignty of the Laws of the Universe as well as the pious power of the Holy Name (of Lord God)”.

The author goes on to elaborate the power and beauty of *Shabda*: “A vast majority of peoples of the world would look askance at the Sikh Faith’s claim that *Shabda* embodies incredible powers that no scientific instrument or philosophy can ever decipher much less measure. Interestingly, the knowledge necessary to use *Shabda* cannot be acquired in schools, colleges, and universities where they only teach you many skills of an amazing diversity beginning with the simplest to the most sophisticated. Knowledge of *Shabda* that comes from inner awakening is out of bounds for the worldlywise and the formally educated smart guys!”

Section I opens with the longest and most comprehensive write up: “**Guru Nanak Dev: World’s Greatest Prophet**”. The author devotes 65 pages to cover all the events of Guru Nanak’s life, his

teachings, odysseys called *Udasis*, his philosophy of Oneness and his Revelations. In my view, no other Sikh writer has interpreted the message of Guru Nanak so brilliantly as Dr. Bhatti. In his own words, he describes, “*I have put my poetic rendering in English of a selection of Gurbani done at different times over a few years as a result of afflatus that had dawned upon me by God’s grace*”. I am a firm believer in the mystique of his afflatus which I also felt while swimming through his narrative of the Sikh Gurus. I can vouchsafe that any dedicated Sikh of Guru Nanak will be transported to a realm of wonder after reading this essay.

The beauty of Dr Bhatti’s narrative is its simplicity, originality, and precision. He sums up Guru Nanak’s teachings: “*There is only one God without a second—omnipotent, omnipresent, omniscient—and that all human beings can have direct access to Him with no need of getting into the rigmarole of rituals, and without the intervention of priests. His most radical social exhortations denounced the caste system and taught that everyone is equal, regardless of caste, creed, gender, nationality, cultural prejudices, nationality, and ethnic eccentricities. Some of the significant values that Guru Nanak instilled in his followers veered round his triune formula of*” *Kirat Karo; Vand Chhako; and Naam Japo*”.

The author further elaborates the implications of Guru’s revolutionary message: “Guru Nanak is the first prophet who presented and propagated a cosmic view of life—piecing together the political, social, and metaphysical imperatives of workaday existence into what I call Pragmatic Spirituality that encompasses the terrestrial and the celestial, the mundane and the exalted, serving it on a platter to the low and weak. He transformed his Revelation into a comprehensible *mantra* in the common folks’ language for ideal living through “Earn thy living through honest means; share it with the less privileged; and meditate on God’s Holy Name”. Dr Bhatti is dead sure that Guru Nanak received the Message of God by His grace through Revelation. His *Bani* is thus soul-resurrecting and consciousness-exalting utterance sprung from artesian wells of direct knowledge within his being that comes only from actual seeing, never by speculation and ratiocinative cerebration. Dr Bhatti also makes a distinction between Guru Nanak’s God and Vedantic Brahman: “*Guru Nanak thus describes God as Primal Person [not an abstract principle of truth as the ‘Brahman’ of the Vedas] both in His Nirguna [without attributes] and Sarguna [with attributes] Being*”.

Dr Bhatti is a proud connoisseur of Sikh Spirituality calling it **Pragmatic Spirituality**: “Guru Nanak ushered an all-inclusive higher order of civilisation containing a complete set of moral and spiritual guidelines for shouldering religious, social and political responsibilities so that even the masses could lead a holistic life. His was a bloodless Revolution that sought to demolish the hegemony as much of the Brahmanical priest craft as of the tyranny of the feudal lords. He sought to create an equal and just society for the downtrodden, humble, and the weak. Throughout his life Guru Nanak taught the virtues of equality and dignity to all humankind irrespective of their perverted practices, caste structures, gender biases, social maladies, and geo-political affiliations and unending conflicts. In sharp contrast to the centuries-old customs and practices he accorded women equal status in society. Pragmatic Spirituality as the directive principle of workaday existence is Guru Nanak’s priceless gift to all Humanity”.

**Pragmatic Spirituality of Guru Nanak** proved to be an elixir of life and panacea for curing ills of Indian society: “Guru Nanak, the greatest Prophet of the World, was painfully aware of how men in power exploited the meek and the hapless to turn them into eternal slaves in order to stay as their beneficent rulers. They used everything—muscle power, mental power, power of caste, creed, social status, learning, political clout and what have you—to achieve the one-point agenda of making people their slaves *en masse*. Guru Nanak’s genius lay in that he could present the most abstruse and abstract ideas in simple and concrete terms in the language of the masses so that they take full charge of their lives as God’s greatest gift”.

The author is well versed with modern scientific theories of origin of Universe and evolution of life. He displays the correct use of scientific concepts throughout this volume. He establishes that the Sikh tradition was liberated from Sanskrit, the language of priestly class, and the Vedic lore by Guru Angad Dev by adopting Punjabi, the language of the common people. Guru Angad underscored the simplicity and accessibility of Sikh Faith’s tenets, and consolidated the idea that it was based on Guru Nanak’s Revelation and was a distinct religion, *not* a rehashing of the prevalent Hinduism and Islam which were always at daggers drawn.

The author further brings out the unique character of Sikh religion: “I can vouch that the Sikh Faith is the only religion so far based on Revelation of its founder [Guru Nanak] who himself has recorded this fact in his own hand unlike the Holy Books of other religions that were written by the followers after the death of their founders. Anyone in doubt of the verity of my averment must examine firsthand the mind-boggling description that Guru Nanak has given of what we call cosmology and cosmogony”. In my view, no other religious scripture has compatible scientific ideas on Cosmology as in the Sikh scripture, Guru Granth Sahib, enunciated by Guru Nanak in Raaga Maru Sohle.

The author has eulogised the contribution of Guru Angad Dev to carry on the mission of Guru Nanak: “Guru Angad was at once a spiritual teacher and a man of action. To him, religion was not only a spiritual experience but a way of life in which every action must have ingredients of spirituality, humility, and love. This can be achieved only when one is always conscious of the presence of God. He thus insisted that there should be harmony between thought, word, and deed at once subsumed in the purity of life”.

The author has described the social and religious reforms brought out by 3<sup>rd</sup> Master, Guru Amar Das during his ministry. Guru Jee established 22 preaching centres, called *Manjis*, in India to preach Sikh religion in Punjab and other far-flung areas. Institution of *Sangat*, *Pangat* and *Langar* (free kitchen) was given primacy. No visitor, howsoever high his status, was allowed to meet the Guru unless he partook *langar* sitting with the common folk in a *pangat* (sitting in a row on flour). The Hindu custom of *Sati* and *Purdah* was abolished by the Guru. Widow marriage was encouraged and allowed against the Hindu tradition. Hindu rituals were either abolished or modified for his Sikh followers: “The Guru redefined life as priceless gift of God by stressing that rituals and rites associated with death were meaningless and, therefore, singing paeans to Lord God’s glory was the only valid ceremony worth performing to guide the departed soul to its destination”.

Guru Ram Das, the 4<sup>th</sup> Master of Sikh faith, was a great town planner who laid the foundation of Ramdas Pur (the present-day Amritsar). He began the exercise with the digging up of the water

pool by enlarging an existing waterbody. The Guru invited and helped settle traders and craftsmen from fifty-two different professions, leading to its rapid growth, so much so that in due course of time the town became the largest commercial centre in the north-western region of the Indian sub-continent. Guru Ram Das also introduced a new and distinct code and ceremony for solemnising Sikh marriages by the reading and singing of *Laavaan* [Sikh marriage ceremony with four circumambulations round *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*]. To make a distinction between tenets of Sikh faith and Hindu faith, Guru Jee prescribed that the person who calls himself a Sikh of the True Guru must observe the following daily routine of life:

One who calls himself, A Sikh of the True Guru,  
 Shall get up early morning and Meditate on God's Holy Name.  
 Bathe daily in the ambrosial pool, Obey the Guru's instructions,  
 Chant Lord God's Name, thus all sins and misdeed,  
 Shall be erased from his life.

Dr. Bhatti has called Guru Arjan Dev, a *Spiritual Symbiosis of Thought, Word and Deed*. His spiritual resplendence glowed forth from his Naam-illuminated humility. Guru Arjan collected *Bani* of all his predecessor Gurus and compiled it into a sacred Scripture of the Sikh faith, called *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, in present times. The Sikh Scripture includes *Bani* (revealed utterances) of 6 Sikh Gurus, 15 Bhagats of other Indian traditions, including Hindus and Muslims, 11 Bhattas and 4 other devoted Sikhs. Its message has universal appeal as it is meant for whole humanity without any distinction of caste, creed, gender, and religion. The author pays his glowing tributes to 5<sup>th</sup> Guru: "I experience a strange delight in contemplating the spiritual symbiosis between Guru Arjan Dev's inspired *Bani* and his inspiring Life. Both are palpably charged with the incredible power of humility which can melt even the most obdurate of human beings". Guru Arjan Dev laid the foundation of Sikh faith as a distinct religion by completing two grand projects: construction of the holy Sikh Temple, Harmandir Sahib (modern day Golden Temple) that must serve as the centre of its devotion, and the Holy Scripture which must enshrine the timeless spirit of its divine message. Guru Arjan suffered martyrdom on 30 May 1606 in Lahore on the orders of Jehangir, the Mughal ruler of

India. This martyrdom changed the peace-loving Sikh faith into an organisation of Saint-Soldiers dedicated to defending their life and freedom.

The author has done full justice to accounts of life and achievements of other five Gurus, namely, Har Gobind, Har Rai, Har Krishan, Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh, who followed Guru Arjan. All Sikh Gurus imbibed the spirit (*Jot*) of Guru Nanak and carried on the flame of Sikhi despite constant struggle against the State, represented by ruling elites, the Mughals, and their cohorts, including Hindu rajas. The creation of Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh on Baisakhi of 1699 has been described by the author as a climax in the history of Sikh faith. According to Dr Bhatti, “*Guru Gobind Singh sought to establish (and succeeded in doing so) two basic principles: (1) universal brotherhood without any distinction, and (2) the spirit of self-sacrifice for others without demur. It was crystal clear to him that “The feeling of brotherhood can only dawn after the annihilation of all (man-made) artificial barriers between man and man. The baneful caste-system introduced by Manu and followed with a vengeance by the Brahmin had to be nullified.”*

To finish this review, I leapfrog to Section II of this volume, written under the title “Miscellany of Support Material” to augment the narrative of Section I. This Section has two dozen essays of historical importance, including Zafar Nama, Golden Temple, Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Religion, Science and the Universe. Some essays are devoted to prominent Sikh personalities of Guru era, for example, Bhai Gurdas, Bhai Buddha, Baba Sri Chand, Bhai Nand Lal Goya, and Bhai Ghanaiya. I have read most of these essays to savour the beauty of Dr Bhatti’s narrative.

“Golden Temple: The Marvel of Sikh Architecture” is a brilliant essay based on author’s 3<sup>rd</sup> Ph.D. Thesis. Dr Bhatti’s description of Golden Temple architecture is based on sublime ideas of divinity and humility of Sikh Faith: “*In the Building Design of Sri Harmandar Sabib, the Spirit of Architecture has been caught in a billowing breath of devotion, in total surrender to God, Who in His own sweet Will, joyously filled the architect’s heart, completely cleansed of egotism, as a worthy receptacle of His Grace. This architecture is thus a Religion of Feeling concretised in the elements*

*of Space, Structure, and Form—at once Universal and Timeless, like God's Own Immanent Divine Creativity: An Architecture in which Religion dwells as a Living Force to reunite souls, wandering on the wasteland of Maya (illusion), with the Logos or God's Word (Shabda)".*

On my bidding, Dr Bhatti wrote two essays: "God in Sri Guru Granth Sahib" and "Religion, Science and the Universe". Both are included in this volume and carry the stamp of his genius. He laments on the attitude of Scientists who believe in Big Bang Singularity: "*It is ironical that Scientists accept this hypothesis but shy away from Guru Nanak's mystical 'Singularity' that he proclaims by attaching the Numeral '1' to God's name by which he begins to share his Revelation: IkOankar.*" He offers a sane solution to resolve dichotomy between Science and Religion: "It is high time that Scientists become 'Saintists' and Religionists transform themselves into 'Reasonalists' so that all people inhabiting the globe find ready peace becoming of the *Homo sapiens* that means 'Man, the wise'. I agree with his cryptic remark: "Both the Religionist and the Scientist suffer from Blind Faith. The former believes in the omniscience of Religion to show the way to our ultimate destination through the dark corridors of Time that run through uncharted terrains of Space. The latter believes in the omnipotence of Science to solve all imaginable problems to the benefit of all and sundry. However, nothing of this kind has so far happened in either case".

The author wants to project the intrinsic nature of Gurbani as a unique phenomenon: "*Gurbani is none of these things: philosophy, poetry, mythology, and mysticism as commonly understood*", and then goes on to define the purpose of each area of study. I am amazed at his depth of comprehension of scientific concepts and their use in religious discourses discussed under the heading: "Comments on Established Scientific Terminology Popularly used in Religious Discourses". He concludes this topic placing Guru Nanak ahead of Einstein: "*Einstein struggled all his life developing a TOE (Theory of Everything) but failed. However, Gurbani already has one: It says that NAAM is the mainstay of everything that exists—living beings, stars, galaxies, and what have you*".

Dr Bhatti is well versed with the domains of Science and Religion: "Religion and Science are two major tools of apprehending the Universe

which in India was classified centuries ago into two categories: the Inner World of Mind, and the Outer World of Matter. These two are respectively referred to as the Subjective World and the Objective World. Based on the assumption, not yet refuted, human life consists of Body, Mind, and Soul. By its very nature and scope, **Religion** based on faith is associated with the Inner World whose worth can be validated only by **Experience** that narrowly belongs to an individual human person. In sharp contrast, **Science** deals with the Outer World by observation, hypothesis, measurements, and lab **Experiment** whose success makes it universal and accessible to all human beings”.

Section III “Poetic Rendering” is a marvellous section added to this volume. It has some random selection of miscellaneous *Shabads* from Gurbani of SGGS and Dasam Granth. As a preface to poetic rendering of Japuji, author writes: “Interestingly, translation prods me on to explore the languages concerned and delve beneath their obvious differences down to their cultural and artistic nuances steeped in cosmic correspondences. Such a self-assigned task has been deepening my understanding of the Sacred Word when the subject happens to be Religion, Spirituality, and Mysticism”. A special feature of this section is addition of his paintings by the author to communicate the message of the holy *Shabad*.

The book under review is an epitome to erudite scholarship of Dr Surendra Singh Bhatti, the celebrated author. It is a creation of White Falcon Publishing as a monumental work of author fully illustrated by artwork and paintings in colour. The text is interspersed with Gurbani quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib to bring home the truth of Sikhi as a distinct religion. The author has given his own translation of Gurbani without any recourse to the popular version of Sant Singh Khalsa MD, available on internet and *srigranth.org* created by Dr K.S. Thind of USA.

As a reviewer, I consider it my duty to point out some minor discrepancies in the book under review. On page 77, under Piri heading, the author wrongly ascribes the Gurbani quote to Guru Amar Das. It is Guru Ram Das who prescribes the daily routine for Sikhs in his *Bani*, not Guru Amar Das. On page 24, author refers to an inscription on Guru Nanak’s memorial in Istanbul, Turkey. This fake news was

spread by Dr D.S. Chahal of Montreal, a renowned Sikh Scientist and Scholar, as his discovery but later he revised his views in 2007. It happened due to misinterpretation of the text of the inscription on the monument. In the essay, “Quintessence of Sikh Gurus’ Contributions”, there is a lot of repetition of text from Section I, “Biographical Notes”. The author needs to adopt a standard system of reference to quote Gurbani *Shabads* and other citations in the text.

I must congratulate the author for bringing out this encyclopaedic work on Sikh Gurus. It will be a useful REFERENCE source for scholars of Sikh Studies worldwide. It has a matchless beauty of narrative written in flawless English. It will cater to the needs of all age groups. The hagiographic stories of Gurus’ life translated from *Janam Sakhi* genre (tradition) in Punjabi language have mesmerising effect. They touch the core of heart of the seeker for truth, lifting him from the physical plane to celestial realms, where he can resonate with the message of the ONENESS of Sikh Gurus, assimilated in Guru Nanak’s IKONKAR.

## NEWS & VIEWS

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### 8<sup>TH</sup> DR KHARAK SINGH MEMORIAL LECTURE

The 8<sup>th</sup> Dr Kharak Singh Memorial lecture in the series was organized at the Institute on December 2, 2023. Dr Indu Banga former Professor and Head, Department of history GNDU delivered this lecture and Dr Tejwant Singh Gill former Professor, Head Department of English GNDU and fellow Bhartya Sahit Academy presided over the function. The lecture was delivered on the “Core Concerns in Sikh Studies”. She stated that studies on Sikh religion, Sikh history, Sikh scripture, and Sikh studies, done since Guru Nanak’s time to the modern times in Persian and English and at present in Punjabi, Hindi and English constitute Sikh Studies. These studies have been done broadly on two lines. While one approach constitutes the traditional, discursive tradition based on oral, manuscriptural and faith based commentarian, interpretative lines mainly in Punjabi, the other approach constitutes the western approach studying Sikh religion, history and even Sikh scripture as an academic exercise bereft of its religious essence and spirit. This approach started with W.H. McLeod and continues at present in the western world, particularly in some of the Sikh chairs established in some of the American Universities in the recent past. This bias against Sikh religion in particular and orientalism in general is deep rooted with its seeds in the distant past which considers Greeco-Christian civilization and literature superior to all that is oriental. This bias was most prominently displayed by Ernest Trumpp, a German Philologist and polyglot whose services were requisitioned by the British colonial authorities in India in 1863 soon after the annexation of Punjab by them. Leaving the assigned task of translating the text of the sacred Sikh text/ Sri Guru Granth Sahib in mid way, he made several adverse observations about its syntax, structure and its contributing Sikh Gurus after which his services were

withdrawn, Soon after, he was struck by a physical disaster and had gone blind and ended/ died in a lunatic asylum. Later on, after four decades, a British bureaucrat in Punjab Max Arthur Macauliffe in 1905, being deeply impressed by the core values of Sikhism endeavoured to undid the damage done by Earnest Trump by translating some of the representative verses along with writing biographies of Sikh Gurus with the assistance of contemporary Sikh clergymen and Sikh scholars particularly with the assistance of Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha. With McLeod, a Christian Missionary and a Scholar, the old bias returned again during mid twentieth century and continues even to this day. A large body of literature in the form of Sikh Studies is being produced in this vein. Several Sikh historians, scholars and academicans consisting of S Daljit Singh, Dr Kharak Singh, Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, Dr J.S. Grewal and others have been engaged in refuting some of the assertions/ perceptions of McLeod and other votaries of his view.

Dr Indu Banga, in her comprehensive and analytical lecture, not only, elaborated upon the concerns of Sikh Studies but also refuted McLeod's positioning of Guru Nanak in the Indian Sant tradition like that of Saint Kabir and his spirituo-philosophical influence on Guru Nanak. She asserted that unlike Kabir Guru Nanak, was founder of new Sikh religion with an independent ideology of his own resulting in the ushering of a new religion. With Guru Gobind Singh's creation of the Khalsa and its glorious history, it acquired a religious and political sovereignty of its own which is enshrined in the doctrines of Guru Granth and Guru Panth. She also highlighted some of the other prominent Sikh traditions such as the catholicity of Gurdwara services of free community kitchen (langar) shelter for all irrespective of caste, creed or status and subscribing to caste and gender equality.

The lecture was followed by a lively question-answer session and meaningful debate. Dr Tejwant Singh Gill, in his illuminating remarks, corroborated majority of Dr Indu Banga's assertions and traced the religious and historical background of the currently going on western critique of Sikh religion and history while evaluating the work of Earnest Trump, Max Arthur Macauliffe and W.H. McLeod. He also expressed the apprehension that younger generations of Sikhs may be influenced by some of the assertions of the western scholars of Sikh history if the Sikhs themselves did not look into some of the distortions in Sikh history. He referred to the distorted long prevailing view among

the Sikhs about the role of Banda Bahadur and his devout followers and the contemporary Tat Khalsa during and after the capture of Banda Bahadur and his and supreme sacrifice and that of his companions. Prof Kulwant Singh, Convenor of the Dr Kharak Singh Memorial Lecture Series called upon the University teachers, students and Sikh scholars present during the lecture to write in English and produce a large body of English translation of Primary Sikh sources to promote genuine Sikh studies across the globe and rebut some of the unmerited interpretations of Sikh religion and history in western Sikh studies. Principal Prabhjot Kaur presented a vote of thanks while Lt Gen R.S. Sujlana, President of IOSS had welcomed the invited scholars and audience earlier.

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### **THIS NEW CAPT AMERICA WEARS A TURBAN**

A recently unveiled animated short film, titled ‘American Sikh’, co-produced by renowned Michelin-star chef Vikas Khanna and Oscar-winning filmmaker Guneet Monga, illuminates themes of inclusivity, kindness, resilience, and acceptance through the compelling real-life narrative of its protagonist—an American Sikh described as a “superhero”.

This engaging project, boasting the creative talents of Khanna and Monga, recognised for their exceptional work including the Oscar-winning ‘The Elephant Whisperers’, stands as an Oscar-qualified piece. Directed by Ryan Westra, the animated short, clocking in at just under 10 minutes, beautifully portrays the life story of Vishavjit Singh, a turban-clad Sikh born in the United States.

Khanna, while hosting an exclusive screening of the film, expressed his deep-rooted admiration for the Sikh community, citing their inherent qualities akin to superheroes. He highlighted the community’s steadfastness in extending help and support during challenging times, emphasising their role as protectors and providers of solace.

Acknowledging his personal connection with Sikh values, Khanna elaborated on the significance of Gurudwaras in his life, mentioning how he found refuge, nourishment, affection, and a sense of belonging within their precincts. His involvement in the film was a heartfelt decision fuelled by these profound experiences.

The chef-filmmaker applauded Singh’s endeavour to combat negativity and bigotry with unwavering compassion and love, emphasising

the courage required to challenge societal perceptions. Khanna stressed the importance of showcasing Sikh culture to a global audience, expressing his commitment to sharing this story through various mediums like restaurants, books, television, documentaries, and movies.

Through the animated short, the Washington-DC-born Singh tells his story of living in India in his younger years and then returning to America as an adult, the challenges he faced, not feeling welcomed and trying to fit in the American society. “I felt a new desire to stand out as myself rather than blend in as no one,” Singh narrates in the film.

Vishavjit Singh was a cartoonist before the 9/11 attack on the US. However, the post-9/11 backlash against the Sikh community in America, due to their mistaken identification as Muslims, influenced Singh’s art. He chose to employ his artistic talents to combat this hate.

Yet, his endeavor wasn’t without challenges. Using art to confront hate exposed him to even more hostility. During this period, he conceived Captain America. The film depicts his struggle not only against hate towards Sikhs but also for any American perceived as an outsider due to their race or color.

“It’s commendable that such a movie is being made. Sikhs in the US have been enduring hate, and the incidents aren’t decreasing. This effort could make a significant impact not only in the US but also in other countries where Sikhs have settled. It’s surprising how, despite their heroic efforts during crises, Sikhs abroad still face discrimination. I hope this movie brings about a change,” expressed former SGPC general secretary Gurbachan Singh Grewal. Singh states in the film that after the 9/11 attacks, he went from being seen as an outsider to being seen as a “villain.” It is then that he decides to don this new identity of ‘Sikh Captain America’. “Sikh Captain America is changing the narrative on Sikhs (and anyone else who may not look “traditionally American”) — creating a new American hero that challenges societal expectations and norms. This film also follows his journey of accepting his own identity,” according to the film’s website.

“People have grown up idolising superheroes for decades. Sikh Captain America may not fight evil monsters, but he takes on hate and intolerance that are sadly still very much part of our contemporary society. That’s why an animated documentary, much like the superhero cartoons we’ve all grown up watching, is such a unique way to raise

awareness about Sikhs domestically and internationally in a style that people of all cultures and ages can enjoy,” it says. Underscoring the importance of spreading awareness about Sikhism, Singh stressed that children in schools across America must be educated about Sikhs. (Courtesy: *The Indian Express*, December 26, 2023)

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PUNJAB SEES FIVEFOLD RISE IN STUDY LOANS; STATISTICS INDICATE EXODUS

Consultants, recruiters and non-bank lenders have seen a five-fold rise in education loan applications from students and young professionals in Punjab looking to migrate to Australia, Europe, and Canada, Mint reported on Monday. Experts told Mint that the difficult job market in Punjab has led to young individuals seeking opportunities abroad.

Ankit Mehra, co-founder and chief executive of the non-banking financial company (NBFC) Gyan Dhan, was quoted as saying that the firm has seen a threefold rise in loan applications between 2021 and 2023. Punjab has been an outlier with a fivefold surge in loan applications since 2021. Most of these applications originate from cities such as Amritsar, Jalandhar, Patiala and Mohali, as well as towns such as Barnala, Firozpur, Faridkot, Khanna, and Muktsar. Most of these students are pursuing courses in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) and medicine.

Mehra stated that students from Punjab prefer budget-friendly colleges, resulting in an average loan request of Rs 10 lakh. This contrasts the national average loan request amounting to Rs 33 lakh. Also Read: Rice prices in Asia hit 15-yr high after India's 6-week campaign of curbs. Ankur Dhawan, president of upGrad Abroad, told Mint that enrolments from Punjab rose four times higher in the financial year 2023-24 (FY24) compared to the same period in FY23.

Youth from Punjab are also increasingly applying for overseas employment. Pranshu Upadhyay, regional director at search firm Michael Page, said there has been a 27 per cent year-on-year rise in job applications from Punjab for international destinations. These applications are spread across Australia, the US and parts of Europe. (Courtesy: *Business Standard*, Sept 4, 2023)

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