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## ਸੁਰਜ ਕਰਨ ਮਿਲੇ

Every year, the Sikhs across the globe remember the Supreme sacrifice of Sahibzada Zorawar Singh aged 9 and Sahibzada Fateh Singh aged 7 and Mata Gujri, the younger sons and revered mother of Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh respectively. During the three extremely cold days and nights of December 25,26,27, 1704, these two infant Sikh children and their aged grandmother, after captivity, were not only imprisoned in the extremely cold upper storey of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Mughal summer resort known as “Thanda Burj”, these two bravest of the brave children were persecuted under the decree (Fatva) issued by the head cleric of their most bigoted and fanatical Islamic Naqashbandi seminary located at Sirhind in Punjab. After refusing to accept all the lies, threats and temptations held out by the then ruler of Sirhind Wazir Khan, the two Sahibzadas were beheaded alive after failing to brick them alive and soon after Mata Gujri, failing to bear the shock, also breathed her last. This saga of utmost sacrifice highlights the rare streak of sacrifice and martyrdom in the Sikh nation and the extreme brutality among the Muslims. Sikh history and heritage is built upon the martyrdom, sacrifices of Sikh Gurus and Sikh Warriors of faith. Sahibzadas are an integral part of this heritage.

ਸੁਰਜ ਕਰਣਿ ਮਿਲੇ ਜਲ ਕਾ ਜਲੁ ਹੁਆ ਰਾਮ ॥  
ਜੋਤੀ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲੀ ਸੰਪੂਰਨੁ ਥੀਆ ਰਾਮ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 846)

## Editorial

### ਕੂੜ ਨਿਖੁਟੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਓੜਕਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੀ

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#### I

Hubris has been accepted as the most lethal among the five human vices. It is very often born out of excessive use or misuse of power especially those in political power. It blinds human vision of a ruler which makes him forget the unwritten bond that exists between him and the people who have vested him with the power to govern them. This is a sacred bond which exists between every custodian and the authority which has made him the custodian. It is a matter of mutual faith and trust and integrity of the custodian. When this faith and trust is violated, a sin is committed. When sin upon sin is committed, one after another, under the raging hubris and expediency, the forces of nemesis are stirred and wipe out all the evil in one stroke. In Shakespeare's famous tragic play "Macbeth" the victorious Scottish General Macbeth and his Machiavellian spouse lady Macbeth are accorded a standing ovation, the highest honour and offered a royal dinner and night stay at the Royal palace by the gracious old Scottish King Duncan old enough to be Macbeth's father. But Macbeth, instigated by the Furies of his own ambition, and his own wife, assassinates the noble king at night and occupies the throne. The rest of the play highlights the nemesis which strikes the expiating Macbeth as he recalls and reconstructs the sin that he and his diabolical wife have committed. While Macbeth raves and rants like a madman burdened by the sin committed by him, his guilt ridden wife Lady Macbeth starts walking in her sleep.

Something similar and equally sinister and blasphemous had been committed by the father-son Akali stalwarts duo during their ten year political rule of Punjab during 2007-2017. Drunk with power and

urged by the unbridled craving to perpetuate themselves in power through means fair and foul, they were prodded by an equally unscrupulous band of political sycophants. Their political ten year tenure in power was marked by the gravest acts of blasphemy, sacrilege and inappropriate promoting and patronizing and protection of the most unscrupulous police officers. Not only did they indulge in gross acts of corruption but also in undermining and damaging the reputation of some of the premier Sikh Institutions such as Sri Akal Takht Sahib and the SGPC. Their first sin included the then Jathedar, Sri Akal Takht and Jathedars of the other four Sikh takhts to grant pardon to the Chief of Dera Sacha Sauda for his blasphemous act of impersonation or imitation of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's posture of administrating *Khande ki Pabul* to his followers during the creation of the Khalsa for the first time. The Dera Chief's act of initiation of his followers in a similar posture was an act of grave religious blasphemy. The Sikh clergy was made to grant him a written pardon under duress at their Chandigarh address even without the Dera Chief's asking for it in writing. After getting this pardon granted, the act was justified through press publicity with the funds from SGPC, again through political manipulation and pressurising of then SGPC Chief. Both these grievous acts were committed to garner votes of a large number of Dera Voters in Akali Dal's favor. Later on, after massive protest from the Sikh sangat, the pardon granted to the Dera chief was rescinded and the guilty Sri Akal Takht Jathedar had to resign.

An other unpardonable act most foul and repulsive during their rule was the desecration of the holy Sri Guru Granth Sahib by the Dera followers by stealing its installed copy from a Punjab village Gurdwara and then scattering its sacred pages in an other village's streets and drains. This was an act of sacrilege of the highest and gravest degree. Then Akali government of father-son duo did not bring the guilty Dera followers to justice, but also allowed the State police to fire indiscriminately on the peaceful protesting Sikh Sangat against these two acts of sacrilege and desecration, killing two innocent Sikhs. It was an act of sacrilege of the magnitude of Ahmad Shah Abdali's desecration of Sri Harmandar Sahib. It shall be written in Sikh history as one of the blackest chapters.

They also ignored some of the Supreme sacrifices of ancient and modern Sikh martyrs including the eighty four days fast unto death of S Darshan Singh Pheruman who had scarified his life for the inclusion of Chandigarh into Punjab. They even promoted and allotted legislature tickets to the kin of guilty police officers like Mohd Mustafa. For all these sinful acts, the father-son duo enacted the drama of tendering a counterfeit apology standing in front of Sri Akal Takht for the inadvertent acts of omission and commission during their rule on their part. But it did not muster trust and approval by the Sikh Sangat. As a result reputation and image of both of them, their council of ministers and Shiromani Akali Dal climbed down from the highest zenith to the lowest Nadir. In the subsequent Vidhan Sabha elections in 2017, 2022 and Lok Sabha elections in 2024, their performance has been most dismal, 17 MLAs in 2017-2022, and just three in 2022-27 Vidhan Sabha and only one in Lok Sabha. As a result of their willful acts of misdemeanor, one of most old and reliable regional and Panthic political parties has become completely irrelevant and obsolete in the only Sikh majority Indian State. But this has been the political fall and punishment of their political misdemeanor and its natural consequence.

But what has so far been eluding is the religious retribution of sinful acts of blasphemy and sacrilege committed under their patronage. The findings of the Justice Ranjit Singh Commission and later on the report of DIG police officer Kunwar Vijay Partap Singh submitted in the sessions court at Faridkot have been scuttled by their manipulation. Both these eminent officers of integrity have held the father-son duo squarely responsible for these heinous and sinful acts while governing the State. After a group of dissenting Akali Stalwarts, majority of whom have been partners in power and had silently endorsed their immoral and irreligious acts, have now turned approvers against them in the highest religious court of the Sikhs, Sri Akal Takht which has resulted in their religious trial and retribution. Several other Akali workers and their earlier confidants have also joined the dissenter's campaign against them. So much has been the intensity and gravity of these sinful acts and their hurtful impact on the hearts and minds of Sikh sangat across the State and the World and their apprehensions about the existential demise of glorious shirmoani Akali Dal with such

a rich historical past and heritage, that neither the guilty wielders of power in the Shromani Akali Dal at present, nor the Jathedars of Sikh Takhts could ignore the urgent necessity of this religious trial any longer. It had to happen. And it happened. What is unique and historical about this trial / inquisition is that all the Jathedars, all of them SGPC appointees, sitting in session conducted the trial so meticulously following all the conventional procedural details that reminded the Sikh sangat of the stern Akali Phoola Singh's holding the trial of the erring mighty Maharaja Ranjit Singh at Sri Akal Takht, awarding him to be whipped in full public view in the distant 19<sup>th</sup> century. Following this convention, all the guilty men including President of Shromani Akali Dal, being Deputy Chief Minister and Home Minister directly responsible for State's law and order and his condescending ministers together with the equally guilty President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee, were arraigned before Sri Akal Takht.

Charges were framed against each accused on the basis of accusations leveled against him by members of the Sudhar Lehar faction of the Akali Dal and all of them were given a fair opportunity to submit their explanations. Similarly, all of the ministers were also asked to submit their explanations.

After examining the charges against each guilty offender and his explanation thoroughly and dispassionately, all the accused were made to stand in front of Sri Akal Takht under its façade with the Slates bearing relevant Gurbani quotes highlighting, their guilt hung around their neck. Each one of them was made to listen to the charges framed against him read out by the Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht and the accused asked to accept or deny the charges by saying "Yes" or "No". The entire spectacle was video graphed and recorded.

Sukhbir Singh Badal was specifically asked, whether he was instrumental in getting the criminal cases against the head Dera Sacha Sauda cancelled and in granting him pardon for his act of blasphemy even without asking for it by summoning the Takht Jathedars to his Chandigarh residence and pressurizing them; whether he, as Home Minister and Deputy Chief Minister, failed to bring to justice those responsible for the desecration of Sri Guru Granth Sahib and other

acts of sacrilege; whether he was responsible for the misappropriation of funds from Guru's Golak by asking the SGPC President to incur expenses on newspaper advertisements to justify the pardon granted to the Dera head, whether he was guilty of promoting guilty police officers responsible for firing and killing the protesting innocent Sikhs and giving party tickets to the family members of some of these officers; whether he was responsible for committing the sin of ignoring the sacrifices of Sikh martyrs on panthic issues and spoiling the reputation of the premier Sikh Institutions through his acts of misdemeanor during his political rule in collaboration with the Chief minister of Punjab, his father. Sukhbir Singh Badal replied to all these charges in the affirmative by saying 'Yes' and owned complete responsibility for these lapses. After his public acknowledgement of these sinful acts, he was declared/ pronounced *Tankbayia* (guilty). Similarly, all other members of his cabinet were tried one by one and charges against them read out and their replies were recorded and all of them were declared Tankhaiyas. The late Sardar Parkash Singh Badal, the then Chief Minister of Punjab, was held equally guilty of all these sinful acts and the State award of Fakhar-e-Kaum Panth Rattan conferred on him was withdrawn by Sri Akal Takht. The Akal Takht said that the leadership of Shiromani Akali Dal had lost its moral authority to lead the Sikh Panth politically due to its (sinful) actions and that SAD Politics had failed to serve and protect the Sikh community's interests since 1997. It also failed to procure Justice for the victims of 1984 anti-Sikh riots and accused the Akali leadership for undermining the integrity and independent working of SGPC and Sri Akal Takht. Virsa Singh Voltoha was given the instant and severest punishment for his brash behavior and ordered the Shiromani Akali Dal to expel him from the party for ten years.

What makes this trial and verdict unique and distinctive is that it has been recorded in black and white and all its proceedings have been audio-video recorded for these facts to be recorded in history. Sri Akal Takht verdict after, analyzing and studying all the charges and answers given by all the accused and after holding consultations with the representatives Sikh organizations and the prominent members of enlightened Sikh intelligentsia, have delivered a very comprehensive

verdict covering both the religious and political aspects of Sikh issue brought before it for adjudication in the best Sikh tradition upholding the *Miri-Piri* doctrine of Sikh philosophy/ Sikhism. While all those held guilty have been awarded religious punishment in varying degrees in the form of rendering *sewa* of cleaning the toilets of Gurdwaras, washing dishes in the *langars* and standing as guard at the Sikh shrines, they have been rendered political punishment in varying degrees as well. While the main accused Sukhbir Singh Badal has been ordered to resign from the post of President Shiromani Akali Dal and the latter has been asked to accept his resignation and report its implementation within the stipulated time, the members of the splinter group named Sudhar Lehar have been ordered to dissolve their new dispensation and return to their parent political party, the Shiromani Akali Dal. Virsa Singh Valtoha has been turned out of Shiromani Akal Dal for ten years. Both Badal and Valtoha has resigned since then. SGPC Chief S Harjinder Singh Dhama has been accused of misusing SGPC funds for political purposes under political influence and ordered to deposit the whole amount of near one lac to the SGPC account along with the two other accused. They too have accepted the order and returned the SGPC money. The erstwhile Sri Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Gurbachan Singh who had granted pardon to the Dera Chief has also been divested of all the perks and privileges by virtue of his exalted position. All those declared guilty have performed the stipulated *sewa* and have been pardoned after paying obeisance and offering *Karah Parshad* at Harmandar Sahib and Sri Akal Takht.

Regarding the political part, Shiromani Akali Dal has been ordered to dissolve its present house and hold fresh recruitment as per its constitution after holding fresh elections under the newly appointed six member committee headed by the President SGPC Chief within the stipulated time line. Thus, both the religious and political components have been completed to a large extent.

Regarding the merit of Sri Akal Takht trial and verdict, it seems to be fairly impartial, dispassionate, evaluative, objective and holistic. The methodology adopted to hold the trial and delivery of the verdict has also been completely meticulous and systematic. Its proceedings have restored the pristine dignity of the institution of Sri Akal Takht

and upheld the expected integrity of its Jathedar as well as the other Jathedars. It has also enhanced the image of the Sikhs as a nation among the comity of nations, especially in India. The Sikhs have come out as a disciplined community which subscribes to its religious tenets in letter and spirit. It seems to have set the skewed moral compass of the Sikhs/ Sikh community right.

The only fly in the ointment is the willful dilly-dallying on the part of Shiromani Akali Dal in accepting the resignation of Sukhbir Singh Badal and SGPC's temporary suspension of Giani Harpreet Singh, Jathedar Takht, Sri Damdama Sahib for a fortnight, earlier and then extended for a month while instituting an enquiry against him by the SGPC constituted three member committee on a corked up complaint filed against him by one of his close relations. Despite Shiromani Akali Dal's explicit declaration of complete submission to the authority of Sri Akal Takht, its asking for extension of time repeatedly on some technical and logistic pretexts seems to lack creditability and smacks of bad faith. It should be clearly understood that the Sikh Sangat will never allow it to temper with this landmark verdict and the present clique wielding power in Shiromani Akali Dal is not likely to succeed. Neither sin nor evil succeed for ever not the sinners can escape retribution for long. Gurbani bears witness to it:

ਨਾਨਕੁ ਆਖੈ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਸੁਣੀਐ ਸਿਖ ਸਗੀ ॥  
 ਲੇਖਾ ਰਬੁ ਮੰਗੋਸੀਆ ਬੈਠਾ ਕਢਿ ਵਹੀ ॥  
 ਤਲਬਾ ਪਉਸਨਿ ਆਕੀਆ ਬਾਕੀ ਜਿਨਾ ਰਹੀ ॥  
 ਅਜਰਾਈਲੁ ਫਰੇਸਤਾ ਹੋਸੀ ਆਇ ਤਈ ॥  
 ਆਵਣੁ ਜਾਣੁ ਨ ਸੁਝਈ ਭੀੜੀ ਗਲੀ ਫਹੀ ॥  
 ਕੂੜ ਨਿਖੁਟੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਓੜਕਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 953)

and

ਹਰਿ ਜਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਭਰਪੂਰਿ ਦੂਜਾ ਨਾਹਿ ਕੋਇ ॥  
 ਹਰਿ ਆਪਿ ਬਹਿ ਕਰੇ ਨਿਆਉ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਸਭ ਮਾਰਿ ਕਢੋਇ ॥  
 ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਦੇਇ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਹਰਿ ਧਰਮ ਨਿਆਉ ਕੀਓਇ ॥  
 ਸਭ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਕਰਹੁ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜਿਨ ਗਰੀਬ ਅਨਾਥ ਰਾਖਿ ਲੀਓਇ ॥  
 ਜੈਕਾਰੁ ਕੀਓ ਧਰਮੀਆ ਕਾ ਪਾਪੀ ਕਉ ਡੰਡੁ ਦੀਓਇ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 89)

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## II ਸੁਰਬੀਰ ਬਚਨ ਕੇ ਬਲੀ

Raja Janak is the most iconic figure in the Indian mythology known for his probity in public governance and integrity in personal conduct. In our own times in the post independence era, Dr Manmohan Singh, the two term Prime Minister of India after Jawahar Lal Nehru from 2004-2009, 2009-2014 who breathed his last on December 26, 2024, remains one of the most iconic figures of modern India. His persona is a fine amalgam of an authentic expertise in macro and micro-economics; Governance of a country with compassion and welfare of the marginalized; strengthening of public institutions and empowering the Indian people with democratic rights; enhancing India's unique status as a powerful nation among the international powers; keeping his personal integrity clean and unsullied in the midst of power and politics and remaining humble and unassuming despite his monumental achievements.

The enactment of National Rural Employment Act (MNREGA), National Food Security Act; Right to Information Act; Right to Education Act, Act pertaining to tribal rights over forests and other natural resources under his visionary leadership together with his winning the confidence vote in parliament in 2008 for signing Indo-nuclear deal with United States of America – All bear testimony to the qualities of his persona narrated in the earlier paragraph. Earlier, he, as Finance minister, backed by an equally visionary Prime Minister P.V. Narsimaha Rao, took the most bold decision to save the country from bankruptcy after the creation of balance of payment crisis and dismantling the decades old Licensing Permit Panj and ushering era of economic liberalization which raised millions of poor Indians above poverty line. His prophetic remarks about demonetization of Indian currency in 2016 and hasty, ill planned implementation of GST and their damaging effect on Indian people and businesses proved real and correct. Besides these achievements, his decision not to retaliate against Pakistan soon after the 26/11 terrorist attack at Bombay in 2008 and opening dialogue with both China and Pakistan were some of his other visionary steps. As he had rightly said “History will be kinder to me” than the contemporary media is likely to be true as well. In this age of

hollow cliches when India is dreaming of becoming a Vishava Guru, despite current economic slow-down and an environment of communal hatred and rising economic inequality, Dr Manmohan Singh was acknowledged as his Guru by none less than Barrack Obama, the then President of USA and several other European and African political leaders. As Dr C. Rangarajan, former governor of Reserve Bank of India, says “If there is talk about India becoming a developed country (Viksit Bharat) Dr Manmohan Singh has laid the foundation for this.” Similarly, commenting about his humility and unassuming conduct, Ashutosh Varshney, a well-known scholar and columnist says, “unwavering civility would perhaps be the best way to describe what I experienced. Arrogance never touched him and civility never failed.” (*Indian Express*, Dec 29, 2024). Finally as the first and only Sikh Prime Minister of India so far, Dr Manmohan Singh brought to bear upon his life all the highest tenets of Sikh philosophy such as honesty in thought and deed, hard work, sharing his knowledge with others and humility and civility in personal conduct.

Through his qualities of scholarship, world class economic expertise, his meritorious eminence, his governance of topmost public institutions and Government of India, his spotless, implacable conduct and deportment and his humility and civility has enhanced the image of Sikh society. He was Akal Purkh’s blessed child who conformed to all the virtues of an ideal human being, a perfect Gursikh described in Guru Tegh Bahadur’s Sorth M 9 :

ਜੇ ਨਰੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥  
 ਸੁਖ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥ ੧ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
 ਨਹ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਹ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨਾ ॥  
 ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਉ ਨਾਹਿ ਮਾਨ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥

(Guru Granth Sahib, p. 633)

*The man, who in pain, feels not pain, who is affected not by pleasure, love and fear and deems gold as dust. Pause.*

*Who is swayed not by dispraise, or praise, and who suffers not from greed, worldly love and pride, who remains unaffected by joy or sorrow and who minds not honour nor dishonour.*

Like a lotus flower blossoming in a swamp, he remained clean and untouched in the midst of power and politics. Talking about

Mahatma Gandhi , Albert Einstein had remarked / said “Generations to come will scarce believe that such a one as this ever in flesh and blood walked upon earth.” Similarly, it can be said about Dr Manmohan Singh that he, being a human being remained completely free from all human weaknesses.

Coming generations of Indians and the Sikhs are also likely to consider him as one of the great thinkers, Statesman and sages. His sagacity, wisdom and honesty in words and deeds are his legacy that he leaves behind for the coming generations. Imbibing his qualities in letter and spirit will be the greatest tribute to him. The present crop of Sikh/ Akali politicians, some of whom have been held guilty of misconduct and misdemeanor while in power by Sri Akal Takht Sahib and pronounced *Tankhaya* (guilty) should take a leaf from Dr Manmohan Singh's life who as a Sikh Prime Minister of India earned the highest laurels and glory through his clean image.

ਕੋਟਿ ਕੋਟਿ ਅਘ ਕਾਟਨਹਾਰਾ ॥ ਦੁਖ ਦੂਰਿ ਕਰਨ ਜੀਅ ਕੇ ਦਾਤਾਰਾ ॥  
ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਬਚਨ ਕੇ ਬਲੀ ॥ ਕਉਲਾ ਬਪੁਰੀ ਸੰਤੀ ਛਲੀ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 392)

## AKALIS ARE OUTDATED FOR WHAT AKAL TAKHT STANDS UP TO

JASPAL SINGH SIDHU\*

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The spectacle of 2 December (2024) in front of the building of the Sri Akal Takht, the highest temporal authority of the Sikhs, located within the Durbar Sahib complex, Amritsar, was historical and enchanting for the Sikhs, Leaders of the Shiromani Akali Dal (SAD), along with party head Sukhbir Singh Badal, presented themselves with folded hands and heads bowed before the 'Five Jathedars' standing on the Akal Takht's projected high pedestal to accept an inquisition from Singh Sahiban.

Akal Takht Jathedar Giani Raghbir Singh sought answers only in 'yes' and 'no' from Badal and other leaders including rebel ones for their religious and political acts of misconduct during their rule from 2007 to 2017, which, the Jathedar adjudged as "anti-panthic (anti-Sikh brotherhood), anti-Sikh Institutions and instrumental to the state repression on Sikhs". Even, Sri Akal Takht withdrew '*Faqr-a-Qaum*' (*Panth Rattan* - Pride of Sikh Nation) awarded to senior Badal.

Sukhbir Badal confessed to all those pointed queries as his and his party's blunders and opportunistic acts in pursuing power. Also his party leaders, later, owned all that Sukhbir accepted as mistakes in religious and political spheres. Rebel (dissident) Akali leaders, who had approached the Sri Akal Takht with the complaint against the dominating leader Sukhbir Badal too fell in line and accepted that they were party to all that Badal did. Both Akali factions accepted the Akal Takht ordained "*tankhab*" in the Sikh parlance which is 'not religious punishment' as described in the media but "*sewa*" (religious

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service) performed to atone for the “sins” (religious and political blunders from the Sikhism’s yardstick). All the Akali leaders undertook the amount of ‘*sewa*’ as assigned to them by the Akal Takht as per their involvement in committing “sins”. The leaders performed ‘*sewa*’ that included standing guard at the Golden Temple, cleaning the toilets, and washing utensils- as a part of penance to regain the lost trust of the Sikh community. The span for ‘*sewa*’ was spread from five to ten days for Sukhbir Singh Badal and his senior party colleagues. All of Akali leaders completed their assigned ‘*sewa*’ to be followed by ‘ardas’ (prayer) at the Akal Takht.

### **BADAL FACTION PERFORMED ONLY RELIGIOUS ‘SEWA’**

But, the Badal-led Akalis performed only the religious part of the ‘*tankhab*’ while shirking away from accepting the punishment pertaining to political issues as ordained by the Akal Takht. The political part included accepting Sukhbir Singh Badal’s resignation as party president by the party’s working committee within three days. Structuring the party afresh, recruiting the new membership within six months, and electing the office-bearers thereafter. A nine-member committee with the SGPC president as convener was appointed by Akal Takht to oversee the genuineness of the process of enlisting the basic membership. The Akal Takht Jathedar made a stark critique of the incumbent Akali leaders saying that they had lost the moral authority to lead the party as it had been reduced to the family fiefdom and for decades there had been no induction of fresh blood through the genuine recruitment to the party.

Actually, the Badal group confined itself to the religious part of the ‘*sewa*’ which they had been insisting upon before and after Sukhbir Singh Badal was declared ‘*tankhaiya*’ (guilty of committing anti-Sikh acts) by the Akali Takht on August 30 (2024). The group leaders continued to pressure the Jathedars that the ‘*tankhab*’ to be awarded to Badal should be within the religious domain only.

### **THE BADAL GROUP PRESSURIZED JATHEDARS**

To make the Jathedars toe the Badal group line one, Akali leader

from Amritsar went to the extent of threatening the Jathedars and even cast a slur one of the Jathedars in the social media and public sphere.

The exerting of such pressure on the Jathedars was not a new phenomenon this time but was part of the SAD's old practice taken up by late party supremo Parakash Singh Badal back in 1990s. The Jathedars have been vulnerable to party pressure as the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) appoints and removes them from office. The SAD controls the SGPC with the majority of its members from the Akali party. For the past three decades, Jathedar heading the Akal Takht and four others manning the other four 'Takhts' virtually enjoyed only ceremonial positions. This fact is known to the Sikhs. Parkash Singh Badal had flouted the Akal Takht Jathedar's dictates in 1999. Rather he got the then-incumbent, Bhai Ranjit Singh replaced. Again, senior Badal disobeyed the pronouncement made by the then Akal Takht Jathedar Professor Manjit Singh for forging unity among the Akali factions in 1994. Prof Singh was, too, shown the doors.

At present too, the Badal group controls the SGPC with its overwhelming majority among the SGPC members. And SGPC president Harjinder Singh Dhami and his team of executives are Badal's nominees. So, Dhami also lobbied with the Jathedars for awarding only religious '*tankhab*' to Sukhbir Singh Badal. But the days of late Parkash Singh Badal have gone by as the SAD is no longer a dominating political party in Punjab and there was a tremendous pressure from the Sikhs on Jathedars to award stringent '*tankhab*' to Badal even to the extent of his removal from the party.

#### **ROLE OF THE BADALS IN POWER**

Senior Badal was Akali Chief Minister of Punjab from 1997 to 2002 and later two times from 2007 to 2017. Not only was his party stronger, but he was also in full command of political affairs and was the tallest leader of the National Democratic Alliance (NDA), which has been ruling the Federal Government at New Delhi under the leadership of the BJP.

Even before senior Badal faded from Punjab's political scene, the SAD began dissipating away. The party has continuously been the loser in four assembly and Parliamentary polls beginning from 2017 to May 2024. It lost its earlier clout and suffered internal dissensions.

That is why, the Badal Group leaders and the SGPC president too failed to mold/ bend the Jathedars as earlier senior Badal used to do. Presently, the Akal Dal Badal leaders failed to judge the changed scenario before jumping to offend the Jathedars. One of the five Jathedars, Giani Harpreet Singh from the Takhat Dam Dama Sahib challenged the Akal leaders' rebuff and submitted his resignation from the office. This created a furor among the Sikh world over with an estimated population of 300 million. A section of Sikhs stood at the back of Giani Harpreet Singh and sought stringent 'tankhah' for Sukhbir Singh Badal . A peculiar situation arose as Akal Takhat Jathedar Raghbir Singh was forced to announce that if the resignation of Giani Harpreet Singh was accepted, all other Jathedars would also resign from their offices.

At this juncture, Sukhbir Badal first wrote a 'threatening-type' letter to the Akal Takht expressing his resentment against the delay in awarding 'tankhah' as his being 'tankhahiaya' obstructed him from interacting with the Sikhs. His party suffered on this count.

Sensing the hardened posture of the Jathedars, Sukhbir, later, wrote another 'entreating-type' letter to the Akal Takht to expedite the awarding of the '*tankhal*' in November end.

### **THE BADALS USED AKAL TAKHT FOR PROMOTING THEIR POLITICS**

In the past, the SAD used the Akal Takht and other jathedars to promote its politics. Even, the Akal Takht Jathedar wanted to remain on the positive side of the Badals and gave the prestigious '*Fagr-a-Quam*' to Parkash Singh Badal. Also, bowing to the pressure of BJP-RSS, the SAD's alliance partners, and at the bidding of senior Badal the Jathedars withdrew the 'Nanak-Shahi Calendar adopted by the SGPC and replaced it with a hybrid Calendar as suited to the RSS ideology.

Similarly, to build a 'vote bank' for the SAD among followers of the Dera Sirsa religious sect having a commanding influence on Dalits and Backward categories, the Badal government in Punjab patronized its Chief Gurmeet Ram Rahim Singh who imitated the Sikh Guru's style of baptism in 2007 at his Dera in Slabatpura village in Bathinda district. That incident sparked violent clashes between Sikhs and followers of Dera Sirsa. Those clashes continued to simmer for years culminating in sacrilege of Guru Granth (Sikh scripture) and police firing on the protesting Sikhs in 2015. The sacrilege incidents known as '*Bargari beadbi*' cases proved water-shed for the SAD's base in rural Punjab.

The *beadbi* cases proved a 'proverbial nail' in the coffin of the Badal Akal Dal. Blinded with power politics, the Badal government in Punjab chose to go soft with Dera Sirsa followers who had aggressively indulged in sacrilege acts for more than four months at a stretch. Instead of arresting the miscreants, the Badals, rather, pressurized the Akal Takht Jathedar to withdraw its '*Hukamnama*' issued in 2007 against the Dera Sirsa Chief while the sacrilege of the Sikh scripture was continuing in September 2015. The '*Hukamnama*' had ordained the Sikhs not to have any truck with the Dera followers.

### **THE AKAL TAKHT REJECTS AKALI DAL BADAL POLITICS**

The Akal Takht has a history when Akali Phoola Singh held the powerful, Maharaja Ranjit Singh accountable. Before pronouncements from the Akal Takht on December two, the Jathedars were flooded with fervent urgings from Sikhs from all over the world that they should become Akali Phoola Singh and not Giani Gurbachan Singh who sheepishly carried the Badals' bidding and withdrew '*Hukamnama*' against the Dera Sirsa chief. Unexpectedly for many, the December two pronouncements from the Akal Takht rejected the Badal Akali Dal's ideology and political line right from 13 April 1978 Sikh-Nirankari clashes in Amritsar when senior Badal was chief minister of Punjab.

Narrating the Badal government acts when it came into power in 1997, Giani Harpreet Singh pronounced from the pulpit, it had failed to get justice for the November 1984 victims. Instead of penalizing

the police officers found guilty of repression of the Sikhs, the Badal government protected them, placed them on lucrative posts, and fought their cases up to the Supreme Courts by spending hefty amounts of money from the state treasury; a guilty police officer's wife was given the Akali party ticket and elevated her to the position of a minister in the government. The Badals promoted '*derawaad*' an antithesis of Sikhism; which violated the sanctity of Sikh institutions.

Besides that, the Akal Takht Jathedar instructed Giani Gurbachan Singh and former Dam Dama Takht Jathedar Gurmukh Singh to clarify their role in granting pardon to Dera Sirsa chief. Even the SGPC facilities provided to the former Jathedars were withdrawn. A week later, these former Jathedars submitted their explanations to Jathedar Raghbir Singh, which were rejected on finding them insufficient.

In a nutshell, the Akal Takht verdict was an all-out scrutiny of the Badal Akali dal's naked pursuit of state power while using Sikh institutions, ignoring the interests of the Sikh community and Punjab. It was an expression of assertion of the Akal Takht's authority and sanctity.

### **IDEOLOGICALLY SIKH POLITY NEGATES BJP-RSS POLITICS**

Though Akali leaders made confessions that they have a distinct Sikh identity throughout the world, it was of utmost difficulty for them to revert to original Akali politics which the Akal Takht dictates and stands for. The reason behind this is: that Akalis joined BJP-RSS in 1996 unconditionally. For the sake of power, it got completely attuned to the BJP's ultra-nationalist politics which leaves no space for the Sikhs to assert their 'separate identity' and claim to be a regional dispensation or regional power center. The RSS-BJP ideology takes Sikhs as part of pan-Hindu society and part of the 'Indian Nation'- a monolithic entity.

Historically, the Akali Dal was set up as a political outfit to look after the interests of the Sikh community during the Gurdwara Sudhar Lehar in December 1920 and later it developed as the regional party of the Sikhs. On the other hand, the RSS was also set up in 1925 with

the ideological assertion that 'India has been and is a 'Hindu Rashtra (Nation)' both on cultural and political fronts. And BJP espouses its political goal of making India a 'Hindu Nation' at par with Muslims who had established Pakistan as an Islamic State. Moreover, like Arya Samaj, BJP too considers Sikhs as 'Hindus' and the Guru Gobind Singh created the 'Khalsa to protect Hindus from predatory acts of the Muslim invaders.' But, in their hearts of hearts, the BJP -RSS rejects the Sikhs' assertion that they constitute a separate 'Nation'.

Hindu Chauvinists' assertions have always been rejected by the Sikhs and sometimes violently. Even the Sri Akal Takht issued a '*Hukamnama*' (edict) instructing the Sikhs to have no truck with the RSS. And, decades ago, the apex Sikh body, SGPC also adopted a resolution describing the Sikhs as a "separate Nation". Pertinent to underline that all religious and political deviations of the Akalis as pointed out by the Sri Akal Takht have emanated from the politics the Badals practiced in alliance with the BJP-RSS.

#### **AKALIS REPRESENT ELITE SIKHS AND THE BUSINESS CLASS**

The harsh fact is that the Akalis have tasted the power for three decades in league with the BJP. They have developed an elitist style of power politics holding priority for their business interests. With the transformed mental outlook with predominant personal/ family interests, the modern Akalis leaders cannot think of, not to say adopting the culture of pre-1980 Akalis as the Sri Akal Takht verdict ordained for. Earlier Akalis were dedicated to the Sikh Panth and some of them even went to the extent of sacrificing their lives..

Like Congress and other mainstream political party leaders, present-day Akali leaders of all hues, too, are businessmen first and last and do politics only to promote their trading/ business interests.

Another reality about present-day crop of Akali leaders is that they have been taking up politics as a 'profession' not as a 'passion' to serve the people whom they represent. That is why their politics has become dynastic. It is worth mentioning that after the 1980s, only the progenies of senior Akali leaders entered the party fold and its hierarchy

with a rare entry of fresh blood from outside. And, each senior Akali leader is a businessman or has '*benami*' shares in business houses, companies, and other trading pursuits. At present, Sukhbir Badal and his wife Harsimrat Kaur Badal are rich business persons holding various '*benami*' trading companies. That is why, the Badals have more capacity than others to spend on political wheeling-dealings which is their mainstay/strength to keep their tight grip on the party and the SGPC.

### **RARE POSSIBILITY OF AKALIS ADHERING TO AKAL TAKHT VERDICT**

The Akal Takht verdict was, in reality, 'indigestible' to the Akalis. Since the beginning, they attempted to wriggle out of it. They did not call the Working Committee meeting on the third day as per the verdict to accept the resignation of Sukhbir Badal. Instead, they sought to prolong it by one or other excuse. Similarly, the SGPC President, as convener of the 7-member monitoring Committee for the party's fresh membership has remained evasive.

Hence, the possibility of reviving the Akali Dal as the regional party is remote because the senior Akalis are not prepared to bring about any drastic change in its leadership. They want only cosmetic changes and window dressing to effect the closure to the '*Bargari beadbi*' episode that earned them 'Sikhs' hate' which is still sticking to them. The 'Bargari sacrilege' was a political misadventure that cost heavily as majority of Sikhs perceived them as "religious culprits".

### **BJP-AKALI ALLIANCE**

A pertinent factor is that the Badals and dissenting Akali group perceive that they cannot survive politically without the support of the BJP at the Center. Their break from the BJP in the wake of the Delhi Kisan Morcha in 2021 was only for public consumption. None of the BJP's basic policy and program was opposed by the Akalis till today even as the latter has parted ways. Rather the Akalis supported the BJP's latest policy decision "One Nation One Election".

Against this background, one could easily judge that the Akalis are least capable/ conditioned / least interested in developing their

party as a regional force like DMK, Trinamool Congress, TDP, and others. They fear leaving the ruling BJP because the Hindutva forces never hesitate to use ED and other Central agencies to make their adversaries fall in line. The Akali leaders do not have a clean slate and there are many skeletons in their cupboards too.

In fact, the SAD suffered dissension because some of them wanted alliance with the BJP during the May 2024 parliamentary polls and others insisted on 'wait and watch'.

### **THE CONCEPT OF 'MIRI-PIRI QUESTIONED**

As a strategy to evade the Akal Takht verdict, the Badal group segregated and gunned against Giani Harpreet Singh who adopted a strong stance against the Akalis' dillydallying posture. Even the SGPC executive debarred him from taking part in the Jathedars meetings for some time. Efforts are on to make all the five Jathedars bend down before the SAD/ the Badals and the latter may succeed in their manipulations.

All this raises a question about the validity of Miri-Piri concept represented by Sri Akal Takht that 'religion and politics are inseparable for the Sikhs. And the Sikh politics must have the stamp of religion. It has also questioned the status/ sanctity of Sri Akal Takht and way of appointment and removal of the Jathedars as the Akali politics seems to ride roughshod over the Akal Takht verdict. But at present, if they persist in flouting the Sri Akal Takht verdict given against its president, they will have to bear the bitter resentment of the Sikh sangat without which they cannot survive. The earlier they realise this reality, the better it is for them. On the other hand, if they obey this verdict in letter and spirit, there is possibility of their survival and their share of power in the renewed Shiromani Akali Dal at some stage.

ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਕੈ ਵਸਿਆ ਸੋਇ ॥  
ਵਖਤੁ ਵੀਚਾਰੇ ਸੁ ਬੰਦਾ ਹੋਇ ॥

(Sri Guru Granth Sahib, p. 84)

## RECENT CONTROVERSIES AND DEBATES IN SIKH STUDIES

DR INDU BANGA\*

This article is the second and concluding part of Dr Indu Banga's longish article entitled, 'J.S. Grewal on Sikh History, Historiography and Recent Debates' which is based on the study of nearly a score of works by Dr Grewal relating to sources, major new themes, approaches and significant departure from the historical writings on the Sikhs. The discussion also takes note of the controversies and debates between western professional historians and Sikh scholars mostly located in India. While major portion of this article has been published in our October-December 2024 issue, the concluding part under the heading 'Recent Controversies and Debates in Sikh Studies' is being published in this January-March 2025 issue in continuation of the earlier part for the benefit of our enlightened readers.

- Editor

As noted earlier, the last chapter of the book is given to an overview of what Grewal calls 'recent controversies' which originated with the publication of W.H. McLeod's *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*

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(1968), and got escalated with the publication of his *Evolution of the Sikh Community* (1975). The controversy involving professional historians and 'Sikh' scholars for and against McLeod's position became 'intense and bitter' with the deepening of political crisis in the Punjab in the 1980s and the growing interest in the Punjab and Sikh Studies in North America since the 1970s. Feeling concerned about the hardening of grooves and its adverse effect on the growing field of Sikh Studies, Grewal decided to examine the issues involved so that the possibility of a dialogue could be created. By the time he published his *Perspectives on Sikh Identity* (1997), question marks had been put on nearly all the high points in the history of the Sikh movement. Another monograph by him followed as the *Contesting Interpretations of the Sikh Tradition* (1998).

Over a score of scholars came to be involved in these controversies. McLeod and Harjot Oberoi reinforced each other's position on the early and later history of the Sikh movement. Pashaura Singh, Louis Fenech and Doris Jakobash more or less supported McLeod's assumptions in their doctoral studies. If a number of Western scholars sympathized with their position, a much larger number of 'Sikh' scholars questioned their assumptions, formulations and methods, even imputing motives.<sup>38</sup> Reacting strongly to their invective, McLeod declared in his *Autobiography* (2004) that he was following the established methods of historical research and writing only for the 'educated Western readers', and that he had to offer 'no apology' for it.<sup>39</sup>

Meanwhile, publication of some doctoral studies produced in North America added some more issues to these controversies. In the words of Grewal: One side presents it in terms of Enlightenment versus religious faith, or 'critical historians' versus 'traditional historians'; the other side presents it in terms of deliberate misrepresentation of the Sikh tradition, lack of empathy and linguistic competence, and use of inappropriate methodology. There is little mutual appreciation. Consequently, what we hear largely are two sets of assertions.

Obviously, 'the two world-views' stood 'in complete opposition to each other'. Grewal's concern has been with their 'bearing' on 'historical writing', which alone in his view is 'relevant for debate'.<sup>40</sup>

McLeod has been at the center of this controversy. While the Western scholars by and large tried to perpetuate, substantiate or defend his position, the 'Sikh' scholars and their sympathizers directed their critique primarily against him, and secondarily against Oberoi, followed at some distance by Pashaura Singh and others. Some of the reviewers of Grewal's earlier publications on the controversies had commented that he unfairly defended McLeod, or that there was no real debate, or that the author had not given his own views.<sup>41</sup> Grewal confronted each issue by evaluating the respective positions at length and then giving his own 'assessment' in no uncertain terms in his *Recent Debates* (2011). This work is as much a reflection of his usual objectivity, lucidity and thoroughness, as it is a trenchant affirmation of his own position vis-à-vis McLeod.

While emphasizing the need for a dialogue in his 'Introductory' statement, Grewal says in the *Recent Debates* that he had not realized that howsoever 'slight', there were differences between him and McLeod on nearly every important issue from the very beginning.<sup>42</sup> To be sure, he read and reread McLeod's entire work, absorbing the detail, noting the modifications in his successive publications, and capturing the nuances in his argument and unravelling the underlying assumptions. By then, Grewal himself had freshly analysed and interpreted a large number of Sikh and non-Sikh sources.<sup>43</sup>

Consequently, his 'assessment' in *Recent Debates* clarifies the issues, amplifies the respective positions, and modifies his earlier understanding. Given the constraints of space, this essay briefly elucidates his particular position on each of the major issues under debate rather than the arguments for and against.<sup>44</sup>

Essentially, and in opposition to McLeod, Grewal maintains that Guru Nanak consciously offered 'a new dispensation', which was distinct from contemporary religious traditions in both 'ideology and praxis'. Placing him in the Sant tradition therefore is not only

historically untenable, it tantamounts to a denial of his express statements and acts for which there is ample credible evidence.<sup>45</sup>

Responding to McLeod's rejection of the Janamsakhis as projecting the 'myth' of Guru Nanak and therefore of no use to his biography, and suggesting 'a positive approach', Grewal maintains that let alone the 'probabilities', 'even in terms of certainties we know more about Guru Nanak than about any other religious figure of the medieval period'.<sup>46</sup> The evidence of the Janamsakhi combined with the compositions of Guru Nanak, and other information about the period could tell us more about his life. Furthermore, 'the "myth" of Guru Nanak is in fact an interpretation of his life and mission and, therefore, the core of a Janamsakhi'.<sup>47</sup> Similarly, 'the "myths" of Guru Nanak in different Janamsakhi traditions are as many interpretations of his doctrines, ethics, attitudes and status'.<sup>48</sup>

McLeod's explanation of the development of the Sikh Panth in terms of evolution and gradual weaning away from 'Hindu' tradition does not take into account the replacement of Brahmanical institutions with new ones like the Gurdwara, the Granth and Guruship. Moreover, the distinctive Sikh 'rituals' can be traced to Guru Nanak himself.<sup>49</sup> McLeod's attribution of politicization and militarization to 'the pressure of external circumstances', like the Shakti cult of the hills blending with the Jat culture of the plains, ignores the pontificate of Guru Arjan and initiative of Guru Hargobind. Grewal underlines Guru Arjan's use of the concept of *helemi raj* 'for the entire dispensation of Guru Nanak and his successors'. Thus, rather than being a state within a state, Sikh Panth came to represent 'a parallel dispensation with no territorial limits'.<sup>50</sup>

Critiquing the position of McLeod and Oberoi over the distinctiveness of the early Sikh identity, particularly Guru Nanak being represented as a 'Hindu' in certain situations, Grewal maintains that 'the connotation of "Hindu" in the seventeenth century was not the same as in the twentieth'. The Janamsakhi evidence has therefore to be interpreted as Guru Nanak's 'denial' that he was a 'Muslim'. The Janamsakhis project the Panth of Guru Nanak 'as different also from

the Panths of the *Vaishnavas*, *Sanyasis* and the *Yogis* (which are now regarded as Hindu).<sup>51</sup> McLeod and Oberoi refer to the Sikh sources ‘without studying’ their ‘evidence’ in detail.<sup>52</sup> A careful study of the Vars of Bhai Gurdas and the compositions of the Gurus in the Guru Granth Sahib brings out the ‘Sikh self-image’ which has not been taken note of by any other scholar. Grewal emphasizes that the successor Gurus and the people closely associated with them ‘thought of the path of Guru Nanak as totally new’. Even an outside observer of the seventeenth century, the author of the *Dabistan-i Mazahib*, ‘underscores the distinctive character of Sikh doctrines and practices in relation to the three great religious traditions of the seventeenth-century India: the Islamic, the ascetical and the Brahmanical’.<sup>53</sup>

Grewal finds serious flaws in McLeod’s hypothesis about the Khalsa rahit and the doctrines of Guru Granth and Guru Panth. Grewal notices ‘a profound continuity with the pre-Khalsa tradition’ in the rahit about the religious life of the Khalsa as spelt out by the Rahitnamas of the eighteenth century. There is contemporary evidence also about ‘the most important’ positive changes introduced by Guru Gobind Singh in the wake of the institution of the Khalsa – the baptism of the double-edged sword, the unshorn hair, the epithet Singh, the bearing of arms, and the duty to fight for establishing Khalsa Raj. Even the most emphatic negative injunction against the use of tobacco figures in the contemporary sources. The basic items of the 5Ks, that is kesh, kirpan and kachh, find mention in the sources of the time of Guru Gobind Singh. The remaining two – *kangha* and *kara* – even in McLeod’s view, can go with kesh and the arms. ‘What is new is the formula of 5Ks [emphasis added] and not the substantive items’. Grewal finds McLeod’s suggestion that these symbols came from the Jat culture as ‘equally off the mark’. What is particularly questionable here is the assertion of ‘sanctity attached to the *kesh*’ by the Jats for which again there is no evidence. Moreover, ‘the *kachh* can never be associated with them’; ‘the *kirpan* had no fascination for them and there is no evidence of its use by the Jats’.<sup>54</sup>

Grewal questions the validity of McLeod’s hypothesis that the

doctrines of *Guru Panth* (Panth is the Guru) and *Guru Granth* (Granth is the Guru) arose gradually out of the need for cohesion during the eighteenth century, and not as a result of the Guru's own explicit injunction. The evidence of Guru Gobind Singh's court poet, Sainapat, whose *Sri Gur Sobha* is now placed in the first decade of the eighteenth century, expressly counters McLeod's hypotheses on this point.<sup>55</sup> Furthermore, 'neither was the doctrine of Guru Granth preceded by the doctrine of Guru Panth nor was the doctrine of Guru Panth completely dropped in the early nineteenth century'.<sup>56</sup>

While underlining the distinctiveness of the Khalsa identity and its dominance during the course of the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, Grewal clarifies some 'misconceptions' held by McLeod and Oberoi. Grewal suggests that the term 'Khalsa' was in use for those Sikhs who were directly linked with the Guru before the institution of the Khalsa. During the eighteenth century, therefore, 'the former Khalsa was looked upon as consisting of *kesbdhari* Singhs and *sahajdhari* Sikhs', and 'both were regarded as members of the Panth'. It is emphasized that 'neither the "Nanak-Panthis" nor the *Udasis* can be regarded as *Sahajdharis* who were closely aligned with the Singhs'. Furthermore, the Persian writers generally used the term 'Nanak-Panthis' 'for all the followers of Guru Nanak and his successors'. Since the Persian writers were not interested in any differences within the Panth, this 'blanket term' served their purpose even during the eighteenth century for referring actually to the 'Singhs'. Through a process of elimination thus, Grewal shows that 'Oberoi's *Sahajdharis* are virtually 'Udasis'.<sup>57</sup> Moreover, Oberoi builds his hypothesis of 'Sanatan-Sikhism' having replaced the Khalsa identity in the early nineteenth century, mainly on the basis of an *Udasi* text, combined with the selective use of the works of Koer Singh and Bhai Santokh Singh, and some Nirmala writings of the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Taking note of the major works of Sikh literature, chronicles of the period, and the works of Malcolm and Cunningham, 'seen in their totality', Grewal concludes that: By far the most important identity of the Sikhs was that of the Khalsa Singhs. Even the Sahajdhari

movements of the early nineteenth century [the *Nirankaris* and the early *Namdharis*] were anti-Brahmanical and supportive of a distinct Sikh identity.<sup>58</sup>

Grewal finds consciousness of a distinctive Khalsa identity not only continuing into the colonial period and revitalized by the Singh Sabha movement, particularly the radical reformers called the Tat-Khalsa. One of its leading exponents, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, published his *Ham Hindu Nabin* in 1898, dwelling on the ideological foundations of the Khalsa identity and equating the Sikh Panth with the Sikh *qaum* (nation), thereby projecting the Sikhs as a political community. In due course, it came to be regarded as a classic statement of Sikh identity. As the basis of Sikh politics of constitutional, agitational and militant variety in the twentieth century, identity became 'a sensitive issue' for the Sikhs as well as non-Sikhs. Therefore, even when it is easy to recognize the distinct socio-cultural identity of the Sikhs from the sixteenth to the beginning of the twentieth century as 'an academic issue', it no longer remains 'academic' towards the end of the twentieth century.

Depending upon their values and assumptions, scholars tend to look upon the question of Sikh identity differently, most often to utter disregard of empirical evidence. Thus, Oberoi's hypothesis of Sanatan-Sikhism hammers 'rupture' from the past, overlooking the ideological and historical continuities, highlighting differences and deviations, and looking upon Nabha's writing as a polemical pamphlet. By comparison, McLeod may appear to be closer to the ground realities, but he too downplays the strength of the Khalsa tradition and its bearing on consciousness of identity and political outlook. In the final analysis, clarifies Grewal, what was new to the Singh Sabha phase was 'rational argument for a distinctive Sikh identity with its political implications, and not Sikh identity itself'.<sup>59</sup> In his view, a better understanding of the movement requires a serious study of the Singh Sabha interpretation of the earlier Sikh literature along with the literature produced by its leaders.

It may be relevant to point out that in his recent monograph on

Sikh literature from Guru Nanak to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Grewal arrives at the conclusion that there was unambiguous evidence of a consciousness of distinctive Sikh identity and its acknowledgment by the non-Sikh observers from the mid-seventeenth to the mid-nineteenth century:

This study indicates that the consciousness of identity among the Sikhs was a product of their religious beliefs and institutions, their social order, and their political role. Present even in the literature of the earlier period, this consciousness crystallized in the eighteenth century as the *Tisar panth* [the Third Panth]. It may only be added that the author of the seventeenth century *Dabistan-i Mazāhib*, who was a Parsi, the author of the eighteenth century *Jangnama*, who was a Muslim, and the author of the nineteenth century *Char Bagh*, who was a Punjabi Hindu, looked upon the Sikhs in the precolonial period as distinct from both Hindus and Muslims.<sup>60</sup>

Grewal sees the Sikh conception of martyrdom as integral to Sikh tradition. In the works of Oberoi, McLeod and Fenech the concept of martyrdom is presented as a kind of ‘invention’.<sup>61</sup> They look upon it as a product of the Tat-Khalsa view of Sikh history, turning the Sikh heroic figures of the eighteenth century into ‘martyrs’. Finding this assertion based on an unwarranted use of a few Sikh sources of the pre-colonial period, Grewal examines the entire range of Sikh literature of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. In the *Adi Granth* itself he notices several inter-related dimensions that have a bearing on the ‘ideal of sacrificing one’s life to uphold the tradition promulgated by Guru Nanak’.<sup>62</sup> Guru Arjan’s compositions, as elaborated upon in the *Vars* of Bhai Gurdas, point to a conscious decision to court martyrdom to reinforce this tradition. Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom upheld the ideal of freedom of conscience. After the institution of the Khalsa, ‘the *pahul*, the *kes* and martyrdom’ not only went together but also served as ‘the markers of Sikh identity’, says Grewal.<sup>63</sup> He concludes, thus:

In Sikh literature of the pre-colonial centuries, on the whole, martyrdom remains an essential feature of the Sikh tradition. The Sikh

who died fighting valiantly for the cause of the Panth was greatly admired, but the martyrs regarded as the most venerable were not warriors. The ultimate source of martyrdom was not the heroic tradition of the Punjab but Sikh ideology. As evident from the sources, the Sikh tradition of martyrdom developed historically in response to the changing environment.<sup>64</sup>

Addressing the issues of authenticity of the *Kartarpur Pothi*, the process of its compilation, and its relationship with the Guru Granth Sahib, Grewal examines the views of McLeod who gave a spurt to textual studies by expressing doubts about the authenticity of the *Kartarpur Pothi*. In the course of analysing the works of different textual scholars, Grewal finds the two recent studies by Gurinder Singh Mann as ‘the most satisfactory on the whole’.<sup>65</sup> Mann is able to use larger evidence and analyse the *Kartarpur Pothi* minutely to settle the issue in favour of its authenticity. He also provides a historical view of the processes that led to the compilation of the *Damdami Bir* before the end of the seventeenth century, and how it became the Guru Granth Sahib.

As regards the status of the *Dasam Granth*, Grewal finds ‘no empirical basis’ for the view made current by McLeod and Oberoi that it ‘had come to be regarded as the Guru before the advent of colonial rule’.<sup>66</sup> Furthermore, neither was the *Dasam Granth* compiled by Guru Gobind Singh nor were his writings ‘meant to be part of the Sikh canon’.<sup>67</sup> There is no clarity about the stage at which the genuine works of Guru Gobind Singh were incorporated into the corpus later called the *Dasam Granth*. Therefore, a serious study of its history, contents and influence is needed. Interestingly, Grewal convincingly places the much discussed Goddess squarely in the context of Sikh ideology:

There is hardly any doubt that Durga figures in the *Dasam Granth*, like Ram and Krishan, as God’s creation and not as the Supreme Deity. Her role is similar to that of Ram and Krishan: to fight with great courage and prowess in support of good against evil. Her parity with the male figures in this context is beyond any doubt.<sup>68</sup>

On the issues of equality and caste, Grewal expresses a nuanced difference from McLeod who recognizes the egalitarian ideal of the Gurus, but underlines the persistence of caste in the day-to-day life of the Sikhs, especially in commensality, connubium and notions of status. The starting point for his discussion is the Caste System. Grewal calls for 'a new paradigm' for a historical study of equality and caste in the Sikh social order. 'A distinction can be made between the pre-Khalsa Sikhs and the Khalsa Singhs', which requires 'a thorough analysis of the entire range of Sikh literature and other contemporary evidence'.<sup>69</sup> Working out of the underlying principles and ethos were different in the pre and post Khalsa period. Application of the principle of equality would be different again in the period of Sikh rule. It is important nonetheless to recognize that, 'Sikh ideology introduced equalities in the religious, social and political spheres of the Sikh Panth and that the Sikh Panth was more egalitarian than the traditional social order'. With the change in the structure of opportunity, there is clear evidence of upward mobility, and extension of commensality from the Brahman to the clean Shudras of the traditional order. At the same time, concedes Grewal, traditional institutions and practices related to marriage were taken for granted; differences of wealth were accepted as God given; and inequalities existed side by side with new equalities. It must, however, be emphasized that 'Sikh ideology does not support any notions of hierarchy based on birth or occupation'.<sup>70</sup> It allowed for reduction of inequalities and creation of new possibilities in different situations.

On the issue of equality and gender too Grewal's approach is different from that of McLeod who emphasizes empirical continuities to make the general point that the idea of equality did not make women equal to men in society, especially in public life. Holding the stick from the other end, Grewal looks for affirmation of the principle and creation of situations conducive for reduction of gender inequalities. He concedes that by creating spiritual space for women within the institution of family, and by using metaphors from conjugality, Guru Nanak sustained the inegalitarian patriarchal framework. At the same time, explicit appreciation of woman and the ideal of householder,

combined with insistence on monogamy and mutual fidelity, probably mitigated the rigors of male domination. Express equality in the religious sphere enabled Sikh women to participate in congregational worship and community meal.

The doctrine of Guru Granth enabled them to read, understand and even expound the scripture. As a corollary, and as evident from the *Chaupa Singh Rabitnama*, additional space was created for women outside the family and in the life of the local community. Grewal cites several striking features of the *Rabitnama* called the Prem Sumarag which he places early in the eighteenth century.<sup>71</sup> There are common injunctions for both man and woman in the *rabit* and religious beliefs and practices; there are broadly similar rites of passage for them; the woman is entitled to baptism and is an equal member of the Khalsa Panth; she can inherit property in certain situations; and she can remarry as a childless widow. While in this conception of ‘an ideal Sikh social order’, the woman is ‘not exactly at par with the man’, the degree of equality visualized between the Khalsa men and Khalsa women ‘makes them almost equal’. In the final analysis, suggests Grewal, ‘gender in Sikhism is conceptualised as a balance between the norm of equality and the demands of a patriarchal family’.<sup>72</sup> ‘A thorough research’ grappling with the tension between the two remains a desideratum.<sup>73</sup> Responding to the methodological issues thrown up by this debate, Grewal finds himself in agreement with Mcleod and Oberoi over the ‘working’ principles of historical method. But he has reservations about their ‘application’ on several points, arising often from ‘a priori assumptions’, together with ‘selective’ use of sources. He underlines, therefore, that ‘methodology by itself does not ensure veracity or validity’.<sup>74</sup> At the same time, he agrees with them about the widened scope of history to legitimately include the study of religious movements. Grewal maintains that as a ‘motivating force’ religious ideology becomes relevant for the historian when ‘it finds expression in words and actions, and words and actions are the subject matter of history’. History would become poorer if it neglected ‘ideas, assumptions and sentiments or “mentalities”’.<sup>75</sup> Evidently, there is a broad similarity of concerns between historians and the ‘Sikh’ scholars.

At any rate, what Grewal seems to stand for is an open-minded approach to sources, not allowing theory, or ideology, or any other a priori assumption to cloud one's judgment. He prefers to analyse a source in totality before using it in any significant way. His general approach is characterized by rigorous application of historical method, combined with empathetic understanding and sympathetic ear for tradition not countered by reason. Understandably, the *Recent Debates* is dedicated 'to all those scholars who aspire to become liberal historians of the Sikh tradition'.

Concluding the discussion with reference to the essential similarity of the methodology used by the two groups, Grewal says: A good deal of importance is given to methodology both by the academia and the intelligentsia involved in the controversies. No one has denied the importance of empirical evidence, or the need of verification of generalizations. Therefore, the distinction between the 'critical historians' and 'a traditional historian' is a difference of degree but not of kind.<sup>76</sup>

It is necessary to recognize that there is no substitute for historical method for studying a young religious movement with a large corpus of sources left by the founder himself, his accredited successors and their followers as well as the dissenters, detractors and other contemporary observers. This realization could perhaps bridge the supposed divergence between the 'insiders' and 'outsiders', or 'believers and 'non-believers, or 'critical' and 'traditional' historians, or, for that matter, between 'Indian' and 'Western' academics. Grewal rightly emphasizes that, 'the historical method in itself is not culturally rooted'. It is 'Western simply because it was initially developed in the West'.<sup>77</sup> As J.D. Cunningham's 'classic' work shows one does not have to be a Sikh or an Indian, or even a professional scholar to produce an academically sound and widely acceptable study of Sikh history.

## **IN CONCLUSION**

The magisterial stock taking by Grewal shows that neither theory nor environment, nor can too much of scepticism or good will illumine the Sikh past. For a worthwhile study there seems to be no substitute

for a rational and sympathetic interpretation of the Sikh sources. Grewal's own work exemplifies the possibility of bridging the best in professional and 'Sikh' scholarship. As a whole, inputs from different social sciences and humanities have enriched the field of Sikh Studies and made it methodologically sophisticated and academically respectable so as to acquire autonomy of its own. It would be a pity if further growth of Sikh Studies as a branch of knowledge with historical discipline at its center is marred by the refusal to enter into genuine debate, or to take note of valid objections about content, interpretation and method.

Indifference on the part of some and keenness to demolish on the part of others might result in loss of momentum and credibility gained over the past half a century.

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40. Historical Writings, p. 498.
41. J.S. Grewal, *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies: An Assessment* (New Delhi: Manohar, 2011), (cited hereafter as Recent Debates), Preface.
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44. For detail, the reader may refer to Grewal's *Recent Debates and Historical Writings*.
45. *Recent Debates*, pp. 67-71.
46. *Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.
47. *Historical Writings*, p. 499.
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49. *Ibid.*, p. 82.
50. *Ibid.*, p. 83.
51. *Ibid.*, p. 111.
52. *Ibid.*, p. 113.
53. *Ibid.*, pp. 101,116.
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56. *Recent Debates*, pp. 97-98.
57. *Ibid.*, pp. 124-25.
58. *Ibid.*, p. 131.
59. *Ibid.*, p. 186.
60. *History, Literature and Identity: Four Centuries of Sikh Tradition*, p. 306.
61. *Historical Writings*, p. 503.
62. *Recent Debates*, pp. 197-98. These dimensions are: 'the hardness of the path, its demand for sacrifice, the conception of liberation, the idea of selfless service, active detachment born of social commitment, and the willingness to accept God's will and to act in accordance with it'.

63. Ibid., p. 203.
64. Ibid., pp. 213-14.
65. Ibid., p. 240.
66. *Historical Writings*, p. 504.
67. *Recent Debates*, p. 256.
68. Ibid., p. 261.
69. *Historical Writings*, p. 502.
70. *Recent Debates*, p.147. See also J.S. Grewal, 'Caste and the Sikh Social Order', in *The Sikhs*, pp.189-205.
71. After carefully considering McLeod's view that the *Prem Sumarag* is a later work presenting, 'the testimony of a Sanatan Sikh', Grewal comes to the opposite conclusion. See 'The *Prem Sumarag*: A Sant Khalsa Vision of the Sikh Panth', in *The Sikhs*, pp.158-85. It may be added that Grewal has revised his earlier understanding about the dating of the *Prem Sumarag*. Cf. W.H. McLeod, *The Prem Sumarag: The Testimony of a Sanatan Sikh* (New Delhi: OUP, 2006).
72. *Recent Debates*, p. 158.
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**SIKHS ACROSS THE SEAS**  
**– SIKH EMIGRATION ABROAD –**

**D.S. MANGAT\***

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This is the second and concluding part of the article: *Sikhs Across the Seas: Sikh Emigration Abroad* by D.S. Mangat. This first part published in October-December 2024 issue of *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* included account of the emigration of the Sikhs to china, African countries, Australia and United Kingdom. In this second part, the author deals with Sikh emigration to America, Latin America, Caribbean region, Brazil, North America, Canada and Italy.

– Editor

**INTRODUCTION TO THE COUNTRIES OF LATIN AMERICA**

Due to large scale immigration of people from various countries of origin, the central and South America, also known as Latin America, and the Caribbean, emerged as one of the most diverse regions in the world. Unlike the North American countries, viz., the US and Canada, these countries belong to the developing global South, mostly ranking between high and medium Human Development Index 2010. Like the North American countries, almost all the countries of Latin America had experienced a large influx of immigrants, mainly from Europe, during the last five centuries or so. People from various countries, initially in Europe and later in other continents too, belonging to different ethnic and racial communities migrated to these countries

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primarily because of the availability of vast area of land brought under cultivation by the colonial overlords. In the second half of the twentieth century, many countries of this region became source of migrants for the countries of the developed global North, with the US, Spain and Canada emerging as the most preferred destinations. In 2,000, 6 million migrants relocated to Latin America and the Caribbean region as a whole but more than 21 million emigrants from the same region moved to different parts of the world, including those who migrated to different countries in the region. Latin American countries like Mexico, Columbia, Cuba, El Salvador, Dominican Republic and Brazil and the Caribbean countries like Suriname, Guyana, Jamaica, Trinidad & Tobago have emerged as the important source countries of migrants in this region. Some Latin American countries like Argentina, Costa Rica and Venezuela can be called immigration countries because they accept larger proportion of immigrants in comparison to those who emigrated from these countries. In Costa Rica, Argentina and Venezuela stand for 7.5%, 4.2% and 4.2% respectively, of the total population are immigrants while 2.2%, 1.5% and 0.9% population of these countries, respectively, live abroad.

### **THE SIKHS IN LATIN AMERICA**

The Sikhs are explorers of positivity, be it in service of humanity, compassion, hard work, greener pastures and other positive values especially if they can make a difference with their labour. Unlike the colonisers they settled abroad not as invaders but as people in need. The Sikhs emigrated to Latin America through Chile or Peru and then through the land route into Argentina at the end of 19<sup>th</sup> or early 20<sup>th</sup> century. In most of the Latin American countries, the Sikhs are spread out in very small numbers. In Argentina there are around 300 Sikh families living now. In most countries the Sikh Dharma (3HO) Yogi Bhajan's followers played a very good role in promoting Sikh Dharma.

### **ARGENTINA**

In his book, "Sikhs in Latin America, Travels Among the Sikh Diaspora" is truly a very good book that covers the history of Sikh settlers in Argentina during the concluding years of nineteenth century. According to the author, lots of literature was available on the Sikh

diaspora in South East Asia, Australia, UK and North America but not much has been written about the early Sikh settlers in Latin America, Continental Western Europe and the Pacific Islands. It is surprising how the Punjabi Sikh villagers without possessing much education, chose to migrate to a continent farthest from Punjab and about which very little was known. The number of migrants to this land has been very small. With reference to Dr. Sujinder Singh, 'first Sikhs came to Argentina in 1885'. Their number always remained around 300. Most of the Sikhs of Argentina are married to the Argentinian spouses and they fluently speak Spanish. In early 1900s Sikhs found work in laying railway lines to connect Argentina to Bolivia. Some others found work in British sugar mills. According to the, "The Sikhs in other Latin American Countries", early Sikh settlers faced multiple challenges in settling in USA due to its Anti-Asian policy and, in Canada, because of its 'Canadian Whites only policy'. The Sikhs preferred Argentina, because it was relatively a prosperous country in early twentieth century. Panama was another preferred destination because of the construction of the Panama Canal and Mexico, due to its proximity to USA for an opportunity to slip into USA through its overland border.

In 1912, a major influx of the Sikh labourers arrived in Argentina which triggered an alarm among the Argentinian authorities. On May 2, 2016, Hindustan Times published an article by Khushwant Singh, "The Argentinian Komagata Maru Ought to be Revealed". In the article Mr. Singh mentioned that the British Diplomat, 'Raginald Tower wrote, 'On the subject of the immigration of Sikhs into the Argentinian Republic, I have the honour to report that the Director General of Immigration, Senor Manuel Cigarraga, addressed a letter on the 21<sup>st</sup> instant to each of the foreign shipping companies represented in this capital, urging them to refuse passages to any Asiatics to the Argentine Republic.' This kind of response from the host country's politicians (Argentinian) and Immigration Authorities was faced by Sikhs, along with Japanese and Chinese. These reactions resulted in new entry restrictions into Argentina. In 1930, the Indian Independence Movement officials visited the Argentinian Sikhs seeking support for the struggle of Indian Independence Movement.

In 1984, The President of India, Giani Zail Singh visited

Argentina and addressed the Argentinian Congress. He also met over 100 families from Punjab who had moved there during 1930s. In 2018 the Sikh religion was officially recognised in Argentina. Lots of Sikhs own ranches, transport companies, supermarkets and retail shops in Argentina. An Argentinian Sikh, Simmarpal Singh (popularly known as ‘Peanut Prince’) is a successful businessman known as the, ‘Peanut Prince of Argentina’. In 2012, his company, Olam International, posted a revenue of Singapore \$17 Billion. His company cultivate about 20,000 hectares of peanut and soya. The Sikh community has a Gurdwara situated in Rosario De La Frontera that serves the religious needs of the Sikhs. Some other Sikhs in Argentina are the followers of Yogi Bhajan’s 3HO (Also known as Sikh Dharma International or Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere) organisation. Among the Argentinian Sikhs to solicit their marriages from among the main-stream spouses. Simmarpal Singh is believed to have helped some more Sikhs from Punjab to relocate to Argentina.

### **BRAZIL**

The Sikhs first, arrived in Brazil in early 1900s and they settled in the southern part of the country, in the state of ‘Parana’. They went there to reach Argentina. According to ‘Naipaul and the Sikhs of Argentina’ “When groups of Sikhs did reach the shores of South America, it was not always Buenos Aires. Some had to travel further, overland through Chile or Brazil”. Mr. Swarn Singh Kahlon’s in-depth study in his book sheds light on the challenges, the new immigrants faced from their host communities in preserving their religious and cultural traditions. Number of Sikhs living in Brazil is around 300. It seems the Sikhs used Brazil to transit through it. May be the climate did not suit the Punjabis. British Consul in Sao Paulo wrote to London on September 17, 1924, “Indians came to Brazil but living conditions were not suitable so they got visas for Argentina but were refused entry to Argentina. So, eight of them wish to be repatriated to India”. Those eight persons were from district Jullundur and Kapurthala.

S. Ajit Singh, uncle of the famous martyr of India’s independence, S. Bhagat Singh spent more than 20 years in Brazil teaching in a university, during 1930s. Bhajan Yogi’s followers have established the Sikh Dharma centres. According to the ‘Tribune’ of February 4, 2018

mentioned 'Brazilian Sikhs visit Golden Temple, plead for gender equality'. The Sikh community of Brazil have established some Gurdwaras in Brazil. One of the largest Gurdwaras, Sri Guru Arjan Dev Gurdwara in Curitiba was established in 1980.

### **ECONOMY OF BRAZIL**

During the last five years the economy of Brazil has expanded multifold (\$222 billion in 2017 to \$341 billion in 2022). The major exports in recent past were Soybean and Crude Oil (Soyabeans-\$47.2 Bn, Petroleum-\$43.1 Bn, Iron ore-\$30.1Bn, Refined petroleum-\$12.9 Bn and Corn-\$12.1 Bn. It manufactures electrical machinery, paints, soaps, medicines, chemicals, aviation and automobiles.

### **SIKHS IN NORTH AMERICA, CANADA**

According to an article by Nikhil Misra-Bhambri of November 2022, on the subject, "The Sikhs in North America", "The person credited with being the first Sikh settler in Canada is Kesar Singh, a Risaldar Major in the British Army. Though illiterate, his dedication and courage led to his becoming a highly decorated officer serving as Queen Victoria's personal guard, chosen to represent his regiment at Queen Victoria's 1897 diamond jubilee celebration in London and Canada. Within a few years, the first group of Sikh pioneers arrived in Abbotsford (British Columbia) to work on farms and in the lumber industry, growing to approximately 1500 Sikhs by 1906'. In Abbotsford, The Sikhs built Canada's first Gurdwara in 1911, which is a Nationally Designated Historical site. The lumber was supplied by the local lumber mills where the pioneers were employed. In some cases, the pioneers manually carried the heavy lumber on their shoulders to the Sikh Temple site. Nikhil Misra further adds that, "This journey of Sikh migration to North America was not always easy. It is a demonstration of the resilient and indomitably positive spirit of the Sikh immigrants that traces its roots back to the beginning of the twentieth century."

### **SIKHS FACE RACIAL DISCRIMINATION FROM THE HOST COUNTRIES**

Unfortunately, the Sikh influx provoked an anti-Sikh sentiment among the local residents. A group named British Columbia Exclusionist called for an all-out immigration restriction in response

to growing number of Sikhs in B.C. In 1908, Canadian Ministers issued the 'Continuous Journey Order' which restricted immigrants who did not come to Canada on a continuous voyage from their home land. A History professor at the University of Minnesota, Erika Lee, wrote in her book, *The Making of Asian America*, "Since there was no steamship service between India and any Canadian port, the (ruling) effectively barred South Asians without exception." The law was racially motivated since Canada was accepting large number of immigrants from Europe. Gurdit Singh Sandhu, a Sikh businessman from Singapore challenged the racially motivated law by hiring a Japanese Ship (Komagata Maru) and sailed from Calcutta to Vancouver resulting in forcing the ship out of Canadian waters with its cargo of around 400 Sikhs and Muslims.

### **FROM FARMING AND LUMBER MILL WORKERS TO TRUCKERS**

According to Nikhil Misra-Bhambri, the nationwide demand for California-grown produce has fueled the growth of the trucking industry. Since the 1980s, Sikh immigrants have been increasingly taking over the industry as the older generation is retiring in Canada and the U.S. According to the Los Angeles Times article, 'Sikh drivers are transforming the U.S. truckers', the I-5, I-80 and I-10 freeways are now dotted with Indian-American owned businesses catering to truckers. Wherever the pioneers, with only 3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> grade education settled, finally opened the door for future Indian immigration. The author immigrated to Canada in 1974. At that time the discrimination against the Asians was at the top. Caucasian gangs would damage the houses of Indians with graffiti and throw rocks. The Caucasian businesses would not hire the South-Asians. That pushed the immigrants to be self employed doing all kind of Jobs. There were some jobs and businesses which the younger generation among the Canadians did not want to do, like driving, janitorial, construction labour and trades. The immigrants took those jobs and turned them into thriving businesses like driving cabs and owning them and buying the trucks. They got a job as janitor and within a year established their own Janitorial company, found a job as a construction labourer and within a short time became a residential contractor and so on. Some how our great Guru followed us like our shadow and encouraged us

towards positive progress, “Charhdi Kala”.

According to Nikhil Misra-Bhambri, ‘During the pandemic, the Sikh values of selfless service were particularly visible. Nikhil quotes one Sikh Saying, “As Sikhs we have learned from our own history. Our Gurus sacrificed their own life to help others, whether it was by giving money, food or time. Money is not the only way to donate.” In May 2016, the wildfires swept through Fort McMurray, Alberta. The Sikh truckers of B.C. loaded their trucks with food, clothing and other essential items for the victims of the disaster and distributed free of cost. The Premier of Alberta and other leaders applauded this effort in the assembly. Khalsa Aid reaching out to the victims of war or natural disasters with all kind of help in war-torn areas that are extremely dangerous situations.

In 2019, Canada’s prime minister, Mr. Justin Trudeau publicly commended the contributions of the Sikh community to Canada. He stated at Vancouver’s Khalsa Diwan Society, “The Sikh community is part of Canada’s history. They have helped build Canada for more than 120 years. They serve their communities every single day whether as innovative local business owners or politicians of every political stripe. It is clear that the Sikh community enriches and strengthens our country.” The Sikh population in Canada is around 772,000 about 2.12% of the Canadian population.

### **SIKHS IN AMERICA**

With reference to Mr. Nikhil Misra-Bhambri, as Canada tightened immigration requirements for Punjabis, most of them came to the U.S. Approximately 85% of the early Punjabi immigrants to the United States were Sikhs, and another 10-12% were Muslims. According to the Sikhpioneers.org, many of them worked on Northern California’s Western Pacific Railways and on modern interstate 80 which connects Oakland and Salt Lake City.

With reference to Dr. Kerin Leonard, an anthropologist who specialised in the study of ‘South Asian Americans, Making Ethnic Choices: Punjabi Mexican Americans’. Dr. Leonard states, “The primary reasons behind migration (from Punjab) were population pressure, subdivision of land and rural debt. The land fragmentation in Punjab

increased as mortality decreased and more sons survived to inherit equal shares of the patrimony; thus, the sons of cultivators took up military service or wage labour abroad.” That is why the Punjabi pioneers to North America were all males many of whom belonged to landowning castes or had served in the armed forces abroad. The early settlers established the first Sikh Gurdwara in the US, at Stockton California in 1912.

### **SIKHS FACE POGROM IN THE UNITED STATES**

On August 4, 2017, Mr. A. C. Thomson from ‘ProPublica’ wrote an article, “Sikhs in America: A History of Hate” expressing, “Demonised as immigrants. Mistaken for Muslims. For more than a century, Sikhs in the U.S. have faced suspicion and violence” According to him, “The 1907 episode in a seaside timber town in Washington came to be known as Bellingham Riots. Really, though, there were no riots. There was a pogrom. At the time, the U.S. was going through deep economic distress, a panic-filled recession that had begun the year before. Angry anti-immigrant sentiment was ascendant. And hundreds of Sikh men who had travelled from India to Bellingham to toil in the lumber mills paid the price. Some 500 white men, many of them members of the local Asiatic Exclusion League, descended on the Sikhs and other South Asians, routing them from the bunkhouses where they roomed and chasing them into the streets. Within hours, the Entire Sikh population of Bellingham had fled, frantically piling on to trains and boats in search of some sort of refuge. Many Had been physically battered.”

According to Dr. Kerin Leonard, “Legal constraints and social stereotypes based on race determined the conditions the Punjabis encountered.” Under the California Alien Act of 1913, aliens were rendered ineligible for citizenship and from owning agricultural land. In 1917 Immigration act banned all Asian immigrants. In the landmark case of 1923 between Bhagat Singh Thind V. United States, in which Mr. Singh, a naturalised American, claimed in the Supreme Court that as an Indo-Aryan, he was white as defined by the U. S. naturalisation law. According to Erica Lee’s book, ‘The Making of Asian America’ the Supreme Court responded, “The great body of our people recognises

the racial differences between whites and South-Asians, and instinctively reject that thought of assimilation of South Asians into White Americans.” Due to this decision of the Supreme Court Mr. Thind was denaturalised and compelled to sell his property in San Francisco.

### **PUNJABI-MEXICAN MARRIAGES**

Despite these constraints, Punjabis decided to stay and create a family life. Dr. Leonard states that their, “search for local brides was hampered by California’s laws that prohibited marriage between people of different races. Since Punjabis were generally classified as non-white, they were not given marriage licenses to marry white women in California.” At the same time Mexican families were fleeing the Mexican Revolution and had settled across the U. S. border. So, many Punjabi farmers married Mexican women who were picking cotton in their fields. This is how Mexican-Punjabi ethnicity was born. There were around 400 biethnic families living in California’s Central and Imperial Valleys and were also spread out in Nevada, New Mexico, Arizona, Utah and El Paso in Texas. Amelia Netarvala is one of the survivor of these biethnic clan whose father had come from Punjab in 1907 and settled in San Francisco. Her mother was a house-wife who raised the family while father worked in the fields. So, her upbringing reflected their exposure to Mexican way of life. According to Netarvala, Mexican-Punjabi families were raised as Catholics. She adds, ‘My father would tell my mother that it was better for them to raise their children as Christians rather than have no religion. During Guru Nanak’s birthday celebrations in fall, her father would take us to California’s Imperial Valley Gurdwara where we used to stay for few days. It used to be more cultural than religious.’

SIRDAR J. J. SINGH (1926-1959); ‘One Man Lobby’ helped Luce-Celler Act passed in 1946. The Act permitted a quota of 100 individuals each from both, Indians and the Philippines immigrate to the U.S. and become naturalised American Citizens. In March 1951, J.J. ‘Jagjit’ Singh became the first Indian to be profiled by The New Yorker magazine. The article, titled “One-Man Lobby” stated him as someone “who seeks to interpret India to, and to further Indian causes, in this country.”

### **DALIP SINGH SAUND – FIRST INDIAN AMERICAN IN THE U. S. CONGRESS.**

Dalip Singh Saund became the first Asian American to become a U. S. Congressman who served the 29<sup>th</sup> District of California from 1957-1963. Once elected Mr. Saund travelled throughout Asia seeking support for U. S. style of democracy. According to *The Making of Asian America*, he “used his own example of overcoming racial prejudice and achieving the American Dream to praise the power of change in Democracies. If Americans were prejudiced against Indians, how did I get elected by free vote of American people in most conservative California.” With the tireless efforts of the Indians like Didar Singh Bains, Preet Didbal (The first Sikh female mayor of Yuba City) and countless others the Sikhs are well established in all walks of American life. Presently, there are around 500,000 Sikhs residing in America.

### **SIKHS IN ITALY**

During the last fifty years many European countries have relaxed their policy regarding immigrants. The industrial economies have registered lower population growth, on the contrary, the LDC (Least Developed Countries) or the have registered higher fertility rate per female causing annual population growth rate to be 2.4% more than double the global average of 1.1%. Global rate of population growth is 1.1%. MENA region (Middle East and North Africa) shows the population growth rate at 1.56%, which is higher than the global average. Higher population growth results from high rates of migration, higher birth rate, higher life expectancy and lower infant mortality rate.

The European countries have shown population growth less than 1%. In order to have a status quo those countries require workers from other countries. It is lot cheaper to have immigration, because the migrants do not cost the host country any benefits from birth to adulthood. Plus, the host country can take what they require for their labour force. In last fifty years, quite a few countries started accepting and encouraging migration. Italy is one of them and Sikhs have progressed with the mainstream population. The Sikhs are credited

with saving the world-famous Italian cheese 'Parmesan Cheese' from extinction. According to a BBC documentary few years ago, presented a positive image of the Sikhs as trust worthy workers. There is video on "The Sikhs Immigrants Behind Italian Cheese" prepared by 'Journeyman Pictures' available to watch. Wherever the Sikhs settle they establish Gurdwaras which provides them multifold energy and persuasion to collective-wisdom, along with Langar which brings in a feeling of equality, free from caste and gender distinction, and above all a sense of responsibility to 'serve the humanity' selflessly, which was incorporated in the basic principles of Sikhism laid out by the Great Guru. Sikh population in Italy is more than 225,000 and established more than ten Gurdwaras. These Gurdwaras fulfil the religious, cultural, and the social needs of the Sikh congregation of Italy.

'Khalsa Aid' is performing that service all the world over in the most hostile situations without any, be it floods, earth quake, wildfires, war torn areas, pandemic situation. During the pandemic in New Delhi, they hand delivered food to the needy at their residence, Oxygen Langar, free Medical Aid langar, free performance of 'last rites' of the deceased. They did all this where all the other agencies had failed. Even the Government failed to deliver what it stands for.

### **SIKHS IN GREECE**

During the early 1970s, no 'work visas' were permitted in Australia, Italy, Greece, New Zealand and other,European countries. For the author, Greece is a personal experience. I arrived there in the winter of 1973, where, instead of finding employment on the ships I applied for Canadian Immigration at their Canadian High Commission in Athens and opted to work for "Karageorgis Shipping Company" of Greece, who helped me to extend my visiting visa for one year. By June 1974, I had my papers finalised, and I boarded a flight to Montreal. On that day my struggle for establishing in my adoptive country started. Canadian job market was tight, since they needed locally trained man power. Even if we move from one city to another, there are some challenges to overcome which take time. It was a novel experience. At that time, it used to take around two to four years for new arrivals, to settle comfortably in Canada. So finally found a job in a small town

in Northern British Columbia, where I spent twenty-nine years and retired in 2007. It was not I who decided my fate but, I consider it the Almighty who had chalked out my course in life. Every life experience is unique. We cannot universalise ones, own experiences since our Creator did not clone us. We act and react according to our own instincts.

Greece is home to more than 20,000 Sikhs who are employed in various fields like taxi drivers and the city bus drivers. There are few Gurdwaras that cater to religious, social and cultural needs of the Sikhs. The Sikh congregations celebrate the important religious Gurburabs and gather on special occasions. The children of these immigrants attend public schools and speak Greek as their mother tongue. The Sikhs win the hearts of the local people with their hard-working culture.

## **CONCLUSION**

There are lots of other countries which are home to Sikh immigrants in Europe like New Zealand, France, Germany, Hungary and so on. Out of the fifty-two, countries of Europe, only Luxembourg registers 1.58% annual population growth, higher than the global average of 1.1%. All other countries have population growth below 1% and some have registered decline in population growth. The list was based on the CIA World Factbook estimates for the year 2023. The list includes all members of the Council of Europe and Belarus. According to the Economics Department of Iowa State University report, the recent fertility rate in Canada is 1.4 (In 2022 it hit the lowest at 1.33 per female), which is very low because the subsistence level is 2.1 per female. It recommended that the Canadian Government should encourage immigration of high skilled or highly educated labour force.

**LEGENDARY PIONEERS**  
**– DR GANDA SINGH — LIFE AND WORKS –**

**DR TARUNDEEP SINGH\***

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Dr Ganda Singh is one of the brightest stars in the galaxy of luminaries who lit up the literary and cultural skies of Punjab in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century through their intellect, wisdom and industriousness.

Dr Ganda Singh was born in an old rustic town of Haryana in district Hoshiarpur. His father, Jawala Singh, was employed with the revenue department. Dr Ganda Singh obtained his basic education in the same town. The medium of instruction in those days was Persian. Hence Dr Ganda Singh had good command over the language since his very early days. He went to Govt. High School Hoshiarpur and then Forman College, Lahore for his higher education. However, he yearned for something more active and abandoned his studies and left to join the Indian army engaged in the third Afghanistan war and served in Peshawar, Rawalpindi, Basra, Makina etc. In 1921 he joined the royal army and was shot in the thigh during action at Basra. After recovery, he joined the Anglo Persian Oil Company and served in Iran for 9 years. Here he met Sir Arnold T. Wilson who was compiling the Bibliography of Persia. Finding Ganda Singh to be interested in history, Mr Wilson encouraged Ganda Singh to research on Indian history. Ganda Singh started building his own personal library. His first book 'My first thirty days in Mesopotamia' was published in Iran. This publication ignited in him a desire to work on something more meaningful and serious. Thereafter, he got a chance to visit England where he spent his time collecting sources related to Sikh history. On his return to India after serving at the Anglo Persian Oil Company, he brought back suitcases filled with books alone.

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In 1931, he was appointed research scholar at Department of Sikh History and Research at Khalsa college Amritsar. Now he began to pursue his work in a systematic and scientific manner. The first task he set his mind on was to build a library full of reference books and manuscripts. Soon he was also appointed faculty in the Department of religious studies, Military Science Department and History. In 1944 he completed his M.A. in history from Aligarh Muslim University. In 1950, he was appointed the Director of Archives and curator of museum at Patiala. During this time, he was also appointed the director of Department of Punjabi under PEPSU Government. Ganda Singh completed his Ph.D. in 1954 from Punjab University, Chandigarh and wrote his thesis on Ahmed Shah Durrani. In 1960, he took charge as the founder principal (honorary) of Khalsa College Patiala. He was honoured for his contributions to Punjabi Language and literature by Govt of Punjab and Rotary Club Patiala in 1963. In the same year, he took charge of the Punjab History Research Department at Punjabi University Patiala. Aligarh Muslim University conferred upon him D. Litt degree in 1964. In the same year he was honored by the Shiromani Gurudwara Prabandhak Committee. He founded the Punjab History Congress in 1965. Dr. Ganda Singh retired from Punjabi University in 1966 and was awarded lifetime fellowship of the university. He started a biannual journal '*Punjab Past and Present*' which soon came to be recognised internationally. In 1968, he was appointed honorary Principal of Gurmat College Patiala. Punjabi University Patiala conferred the Doctorate of Literature on Dr Ganda Singh in 1978 and in 1983 he was conferred the Padma Bhushan by Government of India. During his career, he was awarded a number of fellowships and chaired numerous sessions in many conferences. He passed away in 1987 after a brief illness.

His first major historical work is the life of 'Banda Singh Bahadur'. He used many original sources from the royal library of Jaipur and many persian texts to show that Banda Singh Bahadur was not against muslims but was fighting against the tyranny of the contemporary rulers who happened to be Muslims. In fact, he had about 5000 muslim soldiers in his own army. He was also able to show that Banda Singh never tried to declare himself a Guru and even on the establishment of his rule. He minted coins carrying the names of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. He did, however, gave the greeting of Fateh

Darshan which he stopped using when Banda Singh found that the sangat and the Khalsa army did not approve of it. His other major works include the history of annexation of Punjab and the first Anglo Sikh war. For these, he relied on the primary source of a book written in French by Colonel Mouton who was leading a mounted regiment in the battle. This was the first-hand account of the events from a non-Sikh participant in the war. Dr Ganda Singh came across this book while he was researching at libraries at Allahabad. He also published a book on 'Private Correspondence relating to Anglo Sikh wars' based on correspondence between the resident at the Lahore Darbar Mr Fredrick Curie and Lord Ellenborough, Hardinge, Dalhousie and Guff which threw sufficient light on the goings on between the British and the Khalsa Raj. These letters he discovered from the private collection of a Maratha person after being given clues by Jadu Nath Sarkar.

When asked about how long had he worked on his PhD thesis on Ahmed Shah Durrani, Dr Ganda Singh replied that it was the culmination of more than 20 years of work of collecting documents and organising them which finally culminated in the thesis. After reading his work on Ahmed Shah Durrani, Afghanistan's foreign minister Faiz Md. Khan Faizi wrote "I feel that the author has analysed and relied on primary sources and has used them scientifically to present the correct picture about Ahmed Shah Baba. Our nation shall forever be grateful to him for this work." Dr Ganda Singh depicts the nine attacks of Ahmed Shah upon the Indian subcontinent and his dealings with Iranians, Marathas and Sikhs in a critical manner and throws light on their war tactics. Ahmed Shah Durrani gave great respect to his soldiers and he himself was an expert at gun and cannon making. Dr. Ganda Singh feels that the Marathas lost to Afghans at Panipat as their artillery was not as good as that of the Afghans and the Marathas also lacked as many mounted regiments. But Ahmed Shah didn't achieve much success in his campaigns against the Sikhs. In fact, his attacks weakened the power of the Marathas and the Mughals, preparing ground for ascent of the Sikhs.

Dr Ganda Singh also wrote the life histories of Sham Singh Atariwala and Jassa Singh Alhuwalia. Sources of information regarding these two Sikh generals are scant and available with difficulty. Dr Ganda Singh relied upon sources in Marathi, Persian, Hindi, French

Urdu and Punjabi from different libraries. These books also serve as good sources of information on the war tactics followed by the Sikhs and the times when the Punjab region was governed by the Sikh misls. The writer raises doubts about dates mentioned in '*Twarikh-e-Riyasat Kapurthala*' by Ram Jas. Dr Ganda Singh praises Rattan Singh Bhangu's '*Pracheen Panth Prakash*' for presenting events in an authentic way. Dr Barun Dey, a famous modern historian, comments about Dr Ganda Singh "Dr Ganda Singh has become an institution in himself in history of Punjab. He will continue to be a source of inspiration for historians to follow".

The Tribune published an article written by Dr. Ganda Singh on 15<sup>th</sup> August, 1957 in the centenary year of the 1857 revolt in which he counters the allegation that the 'revolt' was not successful because of the non-co-operation of Sikhs in Punjab. Dr. Ganda Singh believes that there was no concept of 'Indian nationalism' at the time of the revolt in 1857. This concept emerged about three decades later as visualized by the Indian national congress. The author says that the revolt was limited to Meerut, Delhi, Kanpur and contiguous areas and Bengal. There was neither any co-ordination between different agencies engaged in the revolt, nor a central leadership or a plan. This was more of a spontaneous rebellion incited by a feeling of sacrilege to religious sentiments of Indian soldiers by the use of animal fat laced bullet which enlarged to involve struggle for control over individual fiefdoms. In the later part there were some attempts at co ordination and to project Bahadurshah the second as the king. However, he himself was in negotiations with the British to give up the crown if he was offered pension and other guarantees. No effort was made to talk to the Sikhs in Punjab. Earlier, the Awadhis and Bengalis had sided with the British against the Sikhs to help annexation of Punjab. Hence there was no question of Sikhs siding with the same soldiers who had fought against them only a few years earlier. Acharya Kriplani seemed to echo Dr. Ganda Singh's views while inaugurating the history conference at Bhopal in 1968 where he said that it would be a mistake to say that the 1857 revolt was a part of the Indian independence movement. It was merely an attempt by few small rulers to uphold their hold and primacy. Similarly, Dr. Ramesh C. Majumdar, in first volume of his book '*History of the freedom movement of India*' writes that it is essential that this belief be dispelled that 1857 revolt was the

first national attempt for independence. It was neither national, nor first and nor for independence.

The revolt failed not because the Sikhs didn't support it but because there was no feeling of nationalism, no identified leader and no plan. It was more of a religious revolt by Muslim and Hindu soldiers against British officers. And though the main target were the officers and other Christians, even the Hindus and Muslims were not united. Dr. Surender Nath Sen writes that the British felt that the Hindus as a class were friends of the British whereas the Muslims were enemies, hence Hindus should be forgiven. Hence, after suppression of the revolt, Muslims in Delhi had to pay 25% of their assets as fine whereas Hindus had to part with only 10%. Dr Ganda Singh, through this publication in the Tribune, threw light on the true character of the so called '1857 revolt of independence' and successfully defended the stand taken by the Sikhs.

Dr Ganda Singh also worked extensively on the martyrs of Sikhs and dispels many falsehoods being spread about them especially regarding the martyrdom of Guru Arjan and Guru Tegh Bahadur. He cites the autobiography of Jahangir, '*Tuzak-E-Jahangiri*' where Jahangir writes that "I have come to know of Arjan, who lives like a peer in Goindwal on the banks of river Beas. He has many Hindu and Muslim followers who call him Guru Ji and come from different places to pay homage to him. This has been going on for 3-4 generations and I have often thought of putting an end to this or convert Arjan to Islam. Finally, I got the chance. When Khusro passed through, he met with Arjan who anointed his forehead with a tilak and blessed him. When I got to know of this, I ordered that his assets be seized and he be tortured to death". Here, from personal account of Jahangir, there is no mention of Chandu or his role in martyrdom of Guru Arjan as is popularly believed. Another version mentioned in '*Dabistaan-E-Majabib*' is that on learning that Guru Arjan had helped Khusro, Jahangir imposed a heavy fine on Guru ji and he was imprisoned due to the nonpayment of the fine and died in prison while enduring torture. However, Dr Ganda Singh writes that there is no mention of such a fine in Jahangir's own autobiography and hence this story is very likely a figment of imagination. Dr Ganda Singh also mentions that Jahangir

pursued Khusro and both crossed Beas at the same spot. However, at the time of pursuit Jahangir didn't know that there was any help from Guru Arjan to Khusro. How is it that a month later, these charges were brought against Guru Arjan. Dr Ganda Singh believes that this version of helping Khusro may also be the work of Muslim clergy at the royal court who held enmity towards Guru Arjan because of his influence amongst the masses. Another version mentioned by Macaulif and Bhai Santokh Singh in 'Gur Partap Suraj Granth' is that Guru Arjan endured torture for five days after which he was threatened that he would be sewn alive in cow hide. At this Guru Arjan expressed desire to have a bath in Ravi and he passed away while in waters. Dr. Ganda Singh believes that after torturing Guru Arjan by making him sit on hot plates and pouring heated sand over him, his body was covered with blisters and dipping him in cold waters of Ravi was just another step in torture. However, Guru Arjan never emerged from Ravi after he was dipped in it. This view is also supported by Bhai Rattan Singh Bhangoo (*Pracheen Panth Prakash*) and Sohan Lal Suri (*Umdat-Ut-Twareekh*). Kesar Singh Chibber (*Bansawaliname*). Bhai Gurdas in his *Vaars* also mention that the Mughals drowned Guru Arjan in Ravi. Hence Dr. Ganda Singh, with reference to multiple sources brings out the actual events leading to Guru Arjan's martyrdom which was the result of Jahangir's policies towards the non-Muslims.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred on 11 November 1675 on the orders of Aurangzeb. Munshi Gulam Husain Khan, in his work '*Sear-Ul-Mutakhareen*' mentions that there were two main charges against Guru Tegh Bahadur. First that he was in alliance with Hafiz Aadam (follower of Sheikh Ahmed Sarhandi) and both were forcibly collecting money from the masses. Secondly, his influence was increasing day by day and it was possible that he may soon adopt a rebellious policy towards the crown. After receiving such information from his spies, Aurangzeb ordered that Hafiz Aadam be arrested and exiled to Afghanistan and Guru Tegh Bahadur be arrested and jailed. William Irvine in his book 'Later Mughals' writes that Aurangzeb was upset that Sikhs called Guru ji as '*Sacha Patshah*'. He could not tolerate someone else, especially a non-Muslim getting such respect. Cunningham in his book '*A History of the Sikhs*' also feels the same.

However, Dr Ganda Singh could find no reference of happenings

as mentioned by Gulam Husain Khan in any of the official or other documents. Dr Ganda Singh also showed that the time of exile of Hafiz Aadam to Afghanistan happened about 21 years earlier than the ascendancy of Guru Tegh Bahadur as Guru and hence such events as mentioned by Ghulam Husain Khan were not possible. The sevadars accompanying Guru Tegh Bahadur were mostly unarmed. The writer of *'Dabistaan-E-Majahib'* mentions that the companions of Guru Tegh Bahadur roamed about like fakeers and it is difficult to imagine that fakeers would forcibly ask for donations. It is true that Sikhs came from far and wide and bought offerings for the guru and these were used for the service of the congregation and for works of public good like getting roads made and getting wells dug and repaired.

It is true that Sikhs addressed Guru Tegh Bahadur as 'Sacha Patshah'. But such practice was not new. Sikhs had been addressing their Gurus as "Sacha Patshah" for the last hundred years and this is unlikely to be the cause of martyrdom. Hence these seem unlikely cause of the martyrdom. Aurangzeb was a religious fanatic and was forcibly converting his subjects to Islam. He also was razing to ground the religious places and schools of non Muslims. Encouraged by such policies, the local governors were also indulging in similar actions of forcible conversions. A delegation of Brahmins from Kashmir, under the leadership of Pandit Kirpa Ram came to Guru ji on 25<sup>th</sup> May 1675 and requested for assistance and guidance. Guru ji raised his voice against the forcible conversions and for the right of individuals to follow their own religion. This became the reason for him being summoned to Delhi and then being martyred after torture and after witnessing his companions being tortured and martyred.

Hence Dr Ganda Singh did a yeomans' service to clear the misconceptions created by vested interests around the events and causes of martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev and Guru Tegh Bahadur.

While presiding over sessions in various history conferences, Dr Ganda Singh impressed upon younger historians to base their work on primary sources. He believed that since most of the literature about medieval India was in regional languages or French, Persian and Urdu, he encouraged historians to be polyglots and also travel to different places and libraries in search of primary and authentic sources of

information. He believed that libraries in Iran, England, Tashkent and Russia could be important sources of historical material. He also stressed travelling to different parts of the country and digging out primary sources. He mentioned that he had found handwritten manuscripts in Patna Bihar bearing the real signatures of Mughal emperors. He also stressed using the sources in a scientific manner and rued that the art and science of history writing in India was underdeveloped. He believed that since eastern oriental religions believed in rebirth and considered the human body and form to be transitory, eastern populations had not recorded history well as history is a record of what is done in human form. The history writing traditions came to India with the Mughals but their focus was more on recording the life and events associated with the ruling class. The conditions and events associated with the commoners were largely ignored. This art and science of history writing further developed with the coming of the British who had a habit of keeping detailed daily notes. This provided authentic records of day-to-day events in common life. He believed that it is these records of ordinary lives that contribute to the continuity of history and provide important details and effects of events of importance which may otherwise be lost.

Dr Ganda Singh built an enormously resourceful library at Khalsa College Amritsar, served as director of archives and museum curator at Patiala and finally his invaluable personal library was converted into the university library at Punjabi University Patiala. He has collected adequate material for many historians to work on and bring to light true facts regarding historical events of importance. His works have inspired an entire generation of historians and many research papers and thesis have been published based on his works. Dr Ganda Singh stands very tall amongst intellectuals in the 20<sup>th</sup> century Punjab and north India and shall continue to inspire many young budding historians.

Brief list of publications by written/edited/compiled by Dr Ganda Singh:

- 1) *Inqshafi Haqiqat*: Sikh Tract Society, Lahore;1926: in this tract Dr Ganda Singh befittingly rebuts the charges made by Swami Dayanand against the Sikh Gurus
- 2) *Banda Singh Bahadur*: Khalsa College Amritsar;1935

- 3) *Maharaja Rajit Singh: Shatabadi Granth*; Khalsa College Amritsar; 1939
- 4) *Jungnama Qazi Noor Muhammad: Sikh History Research Department, Khalsa College Amritsar; 1939*
- 5) *Maharaja Kaura Mal Bahadur*; Khalsa College Amritsar 1941
- 6) *Sikh Itihas de Samkaali Srot*; Khalsa College Amritsar; 1938
- 7) *Gurudwara Shabeed Ganj, Lahore da Itihas*: Self-published; 1935
- 8) *Kukeyan/Namdhariyan da Itihas*: Self Published; 1942
- 9) *Sikh Itihas Val*; Punj Dareya Prakashan, Lahore;1946
- 10) *Punjab Diyan Vaaran*: Self-published; 1946
- 11) *Sardar Sham Singh Atarivala*; 1949
- 12) *Sikhan da SankhepItihas* (Bhag Pehla); Orient Longmans and Co; 1950
- 13) *Mukhatsar Nanakshahi Jantri*: Sikh History Society;1949
- 14) *Patiala atey PEPSU diyan Riyasatan*: Archives Department;1950
- 15) *Punjab (1839-40) 'Punjab Akhbbar' Vichon*: Sikh History Society;1952
- 16) *Punjab Utey Angrezan da Kabza*: Punjabi Sahit Academy, Ludhiana;1955
- 17) *Afghanistan vich ik mahina*: Sikh History Society;1954
- 18) *Private correspondence regarding Anglo-Sikh Wars*: Sikh History Society;1955
- 19) *Abmed Shah Durrani*: Asia Publishing House, Bombay; 1959
- 20) *Punjab 1849-1960 (Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth)*: Punjabi Sahit Academy; 1962
- 21) *Bhai Jodh Singh Abhinandan Granth* (Bhag Dooja): Punjabi Sahit Academy; 1962
- 22) *Bhagat Lakhsman Singh*: Sikh Cultural Centre, Calcutta;1965
- 23) *Banda Singh Bahadur*: SGPC Amritsar;1965
- 24) *Guru Gobind Singh Ji de jyoti jyot samaun di vaarta*: Guru Nanak Foundation, Faridkot;1972

Apart from these, there is a long list of his other writings, lectures and research papers through which we get a glimpse of his brilliant scholarship, farsightedness and expansive vision and his enormous contribution to the history, culture and literature of Punjab.

## SANT SINGH SEKHON'S READING OF GURBANI

TEJWANT SINGH GILL\*

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In the aftermath of independence, a new approach for studying life in general and literature in particular got prominent in Punjabi. To be more specific, it developed in the mid-fifties and held unquestioned sway for more than a decade. Rather than vanish away after that, it has flourished with requisite change in perspective. Instead of favoring the residual or dominant ideology, it voiced an emergent view of the past, present and future. Thus, this new approach was ideological with a difference. Holding Marxism as the life philosophy of the time, it employed the categories of Dialectical and Historical Materialism to judge every aspect and facet of history and society. Their categories i.e. thesis, antithesis, synthesis, class-conflict, class-character, exchange-value, use-value etc. were employed for analyzing and evaluating the merit of a literary work and history of literature.

For this new approach, a literary work merited appreciation and advocacy to the extent to which it enriched and replenished the progressive trend or movement. The progressive movement had its origin in the mid-thirties as bulwark against Fascism and Nazism. This new approach had continued from the earlier times. If not in the ancient times, its evidences were definitely, rather prominently, there in the medieval times. If as a movement, it was manifest, as a trend it was latent and to co-ordinate the two was the job that this new approach had taken upon itself.

This new approach regarded the examination of literary trends a matter not only of crucial but also of partisan importance. The more this trend was capable of hearkening to the historical and materialist

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view of life, the more deserving of appreciation it got in the history of literature. Its past significance acquired present meaning for, at subsequent junctures it could generate the impulse to reckon with inertia, backwardness and dark forces impeding the replenishment of life in the progressive direction. Progressiveness in this way does not denote uplift only in the economic and political sense. In the historical sense also, it connotes the capability to resolve problems and crises of life on the basis of human initiative and will.

In Punjabi literature, it was *Gurbani* that had forwarded these insights with lot of emotional, intellectual and spiritual surplus. A feeling of over-determination was in store for the new approach from this encounter with compositions figuring in *Guru Granth Sahib*, the sacred scripture of the Sikhs. In this regard, it marked a revolutionary departure from the earlier two approaches oriental and orientalist respectively. Brought into vogue by the tradition-bound scholars of the *Udasi* and the *Nirmala* sects, the oriental approach had found *Gurbani* a revealed text (*dhur ki bani*). This approach did not posit any qualitative difference between its listening, recitation and reading. The whole purpose was to embed its revelation in the mind of the person who listened to its recitation, or recited it or read it with his own effort. As a result, hagiography was both the acme and essence of this approach. This hagiographic exercise explained the dictionary meanings of the words with focus only upon their etymology.

Now the semantic range of words cannot be confined to their etymology. Along with their definite meanings, they have themes with horizons of suggestions. Then, they have intonations verging upon the actualities of life. Explication drawing upon meanings forwarded by the hagiographic exercise cannot do justice to the 'semantic range that has varied with varying nuances. Illustrations to the effect can easily be found in the explications provided by Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha and Prof. Sahib Singh. In his book, *Gurmat Martand*<sup>1</sup>, the former has explicated the following lines of Guru Nanak:

*Khurasan Thou hast taken under your wings  
And put Hindustan to fright.  
Thou dost not take blame upon Thy self,  
But hast sent the Mughal as the agent of death.*

*When the people groaned under the scourge,  
Didst Thou not feel pained?*<sup>2</sup>

While explicating them, Bhai Kahn Singh subjects himself to such impediments, inhibitions and digressions as do not let him reckon with the agony that Guru Nanak might have experienced at the enormity of the sight visited upon the people through that brutal invasion. After providing geographical information about Khurasan, he glosses over the Punjabi term so as to cover it under the wing of his theistic point of view. This gloss ignores the complicity that for Guru Nanak, the Almighty seemed to have shown in the launching of this scourge upon India via Punjab for no fault of the inhabitants.

Bhai Kahn Singh's explication of these utterances brings this inadequacy all the more to the forefront. According to the explicator, the onus for launching the invasion did not lie either with Almighty, the dispenser or with Babur, the invader. It lay with the people. The quantum of their sins had grown so much in magnitude that the Almighty, for scourge, had to dispatch the invader. This was the design that the Almighty had devised for bringing them round to the path ordained for living in accordance with His Will. Howsoever sanctimonious this explication might have sounded, it did not do justice to *Gurbani* by miserably failing to show how the composition overflowed with compassion for the people. The common sense of the people owed Bhai Kahn Singh a great gratitude for the voluminous work, he completed with formal persistence and arduous diligence. However, perceived from the good sense with which Guru Nanak's mind overflowed, explication provided to the above hymn was woefully flawed. In this regard, the following lines from *Japuji* come to mind:

*Thought cannot encompass, a hundred thousand  
Times ventured,  
Silence cannot bring about peace,  
Even in uninterrupted communion.  
Hunger cannot be overcome by fasting,  
Even if all the senses are restrained!  
A hundred thousand kinds of wisdom be,  
Not one will avail.*

*How to attain to the Truth,  
And rend falsehood's veil?  
One has to abide by Will and Ordinance,  
Written by Nanak to carry with one's own self!*

The etymology of the word *soch* in Punjabi impels the explicator to regard it as such i. e. piety and from the utterance, he draws the meaning that it is impossible to maintain it. If this is what it implies then the next line holding introspection as an unattainable ideal loses its contextual importance. Likewise, the analogy of abiding by the Will of the Almighty with obedience extended further, renders it mundane in the essential sense. The sublimity that the Guru seeks to impart gets inconsequential.

The orientalist approach also suffers from very serious flaws. It owed its beginning to Ernest Trumpp<sup>3</sup> (1828-1885), the famous German philologist and orientalist of the nineteenth century. None excelled him in forwarding an orientalist critique of Gurbani. Not to talk of excelling him, none after him dared follow the norms of this approach in his/her study of this magnum opus. By the time, Trumpp launched himself upon this study, philology had grown into a rigorous discipline. The achievement it registered in the nineteenth century was linguistic-cum-grammatical in nature. Trained in this rigorous discipline, Trumpp regarded principles of this approach as universal and faultless. His intellect registered them in the order that was formidable and flawed at the same time. First, he held that a language could claim superiority over other languages to the extent to which it was pristine in origin and growth. Second, its being pristine depended upon its being ancient. Third, decline was essential for it to undergo with the passage of time. Fourth, decline showed itself through declension that was phonetic to begin with and then got grammatical and lexical. Fifth, this decline tended to be over-all from which no escape was possible.

In the Indian context, these principles had several implications. Since Sanskrit was an ancient language so it was accepted pure and pristine. The inadequacies, which, with his deep erudition, a scholar like D D Kosambi<sup>4</sup> could discover were invisible to the orientalist mind. For Kosambi, Sanskrit was passive and inert because of the

acute lack of verb-formations. For Trumpp, such inadequacies were not worth any consideration. The subsequent languages, coming in chronological order, were inferior in comparison. With the exception of Sindhi, such was the view he formed about languages flourishing in his times in the Indian sub-continent. As a result, the observation of the sort that, Kabir had propounded about the dynamism of living language as against the inertness of its ancient counterpart, seemed to him to go against the very grain of truth.

No wonder, *Guru Granth Sahib* seemed to him shallow of content. He came up with two reasons to support his contention. One, he contended, was that all categories and concepts which figured in this magnum opus were not intrinsically its own. They were drawn from diverse systems of the past. This excessive reliance upon the past tended to deprive it of the originality of content. Second, he found those concepts and categories extremely repetitive and monotonous. In fact, two important factors were there which led him to form these sweeping views. Imbued with the Biblical spirit as he was, he could relate himself only to motifs of the narrative sort. In this magnum opus, the motifs are poetic which work out their nuances through reiteration, interplay and intra-discourse. In the course of this interplay, they also get transfigured and acquire meanings invisible in the ancient writings. Whether the motif employed is of the sacred thread worn around by a Hindu or the ascetic practice resorted to by a Buddhist or the esoteric activity of a Yogi, it invariably reflects a new semantic horizon.

Nevertheless, the language of this magnum opus seemed of great interest to him. Since it was of archeological rather than genealogical interest, he could not perceive what in it there was of past significance, present meaning and perhaps of future value. Per his archeological interest, Trumpp found this language "*a real treasury of the old Hindui dialects, specimens of which have been preserved therein which are not to be found anywhere else.*" (*Adi Granth*, p.cxxii).

Apparently different, both the approaches were similar. They went after traditional meanings as grammatical categories suggested. As a result, what Guru Nanak suggested a new by employing varying

categories of discourse stayed away from their conspectus. So a different method, a new approach comprising categories capable of grasping discourse, its ironical vein and its other nuances, was required. Though not as comprehensive as the traditional, rather fragmentary and hypothetical in certain ways, its urgency could not be set aside.

(A)

The new approach striving to get across all the inadequacies, still not profound to the enviable extent, came into being with Sant Singh Sekhon<sup>5</sup>(1908-1997). He was a poet, novelist, story-writer, playwright and translator from Punjabi into English and vice versa. The only significant history of the Punjabi language was also penned by him. The most ambitious was *The History of Punjabi Literature*, he had taken upon himself to write in six volumes. However, death intervened and he could bring out only the first two volumes, dealing with *Gurbani* and the *Kissa* and *Sufi* literature respectively. So far critical theory and literary criticism went, to all intents, he was their founder in Punjabi.

His Marxist orientation had impelled him to form this project with socio-historical view in mind. It was in the mid- thirties that he came under the influence of Marxism. He adopted it as the philosophy of the age. To make the point explicit, in his autobiography finally to appear as *Meri Swajeevni*, he observed that compared to Marxism, other philosophies, in which he included Existentialism and Structuralism, were like islands in the ocean. Karl Marx<sup>6</sup>, F Engels<sup>7</sup> and Lenin<sup>8</sup>were the acknowledged authorities whom he studied with diligence. Plekhanov<sup>9</sup>, Ralph Fox<sup>10</sup>and Christopher Caudwell<sup>11</sup> were the other thinkers, whose writings upon literature, its theory, ideology, form and style, appealed to him. In the sixties, he was influenced a lot by Georg Lukacs<sup>12</sup> who had reflected extensively on all the literary forms and styles. His writings which he influenced Sekhon the most were neither the early nor the last ones. They were of his middle period, which dealt with realism, modernism, tradition, reflection, the epical and the allegorical forms etc. Late in the seventies, he did a scattered reading of Antonio Gramsci<sup>13</sup> and Walter Benjamin<sup>14</sup>. However that was too meager and belated to cause any basic change in his erudition and perception. Since he was prodigiously creative so resilience became

an integral component of his critical writing.

As against hagiographic explication and grammatical-cum-linguistic censure of the native and foreign scholars, Sekhon named his method of study as new and renewed elaboration (*nirvachin*)<sup>15</sup>. This term, coined by him on his own, signified a method of study proceeding under the ambience of the philosophy of the age. Elaborating his point further, he observed that study to be conducted in tune with this method was not only desirable but essential as well. Mythological and historical events could reflect present meaning only if past significance was decoded in them. Besides and beyond this, they did not have any relevance. What Sekhon did not reiterate is that the inadequacy marking the philosophy of the age should also be explored. More than comparative, it is the contrapuntal technique that deserves to be on the finger-tips of the literary critic.

Thus equipped, Sekhon launched his study of *Guru Granth Sahib*. However, it was a selective study that he strove to do both in English and Punjabi. He wrote six detailed papers on Guru Nanak. Four of them, dealing with the essential nature, metrical arrangement, imagery and aesthetic quality of Guru Nanak's writings, are included in his book *Punjabi Kav Shiromini* (Poetry of Excellence in Punjabi)<sup>16</sup>. The other two dealing with his language cum style and his contribution to Punjabi language and literature appeared separately in journals<sup>17</sup>. In the book mentioned earlier, there is a detailed paper each on the third and the fourth Guru. Two papers are on the fifth Guru as well, one on the general direction of his writing and the other on the metrical order he observed. All these papers have such valuable insights as, elaborated and developed, are likely to enrich this approach so as to enable it not only to reckon with the earlier two approaches but also to surpass them. They are capable of forwarding fuller and richer awareness of *Gurbani*. That way, not only its past significance but also the present meaning along with future value of *Gurbani*, can be grasped with deeper sense and sensibility.

For Sekhon *Gurbani* was the distilled wisdom and communication of the Sikh Gurus. According to him, they were exceptionally gifted human beings. Through their mystical vision and intuitive experience,

they realized the true nature and identity of the universal power without any claptrap of supernatural phenomena. They communicated their perception about the universal power and its creation of species including human beings. Sekhon finds his geneological affiliation with the Sikh Gurus very creditable. Writing about Guru Nanak, Sekhon, in his autobiography<sup>18</sup>, calls him both his Guru and his forefather. Guru Nanak was a man of deep and vast experience. This does not mean that incredible events had not happened to him. Rather, he had the aptitude, potential and courage to reckon with anything happening in the life around. So much so that the invasion Babur launched upon India pained him a lot. He looked at it both from within and without, experienced all the outrages happened as if on his own skin and implicated even the Almighty in the death and destruction caused on a stupendous scale. In Sekhon's view, all the Gurus had this sense of experience though the first one excelled them all not only in plentitude but in depth as well.

Along with this sense of vast and deep experience, the Gurus were endowed with profound understanding of life. Here again, the first, Guru Nanak<sup>19</sup> comes in for eloquent admiration. Sekhon feels no hesitation in accepting that the Guru was a mystic by nature. At the same time, he underlines the fact that his mysticism was of the intellectual sort. It equipped him with the rare aptitude to feel the Divine engrossed in worldly dispensation. Though a theist, he was not averse to knowledge. For him, the horizon of the Divine extended beyond what intellect and knowledge could grasp. This meant that horizon of the Divine shifted with extension of intellect and knowledge. For the Guru, space and the beyond were symbiotically related. Also the mode for spiritual fulfillment did not rest with such individual austerities as fasting, personal chastisement, penance and pilgrimage, etc. For him, it lay in solidarity with the downtrodden, the insulted and the humiliated who, in the course of history, had ever missed the grasp of human knowledge and imagination. This aspect of the Guru charmed Sekhon a lot. So much so, the modern poets, whom democracy, socialism, universal education and social amelioration have swayed, pale into insignificance in his eyes before

the Guru's alignment with the people and the Almighty. To put it in his words:

*If there is mysticism in Guru Nanak, it is of a very unconventional variety. He does not claim to have realized the Divine in any ultra-rational, mystical way. The Divine is a mystery to him and he in short tries to pierce through to it with the help of his intellect till he seems to have reached its nearest approaches. There, he finds himself baffled and falls back on the Divine in himself, the Divine in the human. Ultimately, it turns out to be his universal sympathy, and all-pervading feeling of goodwill towards the world, which he realizes as his God.*<sup>21-A</sup>

According to Sekhon, the starting point for the Guru to realize the world and the Beyond was the Upanishadic notion of *Om*. Whereas this ancient term for the Universal Soul stood for All, the Guru awarded prominence to Unity i. e. the attribute which he might have taken from the Semitic ethos, particularly (as articulated in Islam). The human being could realize the Divine without animus and, fear. The Guru forwarded this fearlessness as an antidote against the helplessness that the people must have felt in the wake of invasions incessantly launched by the Mongols and the Mughals. This fearlessness was meant to restore human dignity to the people who, as helpless beings, had lost all hope of it. In the Guru's view, the most veritable way to regain it was by taking it as the Will of the Absolute and by submitting to it to the ultimate extent. This seems to raise to infinite degree the feudal principle of command as the earlier one had reiterated that of human dignity and identity. For Sekhon, this involved a manifold paradox: "In his assertion of the Universal's absolute denial of attributes, Guru Nanak seems to advance a multiple paradox: *"while in his assertion of the absolute to the middle class as known in the West, in his deification of command he seems to take the opposite line."*<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless, he is quick to assert, *"In fact, this is one aspect of the remarkable dialectic of Guru Nanak's philosophy."*<sup>21</sup> Lest his critique may give the impression of being negative, he concludes, *"Turning to the functions of creation, preservation and destruction, as functions of the Universal known to man everywhere, Guru Nanak registers a significant advance on the cotemporary thought in both the East and the West by rejecting all theories and hypotheses."*<sup>22</sup>

In no other Guru, whose compositions figure in the magnum opus, did Sekhon find as much originality of thought and feeling as in Guru Nanak. Since the second Guru<sup>23</sup> was very meagerly inclined towards this task, so quite justifiably, he ignores this aspect of his career. The third Guru<sup>24</sup> was very prodigious so he took due notice of his compositions. Not much emphasis is put upon his thought that strove to elaborate the philosophical concerns of the first Guru. If something of his own was there, it consisted of spiritual notions and metaphysical views of the traditional sort. His real contribution lay in enhancing the Punjabi character of the poetic medium. Without any ambiguity whatsoever, Sekhon was all praise for this aspect of his achievement. Likewise, he praised the compositions of the fourth Guru<sup>25</sup> who, by employing male-female syndrome imbued with musical sweetness, embedded the first Guru's philosophic concerns deep in the hearts of the Sikh community expanding fast both in the urban and the rural areas. While dealing with Guru Arjan Dev<sup>26</sup>, the fifth in succession and the compiler of the magnum opus, Sekhon employed full ingenuity and resilience to grasp his great contribution. To put it in his words:

The philosophical content of Guru Arjan's writings is largely the same as that of the Upanishads...this world is an illusion, that the proper thing for man is to recognize the Universal Spirit and not get absorbed in and diverted by the illusion. But how can and should man come into this finite world, conduct himself is a big question. Though the Upanishads have not answered this question, his was a clear answer: Man comes into this world under the Will of the Universal Spirit and has to live in this finite world according to that Will.<sup>27</sup>

Taken in the actual context as over-determined by lineages of the present and the past, the message of the Guru gave great sustenance to the people. It sought to deliver them from idol-worship, caste-system, feudal structure, callous rule and its oppressive and suppressive nature. The sense of righteousness it professed was not in the abstract at all; in no uncertain terms, it strove to show the great danger lurking over the mighty ones, their scepter and crown, power and pelf. This signaled a cultural revolution for which the Guru had to pay with his

own life. As Sekhon candidly puts it, "*The pleasures of power and pelf are coveted even by the poorest. And perhaps the poor needed the assurance that the rich and the mighty are not the permanent lords of this world and its comforts.*"<sup>28</sup>

(B)

Keeping the past significance and present meaning of *Gurbani*, particularly of Guru Nanak in view, Sekhon has also sought to unravel its crucial aspects and problematic facets. In the first article, meant to bring out the quintessence of the Guru Nanak's *Bani*, Sekhon contends that its prime concern lay with the metaphysical reality. Guru Nanak's effort was to grasp it through the mystical mode. However, his mysticism was not of the intuitive and subjective sort. It was intellectual and objective that impelled him to reckon with the immanent, social, political and existential reality. In the chapter written on his criticism that is unpublished yet, Sekhon finds the Guru's reaction to the political upheaval of his time as very realistic and poignant. More than that, he finds historical parallel between Babur's invasion and the establishment of Mughal rule and the British rule in India. He contends "*The oppression and outrage to which the common people of India were subjected are very forcefully expressed. Guru Nanak attributes it to the inscrutable will of God. Nevertheless, his viewpoint is not altogether metaphysical as were the reactions of Indian thinkers at that time. There is a rational element in this description which takes note of the material conditions.*"<sup>29</sup>

Then, Sekhon provides a break-up according to the genres employed by Guru Nanak. At the very outset, he makes it absolutely clear that whatever writing of the Guru is to be found in the magnum opus is fully authentic. All the other compositions attributed to him in apocryphal volumes are inauthentic. The compositions, in authentic terms of Guru Nanak himself, are categorized by Sekhon in six genres. In the first come such writings as *Japuji* which go across the musical system in which most of the compositions, those written in couplets, figure prominently. They are widespread in amplitude and depth. *Ashtpadis* forward the third generic mode in which the Guru's excellence comes out in full plasticity suffused with poetic intensity. In the fourth category are compositions in the supplementary genre and of formal variety occurring within and between the *Ashtpadis*. At the fifth stage,

come *Vars* deriving impulse at the generic level from the folklore. Such is the transformation that the Guru introduced and the richness he awarded that the moment of their production and reception seem to bring before human eyes the subsequent times as well. The sixth category comprises *Slokas* not forming a part of the *Vars*. Sekhon contents himself with this break-up. He does not go further into the analysis of the genres employed, their inter-relationships, the transformation they undergo and the contrapuntal contribution they make to the forging of his poetic discourse.

In the next chapter, Sekhon deals with the metrical structure of the poetry of Guru Nanak. Regarding this, he contends that there is about it a quality that is rather exceptional. It is free from the constraint usually in vogue to mark the metrical compositions including those of Guru Gobind Singh<sup>30</sup> and the later Sikh poets. To his mind, the reason for this does not lie in its organization being in accord with a musical system. This is a tentative observation which even Sekhon regards as lacking in reasonable elaboration.

The actual fact is that the poetry of Guru Nanak is composed in meters. The Guru has taken liberties with them as was a widespread practice in the folklore. So they do not reflect his indifference to aspects of form and structure. Instead, Sekhon finds these so-called irregularities, more apparent than real. Actually they are variations introduced with conscious volition. They impart it a plastic and elastic quality so as to enhance its thematic and aesthetic appeal. No doubt, its musical appeal also gets enhanced. This contention may appear as a misnomer but there is a grain of truth in it as well. On this score, his profusely illustrative presentation does not leave any doubt behind.

This is followed by detailed analysis of the imagery in Guru Nanak's poetry. While doing so, Sekhon strives to focus upon several configurations with the Guru's multiple concerns, of which the mystical and the metaphysical ones were the most important. He begins his analysis by holding that to strive for union with the Almighty was the central concern of Guru Nanak's poetry. To his mind, there were three modes, veritable and efficacious, he employed for this purpose. They were true knowledge, noble deeds and ardent devotion. In the last

instance, knowledge and noble deeds, veritable and efficacious, did direct the person towards the destination but only to leave him lurking on this side of the achievement. Without obliterating their role, it was devotion that took the persona closer to the destination. Even when these three modes were employed to the full, for Guru Nanak, the distance between the human and the Divine still remained. Consummation if any was possible only through grace the Almighty might bestow. This did not mean that knowledge and good deeds, unable to deliver the good, were to be dispensed with. They were to be employed to the full as the Guru was able so eminently to do during his life. As a result, religious beliefs, social customs, political oppression, cultural stratification, rites and rituals, superstitions and so many malpractices of the sort, could not miss the Guru's scintillating observation. His poetic discourse negotiated with them in such a way that a multi-layered network came forth for reckoning, recognition and reconstitution.

For Sekhon, there were four aspects of the Almighty configuring in the poetic discourse of Guru Nanak. In keeping with the terrain upon which the poetic discourse was negotiated, constituted and reconstituted, these four aspects pertained to the Ruler, Endower, Judge and Lover. Of course, they carried facets and aspects of their collaterals. Then, their ideal selves were invoked. Partly to avoid repetition but more to suggest further nuances, the Guru used all configurations to search for a place in the semantic range. *Sabib*, *Patsab* and *Sultan* were the terms which supplemented the significance of the Ruler. All of them were drawn from the Arabic and Persian language. They were currently in use to denote and define the Muslim rulers of the kingdom established in the Indian sub-continent. Guru Nanak distinguished the Almighty by imparting Him supreme quality of truth as against the actual ruler whom he found engrossed in falsehood. He did so by associating with it the appellation of *Sacha* to connote that its truthfulness was absolute, fathomless and perfect.

Significantly enough, the adjective for the above appellation was drawn from the Indian language, more so from its indigenous orientation. This goes to show that in forging his vision Guru Nanak

could imbibe the alien influence but in no way could he be swept away by it. Then in his affiliation, indigenous orientation had a crucial role to play. Another thing to note was that most opulent were the utterances in which the appellation of *Sahib* was employed to invoke the Almighty. According to Sekhon, it was because unlike the other collateral terms, *Patsab* or *Sultan*, it invoked affiliation along with authority. Since his observation advanced full explanation, he regarded it an issue of literary as well as philosophic importance.

The other appellation employed with as much opulence was *Khasam*, again drawn from the Arabic language. There it stands for the adversary even though its context may be conjugal rather than social. In Guru Nanak, it oscillates between *Sahib* and the lover. In fact, it is closer to the lover though its other use is not altogether dispensed with. For Sekhon, this again is a matter of profound interest. Though he does not go that far into detail, he seems to hold that it is due to his aptitude to enhance affiliation vis-à-vis authority in configuring the Almighty. The terms he employed for locating this configuration are also of literary and philosophical importance. Related to them are such words as award them local habitation and name. *Darbar*, *Diwan*, *Dargah* are terms which, instead of being visited as pilgrims do, tend to become a part and parcel of the mental landscape of a person. *Mahal* is another term that he associates with the Almighty. It is not without interest to find that they are all drawn from the Arabic language. Their meanings get so transformed albeit transfigured that they no longer remain the loci of the worldly ruler. Rather than denote authority and power, they begin to connote spiritual profundity and richness. There are also terms through which their correspondences grow into mediations. They are command, pleasure, statute, grace, charity, grant and seal, respectively. Guru Nanak again has recourse to Arabic terms i. e. *Hukam*, *Raza*, *Farman*, *Nadar*, *Karam*, *Bakhsish* and *Nishan*. All these terms dispense with their worldly and traditional meanings so that alternative reality may come to the fore for the person to reckon with. New horizons open before the eye of his imagination and superior perspectives equip him to enhance realization. The second and third aspects of the Almighty, evoked through the use of the endower and the judge, are meant to take stock of the amplitude the person may

register in the process. In this dual capacity, the Almighty is like *Sabukar* whom to account for what was received from as debt for spiritual richness and growth, is creditable indeed.

For Guru Nanak, relationship was the most poignant mode for articulating union with the Divine. Its most pregnant form was marital of husband and wife in which different appellations of *Sabib*, *Khasam* and Lover relate as much to the husband as to the person seeking union through charity, command and grace in all its fervor. The impulse to deal with it came to the Guru from the feudal system. As Sekhon has put it so well, "In the feudal society, relationship of the husband and wife stands for a perfect reconciliation of the feud marking it. If any union of the human with the Divine is possible, it is only through the relationship of the wife with the husband. No wonder, in *Gurbani*, most poignant emphasis is laid precisely on this relationship."<sup>31</sup> Sekhon does not lose sight of the fact that in the ancient Hindu scriptures, particularly the *Vedas*, great emphasis was laid upon the male-female syndrome for attaining the ultimate realization of life. There is however a qualitative difference between the husband-wife paradigm and the man-woman syndrome. Sekhon has this distinction in mind though he does not work out all its nuances and implications. At another place, he has applied his mind to this distinction as well. While drawing a contrast between *Gurbani* and the Sufi lore, he contends that both keep the male-female syndrome at the center. However, the Sufi compositions pleaded for erotic union as the highest stage in life. On the other hand, *Gurbani* advocates social and cultural reconciliation for which husband-wife paradigm provided the most poignant mode.

That Guru Nanak was an intellectual, rather than a subjective mystic is nowhere better established than in Sekhon's article on *Japuji*. This composition, marking the beginning of the magnum opus, is taken as the profoundest exposition of the Guru's vision in particular and the Sikh religious ethos in general. Composed in a style that is lyrical, incantatory and mystifying, it, according to Sekhon, forwards no logically consistent meaning. Elaborating his contention, he candidly holds, "It can best be understood in alternating modes of argument and mystification. Philosophically, an attempt is made to break through the limits of the prevalent Eastern and Western modes of thought. This attempt is successful

*as far as it goes, that is, in refuting all the older hypotheses and beliefs regarding the Ultimate Reality. Beyond this, it openly acknowledges bafflement.*"<sup>32</sup>

In the Punjabi version of the article written in the early sixties, Sekhon goes into a very detailed discussion of his over-all evaluation of *Japuji*. It begins with the urge to realize the Divine in actual life. First of all, attributes of the Divine are invoked. By identifying Him with truth in the past, present and future, Guru Nanak marks a departure from both the Eastern and Western modes. In this regard, he subjects the feudal actuality of his time to a mystical critique, more cogently than any advocate of *Bhakti* could or dared do ever before or after. For Sekhon, this was fruit of the Guru's intellectual mysticism. The issue got problematic when he wrestled with the mode he adopted to attain realization. He rejected the scriptural mode that the *Vedas*, *Shastras* and *Smritis* had been advocating from times immemorial. Then, the ritualistic mode, comprising pilgrimages, austerities and charities, was regarded as of no consequence at all. The Guru brings under consideration the cognitive mode in particular. This is the issue that shows him actually grappling with the emergent episteme rather than the archaic, residual or dominant one. In the first instance, the Guru finds it inadequate in the essential sense. Ultimately, his choice rests with submission and shifts to wonder at the limitless creation i.e. His recitation dilates upon the glory of the Divine and the observance of the code reserved for creation.

For Sekhon, this is a slide from the pinnacle upon which the Guru's thinking was poised earlier. No wonder, several stanzas follow in which a lot of mystification seeks expression. In between, figure utterances in which the immensity of creation is invoked in a way that may be the envy of even the great scientific thinkers:

*There are earths and still others beyond,  
What is the power that supports them?*<sup>33</sup>

Taking all these factors into view, Sekhon forwards an evaluation of the masterpiece with which it is odd to find any fault in the over-all context. He regards it a difficult text of which profundity is the essential aspect. It renders the mysterious as intellectually realizable. To put it in his words, "*The endeavor is pursued stoically beyond the ordinary limitations*

*of thought. And it is only when thinking can take us no further that a sphere of mystery is acknowledged lying beyond the limits of intellectual understanding.*" For Sekhon, in the medieval Indian context, none could visualize such achievement, of this magnitude and profundity. No wonder, he is thus impelled to conclude his argument, "*The failure of the intellect to penetrate into the mystery of the universe has been acknowledged all along by philosophers and scientists, but except those who would delight to wallow in the mystery, no philosophers and thinkers have for that reason forsaken the endeavor. The endeavor may not ever take us to the core of mystery, but valuable acquisitions have been attained by trudging this path with intellectual fortitude.*"<sup>34</sup> The place this composition occupies in *Guru Granth Sahib* and the realization it provides to those who recite, read and ponder over all that it holds through its mode of inner music, is proof of the fact that is beyond proofs of all sorts.

## (C)

Sekhon wrote in Punjabi an article, each on the third and the fourth Guru. On the fifth Guru, he wrote two articles which he changed into four pieces while writing for the first volume of *A History of Punjabi Literature (1993)*. His study of the third Guru Amar Das is based upon *Anand* and *Varan*. Rather than go into their structure and texture, he examines their themes by relating their motifs to the social formation come into its own under the influence of *Gurbani* as imbibed by the disciples on way to form a community. Its evidence may be gathered from the fact that for the disciples, bliss was not a direct grace to be bestowed by the Almighty. It lay in submission to and service of the Guru in the course of earning livelihood as a simple member of the family. Be this as it may, this bliss was distinct from worldly happiness sought by fulfilling material needs. To put it in the terminology of Karl Marx, it was use-value rather than exchange-value that in Marxism cannot be dispensed with. Sekhon does not enter into this comparison. Instead, he concerns himself with its social effect. To his mind, the community, coming into its own, had no need to envy the ruling section. Of course, the feeling of resistance was yet to strike root but the ground for this did lurk on the horizon. Its vibrations were there to be felt.

In the four *Vars* composed in four different ragas, the Sikh theory of the universe, along with human being's relation to it, finds elaborate expression. The quintessence of this theory is that the Almighty is the creator of Himself as well as the universe. In this universe endowed with His own light, He has created human beings, wrapped in *Maya* (illusion) that the Guru puts an end to, so as to ensure their salvation. Who the Guru is and how human being can attain grace, is not only categorically but is also pontifically stated. In Sekhon's unpublished papers, the assumption is made that "*Guru Nanak is this Guru who perpetuates himself through the process of succession.*"<sup>35</sup> As it happened in Sikh history, this process of succession ended with Guru Gobind Singh who ordained the Sikh community to regard *Granth Sahibas* Guru ever in the future.

In Sekhon's view, the fourth Guru Ram Das awarded great importance to this image of the Guru without whom salvation was not possible. So in his compositions, the Guru is portrayed as *Pritam Piara* (dear lover) who earlier was hailed as *khasam* i.e. husband. As is evident from *Lavan*, there is no fear of separation and if any unrest is there, it adds urgency to the union:

*The all-pervading Lord, the fascinating Guru  
Has so fascinated my mind!  
I am so restless at the sight of the Guru,  
I roll myself at His Feet*<sup>36</sup>

As a result, the marital state gets imbued with erotic pleasure if not with sexual consummation as well. Rather, sexual consummation gets so transfigured that the element of oblivion, accruing to it from erotic pleasure and physical desire, changes into contentment. Supplemented by family life in which full contentment prevails, the expanding Sikh community began to disseminate autonomy if not sovereignty. However, this eventuality did not take long to happen. In the time of the fifth Guru Arjan Dev, it changed into a bitter but heroic fact of history.

The urge of autonomy for sovereignty was the crux of the compositions of the fifth Guru, Arjan Dev. Though Sekhon wrote two chapters on him in Punjabi that, in modified form, come to four

in English, yet he felt that he had not studied him in more detail. On his part, this confession is justified though several of his observations are too important to be set aside. It was on Guru Arjan Dev's initiative that *Adi Granth Sahib* was compiled. He visualized the inter-textual quality in contradistinction to the scriptural Books of the other religions. The musical-cum-authorial design it came to configure was also the product of his genius. Lastly, more than half the compositions of this magnum opus were from the pen of the fifth Guru himself. In the light of all this, Sekhon's confession is not off the mark. Nevertheless, the issues he has raised with regard to the Guru, his genius and contribution are too crucial to be ignored.

In Sekhon's view, Guru Arjan's philosophic vision rests upon three factors. First, this creation is by the Universal Spirit that is infinite and beyond comprehension. Second, in contrast to the Universal Spirit this world is an illusion. Third, the human being, come into this finite i. e. illusory world, should conduct himself in accordance with the will of the Universal Spirit. For the Guru, such a conduct could become a reality not through contemplation but by living in this world, facing difficulties, rather ordeals of life, with honesty, integrity, truthfulness and fortitude. This becomes evident from the following lines:

*All those who forsake the Lord,  
They are destined to lead a forlorn life.  
For them all pleasures of the world  
Turn bitter in a single moment.  
None can intercede on their behalf,  
To whom may one cry out his heart?<sup>38</sup>*

The result of all this in Sekhon's words is that "*the life of a man devoted to the Almighty suffers from no frustration and he remains mentally and materially independent of all the world's seats of power, wealth and honor.*" As he has contended ahead, "*It is this independence of mind and supreme indifference towards the worldly powers that came to distinguish the general body of Sikhs so that living in the domains of the Mughal empire, they yet felt independent of its favor or fear and were content with what they could earn in their own self-dependent way.*"<sup>37</sup>

Sekhon's contention leads to his emphatic assertion i. e. *Gurbani*

should be studied in the context of Sikh history. In his unpublished writing, he observes, “*In the context of Sikh history, Gurbani is the theory and Sikh history the practice. If Sikh history can be understood and interpreted in the context of Gurbani, an understanding of Gurbani also needs Sikh history to explain it.*”<sup>38</sup> By this Sekhon does not mean that they translate each other in simple terms. He visualizes between them a dialectical relationship, the parameters and proportions of which he does not explain in terms of a theoretical discourse. Their general contours may be gathered from his whole critique of the way in which new motifs appear, formal devices come into being and stylistic strategies are forged for doing justice to the vision animating *Gurbani*. No wonder, his concluding remark about the compositions of Guru Arjan Dev is that for its literary appreciation its historical context should never be overlooked. Otherwise, instead of “*respect, it would result in disrespect.*”<sup>38</sup>

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#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. Nabha, Kahn Singh. He was the greatest Sikh scholar of the first quarter of the twentieth century. *Mahan Kosh* was his memorable *Hum Hindu Nahin* is a polemical work of his that still arouses controversy.  
Gurmat Martand in two volumes is his hagiographical book by him. He also wrote on the metrical system of Guru Granth Sahib.
2. Written by Guru Nanak, the English version is taken from Sekhon's *A History of Punjabi Literature*, volume one, p.208.
3. Trumpp, Ernest (Dr.) He was the greatest orientalist scholar of the Northern Western part of the sub-continent in the nineteenth century. A philologist by training, *Grammar of the Sindhi Language*.  
He also prepared grammars of other languages of the region. *His Adi Granth or The Holy Scriptures of the Sikhs* is a very controversial work.
4. Kosambi, D. D. He was the greatest historian of India in the twentieth century. His *Outline of the Ancient of India* is a path-breaking work that has changed the perception of the

- period.
5. Sekhon, Sant Singh. He has been one of the three or four greatest writers of Punjabi in the twentieth century. His critique of Gurbani both in English and Punjabi is the subject of this paper.
  6. Sekhon was an avid reader of the writings of Karl Marx. Selected Works of Karl Marx, Civil War in France and Notes on India were his favorite texts.
  7. Engels, F. He was the closest companion, intellectual and otherwise, of Marx. Sekhon rated quite high his Origin of Family and Private Property.
  8. Lenin, V. I. He was the harbinger of the Socialist Revolution in Russia. Sekhon had read his Selected Works. For him, Lenin was the greatest revolutionary leader. No wonder, in Sekhon's play, *Mittar Piara* he is the point of reference for the Indian revolutionaries.
  9. Plekhanov, He was the greatest Marxist thinker in the pre-revolutionary Russia. His *Art and Social Life* was rated well by Sekhon.
  10. Fox, Ralph. He was a British Marxist who was killed in the Spanish Civil War. Sekhon had read his *Novel and the People* in the formative stage of his life.
  11. Caudwell Christopher. He was a young British Marxist thinker who reflected deeply over various aspects of philosophy, psychology and aesthetics. He laid down at the young age of twenty-nine in the Spanish Civil War. Sekhon had read with deep interest his books: *Illusion and Reality*, *Crisis in Physics*, *Studies in a Dying Culture*.
  12. Lukacs, Georg. He was a Hungarian Marxist thinker who wrote in German. He thought deeply and vastly over philosophical, historical and literary problems. His *Studies in European Realism*, *The Historical Novel* and *Problems of Contemporary Realism* were favorite books with Sekhon.
  13. Gramsci, Antonio. He was the most creative Marxist thinker. Sekhon read only in parts. He missed reading his *Prison-*

- Notebooks. Of course, he liked his “The Southern Question”.
14. Benjamin, Walter. He was a great German literary critic. None has so far excelled his study of Modernism from the angle of Marxism. Sekhon did not get the chance to study him. Only one or two of his articles came his way.
  15. *Nirvachin* was the term that Sekhon coined to define his critical theory, its philosophy and methodology.
  16. *Punjabi Kav-Shiromini*, Lahore Book Shop Ludhiana, Punjab, India, 1964.
  17. In the course of his long life, Sekhon published about two hundred articles in them various Punjabi journals. Of them about a hundred are yet to appear in book form.
  18. *Jeevan da Pandh* (Journey of Life), Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, Punjab, India, 1987. It was edited by the author of this paper. He appended to it a long introduction.
  19. Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539) was the founder of the Sikh Religion. In his compositions is laid the basis of the doctrine, philosophy and message of Gurmat. Sekhon’s major study of Gurbani concerns his compositions.
  20. Ibid p. 46
  21. Ibid p.46
  - 21-A. *A History of Punjabi Literature*, volume one, Punjabi University Patiala, Punjab, India, 1993, pp. 44-45 22.
  22. Ibid p.47
  23. Angad Dev, Guru (1504-1552) was second in line of the Sikh Gurus. He wrote only a few couplets, as subsidiary to those of his predecessor.
  24. Amar Das, Guru (1479-1574) was the third in succession. He was a prolific while. He elaborated the doctrine of the Guru. At the same time, he supplemented it by adding new concepts as of congregation. He also brought the poetic idiom closer to the soil.
  25. Ram Das, Guru ( ) was the fourth in succession. Like his predecessor, he was also prolific. He not only added new motifs but also brought poetic idiom close to music.

26. Arjan Dev, Guru (1563-1604) was the fifth in succession that from then onwards became hereditary. He compiled Guru Granth Sahib with more than half comprising his own compositions in various genres, forms, meters and styles. His martyrdom gave a new direction to the already expanding Sikh community.
27. *A History of Punjabi Literature*, pp. 103-104 30
28. Towards the end of his life, Sekhon became Professor of Eminence in Punjabi University Patiala. To write a six-volume History of Punjabi Literature was the project he took upon himself to complete in the course of his tenure. By the time he expired in 1997, he could complete only two volumes. He made rough drafts for the next two as well. All those papers are now with the author of this paper. They are not paged properly yet. These lines are from those drafts.
29. From the unpublished drafts.
30. Gobind Singh, Guru(1666-1709) was the tenth and last in succession. He was a prolific writer but he did not incorporate his compositions in the magnum opus. Nevertheless, he declared Granth Sahib as the Guru of the Sikhs for all times to come.
31. *Punjabi Kav-Shiromini*, p.116 34
32. *A History of Punjabi literature*, p. 48
33. From Sekhon's translation in *A History*
34. *A History*, p.53
35. From the unpublished drafts.
36. From Sekhon's translation, pp.230-231
37. *A History*, p. 112
38. From the unpublished drafts.

# SINDHI HINDUS & NANAKPANTHIS – DEVOTION TOWARDS SIKHI BUT IGNORANCE OF REHAT MARYADA

INDERJEET SINGH\*

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## INTRODUCTION

The recent incident of 13 years old Sindhi girl dressed up as Guru Nanak Sahib in a hall of a *Tikana Sabib* (Sindhi Hindu Temple) again exposes the lack of knowledge and understanding amongst the Sindhi Hindus regarding the Sikh *Rehat Maryada* (Sikh code of conduct or Sikh way of life). Almost 2 years ago, more than 100 *Birs* of Guru Granth Sahib were given up by the Sindhi community. One would have hoped that the incident would have prompted a response to educate the Guru Nanak Naam Leva communities. It seems very little has been done to indoctrinate the basic Sikh code of conduct among Sindhis. The article will try to understand the heterodox beliefs of Sindhis and their misrepresentation as *Sahajdhari* Sikhs. The Sindhi in the article refers to the Sindhi Hindu in India.

## SINDHIS & THEIR FAITH – 1851

The British annexed Sindh in 1843 and found Sindh unique and different from other Indian provinces. Sir Richard F Burton (1851) wrote *Sindh & the races that inhabit the Valley of the Indus* describe a curious mix of Hindu and Sikh practices among Sindhi Hindus. He calls them ‘heterodox Sikhs’ and observed that “they show a general tendency towards the faith of Nanak Shah, and that many castes have so intermingled the religion of the Sikh with their original Hinduism, that we can scarcely discern the line of demarcation.”

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Burton adds that there is no remnant of the Kshatriya (warrior caste) in Sindh, “Those who lay claim to the regal origin are generally Banyans (Baniyas, the trader/mercantile community) who have partly conformed to the practice of Nanak Shah’s religion, they are therefore heterodox Sikhs. Their chief occupations are trade and government employment. Their studies are confined to the writings of the Gurus, and sufficient Persian to keep them in office. They wear no peculiar costumes and do not necessarily shave their beard. Their food is the same as that of Sarswat Brahmans, except that they eat only animals that have been killed, either by themselves or a fellow caste man, according to the Sikh rite termed Jhatko. Finally, they are either pure theist (belief in the existence of God), or as is more generally the case, they mix up deism (rationalism) with the old idolatry of the Hindoos.”

Burton states that Lohano Sikh is called Nanak Shahi and Munnee Singh (a Shaver). Sometimes he wears a kara but never the Chakkar. Lohana is a caste from a trading community. The writer mentions Udasi priests and their initiation of people into the Nanak Shahi faith. He adds that these people recited Jap Ji Sahib, Rehras Sahib and Sukhmani Sahib. The author of this article could not find an older resource on the faith of Sindhi Hindus.

### **ARE SINDHI HINDUS OR SIKHS?**

In 2008 Professor Steven Ramey of the University of Alabama, USA wrote a fascinating book on Sindhis titled *Hindu Sufi or Sikh: Contested Practices and Identifications of Sindhi Hindus in India and Beyond*. The book discusses the heterodox beliefs and rituals of the Sindhis who follow both Hindu and Sikh tenets. To understand Sindhis, one must set aside their standards and preconceived ideas about what constitutes a Hindu, Sikh, and even Muslim religion. As per the 2011 Census, there were 2.77 million Sindhi speakers in India. Further 1.74 million spoke Sindhi as a second language.

The Sindhi *Sangat* in India can be divided into the following groups based on the author’s study of Sindhis for the past 10 years:

1. **Sindhi Sikhs** – These are the *Keshadhari* Sikhs from the

province of Sindh who migrated to India in 1947 following the country's partition. They are practicing Sikhs, and many share the surnames with the Punjabi Arora community. Curiously the Arora community traces their origin from Aror (now called Rohri) in North Sindh. There are about 90,000 – 1 lakh Sindhi Sikhs who live like Sindhi Hindus in the states of Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Maharashtra, and Gujarat. They can play a vital role in linking with Sindhi as predominately mainstream Sikhs from Punjab have little and or clue about the Sindhis.

2. **Sindhi Sahajdhari** – About 10% of the Sindhis in India are very close to Sikhi, their birth, happiness, marriage, and death everything is done as per the Sikh traditions and in the Gurdwara Sahibs. They are Sahajdhari Sikhs, and they will get offended if a Punjabi Sikh doubts their devotion or credentials as a Sikh. Curiously most of this group, perhaps out of ignorance, continue to put themselves as Hindus in the population census and other government documents.
3. **Sindhi**– It is problematic to give a name to this group. They constitute more than 50% of all Sindhis in India. Their beliefs and way of life have Hindu and Sikh overlap to varying degrees. Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Sukhmani Sahib, the composition of Guru Arjan Dev Ji hold a very important place in their faith. Every happy occasion means shukrana (thanks) and langar in the Gurdwara or reciting Sukhmani Sahib in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib.

Post partition the reverence for Sain Jhule Lal has grown. In 1950 Sindhis, led by Ram Panjwani in Bombay, declared Jhulelal as the icon of unity for all Sindhis. These people were most probably brought closer to Sikhi by the Udasi Mahants. Many hold Baba Sri Chand the founder of the Udasi sect in high esteem. They may go to mainstream Hindu Temples as well. Many would have marriages through Anand Karaj but many who have Hindu Agni *pheras* would have Akhand Paathh or Sahaj Paathh (reading of full Guru Granth Sahib) first.

4. **Sindhi Hindus** – About 1/3 of Sindhi have little or no relations with Sikhi now. These people just know the name of Guru Nanak Sahib. He is one of the many deities for them. There may also be following a living Guru who heads a *Dera*. This could be post-partition change in these people. The lack of engagement from Sikhs, geographical distance from Punjab, and eagerness to adopt the local culture of the majority community seem to have contributed to this switch in the doctrine. The substantial number of Sindhis in Gujarat are now vegetarians, unlike their ancestors who came from Sindh.

#### **EPISODE IN INDORE – JANUARY 2023**

The Sindhis (mostly from the above group 4) gave up Guru Granth Sahib in Indore in January 2023. It all started with Nihang Singhs alleging that the sanctity of Guru Granth Sahib was not being maintained in the Deras and Temples. They also demanded the removal of Hindu deity idols that were placed alongside Guru Granth Sahib in these Temples. The *Parkash* (ceremonial opening at dawn) and *Sukhasan* (ceremonial closing at night) of Guru Granth Sahib were not done in many of these places, sometimes out of ignorance. In most places, they had none or very few people who could read the Gurmukhi script. They should have been given the *Sanchian* (small booklets) of Guru Granth Sahib. The *Sanchian* is Guru Granth Sahib in 2 or more parts. Although proper respect must be given to *Sanchian*, there is no obligation to perform their daily *Parkash* and *Sukhasan*.

#### **OTHER COMMUNITIES WITH SHARED HINDU-SIKH BELIEFS**

A Hindu Arora living in Haryana shared this incident. His grandparents came from Lyallpur, Pakistan. About 25 years ago they (grandparents) had arranged some Pooja at home. The Pandit who was doing the ritual prayer just before the finish asked them (grandparents) about their *Isht devta*. After contemplating for a few seconds, the grandfather said Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The Pandit who was also from Lyallpur also felt it was the right answer. And they continued with the *Pooja*.

The interviewee's marriage was conducted by Hindu Agni pheras but they did Akhand Pathh at home before the wedding. He tells me his mother does Japji Sahib in the morning and Rehras Sahib in the evening and the rest of the family joins her.

The Hindu Aroras from Multan, Bahawalpur, and South Punjab are now settled in Rajpura (district Patiala) and many of them have dual Sikh – Hindu beliefs to varying degrees. Interestingly due to their ancestors' geographical proximity to Sindh, the worship of Sain Jhule Lal is also observed by some.

### **IMPERSONATION OF GURU NANAK DEV JI BY A SINDHI GIRL**

The video of a 13-year-old Sindhi girl dressed up as Guru Nanak Dev Ji on Gurburab in a hall of a *Thikana* (Sindhi Temple) in Shahdol, Madhya Pradesh went viral. It was wrong and unfortunate that the elders of the community out of ignorance of Maryada permitted her to dress up as Guru Sahib. The 13-year-old Sindhi girl out of devotional love felt that her Guru Sahib had been left out as other kids were getting dressed up as Shivji, Ganeshji, and other Hindu deities.

The mainstream Sikh community needs to share some part of the blame that they have not been able to tell the Maryada to Guru Nanak Naam Leva Sangat outside Punjab. Most Punjabi Sikhs who have not interacted or lived with Sindhi Hindus have no clue about their devotion to Guru Nanak Sahib and Gurbani (especially Sukhmani Sahib) started commenting adversely on the social media. Even death threats were given to the family. Despite multiple apologies from the girl and her parents, they have been dubbed RSS agents. The RSS and SGPC came into existence in the 1920s but Sindhi Hindus have been a follower of Guru Nanak Sahib since 1521 when Guru Sahib visited Sindh.

The poor girl has been hospitalised for acute depression. She was seen shivering with fear in a video. It was not a pleasant sight. The matter should have been left in the hands of Sikhs living in Madhya Pradesh, Gujarat, and Maharashtra who know them well. There are many Khalsa Sikhs amongst Sindhis as well.

### DIFFERENCE IN BEHAVIOUR

Punjabis are large-hearted but also emotional. Sadly, some of the present generation have this notion that they know all. The Sikhs in Nankana Sahib are originally from the FATA region of the KPK province (previously known as NWFP). The elders speak Pashto, but their new generation is fluent in both Punjabi and Pashto. All these Sikhs are *Keshdhari*, and many are *Amritdhari* as well. During their visit of the Jathas from India, there will always be some Punjabi Sikh with trimmed beards and wearing a turban without unshaven *Kesh* would have the audacity to comment “What kind of Sikhs are these, who can’t speak Punjabi?”

Bhai Gurpreet Singh (popularly known as Rinku Veerji) of Amritvela Trust, Ulhasnagar has a huge following amongst the Sindhis, but a few Sikhs are unhappy that his Katha is done in Hindi rather than Punjabi. The Guru Nanak Naam Leva Sangat are mostly non-Punjabi hence it makes perfect sense to communicate with them in the language they understand. This regional-centric approach will not help Sikhi in the long run.

A *Sahajdhari* Sikh from Khost (province in Afghanistan) was building a Gurdwara Sahib in London. A group of Punjabi Sikhs demanded to know from him, why a Hindu was building a Gurdwara Sahib. The poor chap was cross-questioned many times. Unlike Punjabis, these people and Sindhis are non-confrontational and would avoid any dispute at all costs. Some elements of their communities tell them that they are not considered Sikhs (by mainstream Punjabi Sikhs) and that they should leave Sikhi. Why are we not learning about these people?

In Baluchistan (Pakistan) the Nanakpanthis and Hindus in Baluchistan have Gurdwara Sahib and Mandir in different buildings or rooms (with separate entrances) but in the same premises. This has been done in line with the wishes of the Sahajdhari Sangat to adhere to the *Rehat Maryada*. The *Keshdhari* Sikh Sangat are only a handful, but the Hindus are 0.5% of the total population. The province is sparingly populated with only an average of 12 people per square

kilometre. The arrangement maintains the security and optimum utilization of manpower and monetary resources. This is something for Sindhis and Sikhs to learn from this micro-minority.

### CONCLUSION

It is imperative that we understand the present-day Sindhis as they are part of the wider Sikh family. Equally crucial is that we don't dub all Sindhis as Sahajdhari and then do not do any *parchaar* of Sikhi amongst them. The Banjaras are a nomadic community found mostly in Maharashtra, Karnataka, and Andhra Pradesh and number about 10-12 crore. S.G. Deogaonkar (1992) wrote that the so-called Sikh Banjara revere Guru Nanak Sahib but have no ritual or observance except tying of a rupee in the turban of the bridegroom in the honour of Guru Sahib, which is spent for the distribution of sweets after the marriage. In these Banjaras, there is an integration of traditional Hindu worship with the worship of Guru Nanak Sahib. Many academics from Punjab continue to state that there are 12 crore Banjara Sahajdhari Sikhs in India. This information has steered to the misleading belief that they are fully conversant with Sikhi and hence mainstream Sikhs from Punjab are not sending any Jathas in their areas to preach the philosophy of Gurbani.

The author feels it is not his place or anyone to say who is not a Sikh. This is for an individual to decide. The heterodox belief is not limited to Sindhis. All Hindus who lived in the region now called Pakistan and even Afghanistan have an overlap with Sikhi. The Gurdwara Sahibs built in Russia, Mauritius, Gibraltar, Malta, Nigeria, Thailand, Singapore, Dubai, Malaysia, and other South East Asian countries have substantial monetary contributions from the Sindhi community. The Punjabi mainstream Sikhs cannot turn a blind eye to the devotion and love of Sindhis towards the Guru Sahibans.

Sindhis sometimes get criticised by both Hindu and Sikh extreme elements for their heterodox beliefs. The actions in Indore in January 2023 and now in Shahdol in November 2024 will push the Sindhi and other Sahajdhari communities away from Sikhi. After incidents such

as this, they will be scared to associate themselves with Sikhi-related traditions. Already there are some Sindhis and many Hindus from Frontier province who would say that unlike them, their grandparents would read Gurbani and visit Gurdwara Sahibs. Let us not be a silent spectators on the issue. Let SGPC and other Sikhs Institutions make concerted efforts to propage basic Sikh tenets and Sikh practices among the Sindhis through the publication of small tracts and Sindhi speaking Sikh preachers.

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**JAPUJI**  
**ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PAURIS/ STANZAS 32-34**

**PROF KULWANT SINGH\***

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**JAPUJI**

ਇਕ ਦੂ ਜੀਭੋ ਲਖ ਹੋਹਿ ਲਖ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਲਖ ਵੀਸ ॥  
ਲਖੁ ਲਖੁ ਗੇੜਾ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਗਦੀਸ ॥  
ਏਤੁ ਰਾਹਿ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੜੀਆ ਚੜੀਐ ਹੋਇ ਇਕੀਸ ॥  
ਸੁਣਿ ਗਲਾ ਆਕਾਸ ਕੀ ਕੀਟਾ ਆਈ ਰੀਸ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਨਦਰੀ ਪਾਈਐ ਕੂੜੀ ਕੂੜੈ ਠੀਸ ॥੩੨॥  
ik doo jeebhoh lakh hohi lakh hoveh lakh vees.  
lakh lakh gayrhaa aakhee-ahi ayk Naam jagdees.  
ayt raahi pat pavrhee-aa charhee-ai ho-ay ikees.  
sun galaa aakaas kee keetaa aa-ee rees.  
naanak nadree paa-ee-ai koorhee koorhai thees. ||32||

ਆਖਣਿ ਜੋਰੁ ਚੁਪੈ ਨਹ ਜੋਰੁ ॥  
ਜੋਰੁ ਨ ਮੰਗਣਿ ਦੇਣਿ ਨ ਜੋਰੁ ॥  
ਜੋਰੁ ਨ ਜੀਵਣਿ ਮਰਣਿ ਨਹ ਜੋਰੁ ॥  
ਜੋਰੁ ਨ ਰਾਜਿ ਮਾਲਿ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਰੁ ॥  
ਜੋਰੁ ਨ ਸੁਰਤੀ ਗਿਆਨਿ ਵੀਚਾਰਿ ॥  
ਜੋਰੁ ਨ ਜੁਗਤੀ ਛੁਟੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥  
ਜਿਸੁ ਹਥਿ ਜੋਰੁ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਸੋਇ ॥  
ਨਾਨਕ ਉਤਮੁ ਨੀਚੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥ ੩੩ ॥  
aakhan jor chupai nah jor  
jor na mangan dayn na jor.  
jor na jeevan maran nah jor.  
jor na raaj maal man sor.  
jor na surtee gi-aan veechaar.  
jor na jugtee chhutai sansaar.  
Jis hath jor kar vaykhai so-ay.  
naanak utam neech na ko-ay. ||33||

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### TRANSLATION

If a person happens to have million tongues instead of one;  
 If these million tongues multiply into twenty million tongues;  
 If he happens to repeat the sacred name of Divine Lord;  
 Millions upon millions of times with his twenty million tongues;  
 Meditating thus gradually step by step with faith and devotion  
 He may end up in achieving communion with the Divine.  
 Hearing tales about such a communion with the celestial Lord;  
 Even an unregenerate insect may engage in mechanical repetition.  
 Nanak, such an exercise, bereft of devotion, is vain glorious;  
 As communion with the Divine Lord comes through His grace alone. || 32 ||

Human willful effort to meditate without Divine Grace is in vain;  
 Equally vain is meditation through observation of willful silence.  
 Neither is willful begging for His grace is of any avail;  
 Nor can one bless anyone through willful human effort.  
 Neither can one prolong human life span through willful effort;  
 Nor can one willfully die before the destined moment.  
 Neither can one rule over others through willful human effort;  
 Nor can one willfully acquire wealth which is an empty boast.  
 Neither can one attain spiritual enlightenment willfully;  
 Nor can one acquire knowledge through willful effort alone.  
 Neither can one still one's mind through any yogic improvisation;  
 Nor can one be liberated from worldiness willfully.  
 The fact is that Divine Lord alone is the wielder of power,  
 He himself overlooks and monitors all human deeds.  
 Nanak, none is either superior or inferior in itself.  
 He himself is the sole arbiter of human destiny. || 33 ||

ਰਾਤੀ ਰੁਤੀ ਥਿਤੀ ਵਾਰ ॥  
 ਪਵਣ ਪਾਣੀ ਅਗਨੀ ਪਾਤਾਲ ॥  
 ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖੀ ਧਰਮ ਸਾਲ ॥  
 ਤਿਸੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੀਅ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਕੇ ਰੰਗ ॥  
 ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਅਨੇਕ ਅਨੰਤ ॥  
 ਕਰਮੀ ਕਰਮੀ ਹੋਇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ ॥  
 ਸਚਾ ਆਪਿ ਸਚਾ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥  
 ਤਿਥੈ ਸੋਹਨਿ ਪੰਚ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥  
 ਨਦਰੀ ਕਰਮਿ ਪਵੈ ਨੀਸਾਣੁ ॥  
 ਕਚ ਪਕਾਈ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥  
 ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਪੈ ਜਾਇ ॥੩੪॥  
 raatee rutee thitee vaar.  
 pavan paanee agnee paataal.  
 tis vich Dhartee thaap rakhee Dharam saal.  
 tis vich jee-a jugat kay rang.  
 tin kay Naam anayk anant.  
 karmee karmee ho-ay veechaar  
 sachaa aap sachaa darbaar.  
 tithai sohan panch parvaan.  
 nadree karam pavai neesaan.  
 kach pakaa-ee othai paa-ay.  
 naanak ga-i-aa jaapai jaa-ay. ||34||

The Divine lord created nights and days;  
He also created seasons and their sequences.  
He created elements of nature like water and air;  
He also created fire as well as nether regions.  
In the midst of these elements and seasonal environment;  
He has created the earth, a place for righteous actions.  
On this earth, he has created multitude of species;  
Of multiple variety through multiple ways of creation indeed.  
These multiple created species bear multiple names and tags;  
Which are innumerable and illimitable in number.  
After their departure from earth, they are judged;  
On the basis of their deeds in their past life.  
In the truly Divine Court of the Divine Lord;  
Who himself is as just and fair as His court.  
There in the resplendent court are seated those;  
Whom the Divine Lord has chosen as the Elect.  
On whose faces the stamp of approval is unmistakable  
As a result of the Divine grace upon them indeed.  
It is here during the trial in the Divine court;  
That the truly upright are distinguished from the imposters/ counterfeit.  
Nanak, this distinction is made there only after the'  
Arrival of these undertrials in the Divine Court indeed. || 34 ||

~ ~ ~

## INTERPRETATION OF PAURIS/ STANZAS 32-34 OF GURU NANAK'S JAPUJI

One of the central concepts in Guru Nanak's Japuji verse is the concept of natural, spontaneous, effortless continuous, unconscious remembrance of the sacred Name of the Divine (*Wabeguru*) with all the faith and humility at one's command. This inspiration, says Guru Nanak, comes from the Divine Lord in a moment of His benevolent grace, depending on the devotee's past and present spiritual moorings. On the contrary, if a person starts meditating very aggressively or repeatedly and mechanically, as if taking part in a competition as majority of human beings indulge in commercial activities with the complete confidence to get an assured return, such an approach will not avail in the spiritual meditative journey of life.

In the Japji's stanzas 32, 33, 34 Guru Nanak provides illustrations to illustrate this concept. Just as the seemingly pinnacle of the sky can never be reached through human climbing of massive stairs, similarly communion with the Divine is impossible to realise through aggressive, mechanical efforts at meditation. In the realm of spiritual enlightenment, it comes through Divine grace and spontaneous efforts (*Sehaj*) of the devotee. Even in normal life, whatever is grabbed through force, aggressiveness or wilful assertion of one's ego, whether it is political power, wealth, or knowledge, hollow ostentation, prolonging life unusually through employing various gadgets, it neither endures nor is it worth acquisition. Aggressiveness and demonstration/manifestation of aggressiveness or unnecessary flaunting of human ego is not the hallmark of a pious person eligible for Divine grace.

Finally, Guru Nanak states that Divine power is all-pervasive, universal just, completely impartial, objective and overly benevolent. Human souls are judged on the basis of the merit of their past. While those with fake and counterfeit deeds are rejected, those with immaculate deeds become worthy of His Grace and get approved and stamped and find admittance in the Divine court. They are honoured as the most distinguished (*Panch Parman*). So while worldly assets are up for grabbing, spiritual emancipation through the quality of human conduct and Divine grace.

## JALLIANWALA BAGH AND THE RAMGARHIYE

GURDEV SINGH ROOPRAI\*

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Thinking about the Jallianwala Bagh massacre and the events of 1919 on the day of Baisakhi in Amritsar sends a chill down the spine. The brutal action of the British government left a wound in the heart of Punjab's history. Let us take a look at some key aspects of this tragedy in simple and concise language.

In the year 1919, the British government passed nearly 27 bills, including Bill No. 11, which was called the Rowlatt Act. This bill was passed in March 1919 and its full name was (Anarchical and Revolutionary Crimes Act). The law was created with the advice of Sir Sidney Rowlatt, the Chief Justice of the Punjab High Court. The act had 43 sections, and sections 22 to 34 specifically discussed the powers given to the police and courts. On March 21, 1919, this law was implemented. (A Collection of Acts, 1919)

With the enactment of this law, the government was given vast powers and authority. Now, the government could arrest any person without trial or notice and send them to jail. Any form of revolt could be suppressed with any kind of force or weapons. A person arrested could be kept in prison for two years or more without the right to appeal or bail.

The general public had already been suffering under the British government's oppression, and revolutionary sentiments were rising everywhere. On March 30, 1919, a general strike was held throughout India. Protests were organized, and rallies were held. On that day, a large gathering of about 30,000 people took place at Jallianwala Bagh, including Dr. Kitchlu, Pandit Kotumall, Swami Anubhavnand, Mr.

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Dina Nath, and Dr. Satyaprakash. In Delhi, the police opened fire on the protesters, killing many. In response to this shooting, Mahatma Gandhi called for a day of protest on April 6, 1919, to be observed throughout India. **(V. N. Datta)**

The freedom fighters referred to this law as “No argument, no appeal” (Satnam Singh Chana, Chiranjeev Lal Nar). Sir Michael O’Dwyer was the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab at that time. As Amritsar was both a major city and a religious center in Punjab, the movement was particularly active here, and there was widespread dissent. Martial Law was imposed in the city. **(V. N. Datta)**

On April 10, 1919, Sir Michael O’Dwyer ordered the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar to take strict action, and instructed the arrest of Dr. Satyapal and Dr. Kitchlu. The police and military were given full instructions to deal with any unrest. The arrest of these two leaders enraged the people, and they gathered in large numbers to march toward the Commissioner’s residence. As expected, the police opened fire, killing 22 people. Revolutionary sentiments started to rise throughout the city. **(V. N. Datta)**

On April 11, 1919, Michael O’Dwyer arrived in Amritsar from Jalandhar. The presence of military troops increased, and military posts were set up in 19 locations around the city. The government issued orders that no one should leave their homes, and no rallies or protests should take place. On the other hand, people began to spread the word about a massive gathering on Baisakhi, which was approaching. Some people, despite the risks, began encouraging others to join the protest on April 13.

One such individual was a Ramgarhia Sikh, Bhai Nand Singh, who was a carpenter by profession. **(S. Arjan Singh Gardgaj)** writes that Bhai Nand Singh hailed from the village of Plasaur (near Tarn Taran, about 5 kilometers away). At the time, he was working in Amritsar. On April 12, 1919, the day before the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh, Bhai Nand Singh went to the Tarn Taran area and spread the message that people should join the strike and protests in support of the country and against the government’s oppression. Despite efforts, no official poster or notice could be found because of the government’s

fear, so Bhai Nand Singh resorted to shouting the message aloud, asking people to join the protests. Though complaints were lodged against him at the local office, the authorities dismissed him as insane.

Jallianwala Bagh was a plot of land, 229 meters wide, surrounded by tall buildings on all sides. A very narrow street connected it to the main road. The land was owned by Bhai Himat Singh, a servant of the Maharaja of Nabha. **(V. N. Datta)**

On April 13, 1919, Baisakhi Day, people started gathering in the Bagh from the afternoon, and the number of attendees was estimated to be about 20,000. Prominent leaders like Hans Raj, Durga Das, Rai Ram Singh, Dar Singh, Abdul Majid, Gopinath, and Gurbakhsh Singh were present on the stage. At 5:15 pm, General O'Dwyer entered the Bagh with his troops. Without any warning, he ordered the soldiers to open fire. The unarmed crowd began to scatter in panic, many jumping into the well to save themselves, while others tried to climb the low walls. Chaos and terror filled the air. Death danced its naked dance.

In his report, General Dyer wrote that he had fired 1650 rounds. It was estimated that 200-300 people were killed. (Mr. V. N. Datta) According to other reports, the death toll was 381, and nearly 700 were injured.

After the Martial Law of 1919, a political wave surged throughout the country, and the formation of the Sikh League took place. Its first gathering was held in Amritsar in December 1919. This marked the first political gathering of Sikhs. **(Report from Sri Darbar Sahib)**

Among those killed and injured in the bloodbath of April 13, 1919 at Jallianwala Bagh were 25 Ramgarhias (carpenters, blacksmiths, and other artisans), and 6 were severely injured. The details of these individuals are as follows, as much as could be found: **(S. Satnam Chana and Chiranji Lal Nar)**

1. Amar Singh, son of Roda Singh, Village Nabi Pur, Tehsil Patti, Tarn Taran.
2. Bhai Bura, son of Arura Singh, born 1899, resident of Amritsar.
3. Hukam Singh, son of Jagat Singh, Katra Sher Singh, Amritsar, age 12.
4. Ilahi Bakhsh, carpenter, son of Abdulla, Village Dalli, District Gujranwala.
5. Kala Singh, son of Wasawa Singh, born 1879, Village Fatehgarh

- Chak, Amritsar.
6. Karamdin, son of Gulab, blacksmith, Village Sohiya Kalan, Amritsar.
  7. Sobha Ram, carpenter, born 1864, Chauk Pragdass, Amritsar.
  8. Mool Singh, carpenter, son of Kahan Singh, age 20, Kucha Naddalian, Amritsar.
  9. Ram Singh, son of Jawahar Singh, carpenter, Kucha Uplaan Katra Koolo, Amritsar.
  10. Sant Singh, carpenter, son of Jhanda Singh, Bazar Raja Sansi, Amritsar.
  11. Sobha Singh, born 1894, Amritsar.
  12. Balwant Singh, age 19, son of Arura Singh, Kucha Tarakhana, Katra Ahluwalia, Amritsar.
  13. Barkat Ali, son of Ilahi Bakhsh, carpenter, Katra Hakeemaan, Amritsar.
  14. Buddha Singh, Chaudhary, son of Sham Singh, Kucha Bakkarwan, Amritsar.
  15. Budha Singh, Ramgarhia, Kucha Bakkarwan, Amritsar.
  16. Harnam Singh, son of Bhagat Singh, Ramgarhia, Kucha Punjab Singh, Chauk Baba Sahib Singh, Amritsar.
  17. Amar Singh, son of Roda Singh, Village Wadala Bhetiwala, Amritsar.
  18. Imam-ud-Deen, son of Murad Bakhsh, blacksmith, Gali Mochian, Amritsar.
  19. Jwand Singh, son of Kharkan Singh, Amritsar.
  20. Kala Singh, son of Gulab Singh, (45) carpenter, Village Panjwar, Amritsar.
  21. Karamdin, son of Gulab, blacksmith, Village Sohiyan, Amritsar.
  22. Lhabo, son of Mangu, born 1889, Katra Ramgarhia, Bazar Khairdin, Amritsar.
  23. Muhammad Sharif, son of Muhammad Ramzan, Kucha Machhian, Toba Bhai Salo, Amritsar.
  24. Mool Singh, son of Kalyan Singh, born 1889, Amritsar.
  25. Muhammad Bakhsh, born 1884, Mason, Amritsar.
  26. Kala Singh, son of Gulab Singh, Chauk Moni, Katra Ramgarhia, Amritsar.
  27. Ram Singh, son of Jawahar Singh, born 1887, Amritsar.
  28. Sobha Singh, son of Kharg Singh, blacksmith, born 1869, Kucha Nichaanian, Amritsar.

29. Sohan Singh, son of Shamsheer Singh, 23, Kucha Hakeeman, Amritsar
30. Abdul Karim, son of Lal Muhammad, Lohar, aged 17 years.
31. Surjan Singh, son of Ganda Singh, born in 1895, village Fatehabad, Tarn Taran.
32. Bhujangi Sundar Singh (16), son of Bhai Gian Singh, Nakkash, Kucha Tarkhana, Chak Kesriya.
33. Murli Mall, son of Labbhu Mall, aged 60, Kucha Ramanand Katra Ahluwalia, Amritsar.
34. Meer Bakhsh (35), Kucha Panditan.
35. Muhammad Shafi, son of Rahim Bakhsh, aged 19, Kucha Umar Shekh Katra Mit Singh, Amritsar.
36. Mistri Bhai Nand Singh.

After this bloody massacre, the British government's oppression increased further. Censorship was also imposed on newspapers. On the other hand, the head granthi of Darbar Sahib, Arur Singh, gave complete evidence of being a traitor to the community, and on April 30, 1919, he called General Dyer to Darbar Sahib, congratulated him, and presented him with a Siropa. (In the biography of Mr. Dyer), it is written that Arur Singh suggested to Dyer to become a Sikh and was even ready to accept Dyer's conditions, such as not growing his hair and not leave smoking tobacco, etc.

It was not only Arur Singh but also the first president of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, Khan Bahadur Syed Mahindishah, Raja Narendra Nath, and other leaders who praised the government's measures. On May 12, 1919, when General Dyer retired, Sundar Singh Majithia read eulogies praising Dyer at the Lahore Government House.

Despite the harshness and restrictions imposed by the British government, the news of the massacre on this Vaisakhi spread throughout India, and protests and outrage grew stronger.

As a protest, Rabindranath Tagore returned his Nobel Prize to the government on May 31, 1919. Mahatma Gandhi also returned his title of Hind Kesari. **(V.N. Dutta)**

## THE FINE DISICTION BETWEEN GURMAT SANGEET & HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL

CHARANJEET SINGH CHANDERPAL\*

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The *Shabads* that have been chosen by Guru Saahib are suited for the particular *Raaga* and Vice Versa would make it not only more meaningful but would also get the desired effect on the subject devotee which it intends to bring in.

How does this happen, this is because the Indian Musicology has Seven Swaras – Tones and additional half notes too. *Illustrating- Sa, Re , Ga , Ma, Pa, Dha , Ni, Sa.* Re can be additionally – *Komal or Flat, Ga* again can be *Komal or Flat, Ma* can be half not higher – *Ma Teevra* and *Dha* as well as *Ni* can be *Komal* or flat. The use of these *Swaras* at regular intervals of frequency or the absence of some while going upscales (*Aaroh*) and downscales (*Avroh*) create medicinal benefits on the audibility senses of a human being. This sends response to stimuli to the brains, which can cure the emotions or even accelerate and ameliorate the healing process. The swaras, can be serious or shrill or happy depending on the message of the recitation. For E.g. - Raag *Bhairav* or *Bhairi*, has “*Re*” and “*Dha*” as flat or komal. Reptition of swaras like “*Ma Teevra*” can even bringing in relaxation which is required after a long day of work. Therefore, with this, time of the day also comes into picture associated to the *Raaga*, but *Gurmat Sangeet* as distinguished from Hindustani Classical, except in a few places, does not pay much emphasis to the time.

Emphasis is paid more on the message and the emotion of the

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Shabad, which variates with the swaras of the Raagas. Hence, for a particular *Shabad* to have full effect in its communication to the Devotee, there has to be a proper use of the *Raaga* prescribed and associated to the Shabad must be ideally recited in Harmony, unless like in *Dasham Granth* – there is less or no usage of *Raagas* at all.

Singing or reciting in a different Raaga is actually a scandal and a sort of *Be- adbi* (disrespect to the decision of taken by Guru Saahib & suggestion to the Sangat). A different Raaga, or a different music composition or any contemporary music, would not send the “medicine/ cure” designed for the Shabad to the audience. Resultantly, the *Keertan* may not give the full effect and treatment, for which the particular Shabad was composed. Note of caution, may be observed that in order to make Shabad *Keertan* more liberal, once can sing in that particular “*raaga*”, the “*Raaga*” need not be confused with the music of the Recitation, musics within the same “*Raaga*” can be many and can be quite different. So do not get stuck to the belief, that “*Raaga*” means only a particular music composition composed by a particular *Raagi*. One can evolve his own tune or music, but within the same prescribed “*Raaga*” assigned to a particular Shabad.

### **THE FINE DISICTINCTION BETWEEN GURMAT SANGEET & HINDUSTANI CLASSICAL**

This topic is worth the interest it invokes, it may be worthy to note that Hindustani Classical en-routes itself to Vedic Period.

The Raagas were not known as Raagas then they were known as “*SbrutiTrayee*”, meaning in the “various varieties of musical sounds”. They came naturally through the penance and deep meditation in synchronization of the mood, natural vibrations and emerged from the “*anbad or anaabad*”, the inner ongoing sound, deep within. As per Vedvyas (the Hindu Rishi), in Dwaparyug, the Vedas were divided into four Vedas- Rigveda, Yajurveda, Saamaveda and Atharvaveda. The Saamaveda took the words (for prayers) from Rigveda and gave the Swaras itself. So it can be safely understood from Hindu Religious Texts, that source of the Raagas, with its best possibility is from the *Saamaveda*. The very word “*Saam*” means “*Swar*” . The Yogis would

use the varied Swaras (now collectively known as Raagas), to meditate or for various other spiritual and ancient health related aspects.

There is a line from Rigved, as hereunder:

Line no. 8. 33. 2 “Swarant(i) Tva Suto Naro Vaso Nirek Ukthin”.

It means “O Son, if you pray to the Lord in a musically pleasing voice or tone or melody, He will appear or answer to you faster”.

Saamved has in all 1875 Mantras, out of which 1504 Mantras are from Rigved. Pure Samaved Mantras are musical, which seem to later on have acquired the broader Thaata and Raaga classifications. A sub classification of the Vedas- known as “*Gandharva Ved*” seems to have been destroyed during the rule of the Islamic Kings. People assign this to Aurangzeb’s Era during the Mughal Period. The “*Gandharvaved*”, a sub- titled topic of probably the Saamved, had the enlistings of various Swaras- later composed as Raagas. Later, Bharat Muni composed the Natya Shastra, which the lay the foundations of various moods and emotions- the “*Raasaas*” which went into development of Raagas. Hindustani Classical is based on “Raaga” and “*Taal*”, which is Rhythm. This aspect has been absorbed by Gurmat Sangeet too.

The wisdom and education of Raagas, attracted people from all religions, including the Muslim. *Guru Nanak Maharaj, with ardent disciple Mardaana, would often sing in His invented style with the Rabab – Raaga-known as Asa. Asa, upon hearing seems to be a devotional Raaga. It is a Sikh Raaga, and is used mainly in Punjab. It is not found in Hindustani Classical Sangeet. Asa Raag, seems to be from Thaata Bilaval, and used pure Swaras and no half tones. Though this may not be a uniform rule. Similarly, its principal Swara (Vaadi) is Ma and supplementary Swara (Samvaadi) is Sa. It is oftenly found in Guru Granth Sahib and its tune can be well heard in the manner & style in which “Asa Di War”, a Sikh prayer from Sree Guru Granth Sahib is recited. “Asa” is one of the Raagas, which may prove soothing even without any percussion (rhythm) instrument like the Tabla.*

When Sikhi originated in or about 1469 AD right upto the Formation of Khalsa Panth in 1699, Sangeet did hold a prominent position in day to day lives, prayers and education of the people during

those days and naturally, it may be presumed that the Sikh Gurus were familiar with Raag Adhyayan, Abhyaas or Riyaaaz and that is how it found its way into Sree Guru Granth Sahib.

Distinguishing features:

1. Hindustaani Classical Sangeet has even assigned different times of the day to different *Raagas* for example – Raag Bhairav or Bhairo may be sung early morning, *Raag Yaman* during the evening, etc. However, if one may think and analyse deeply, the “swaras” of the *Raaga* are such that it bring about the emotions related to the “*Raaga*” which are conveniently assigned to the parts of the day or night time. However, a person may or may not be in that mood. The “*Raagas*’ “recitation in Hindustaani Classical is such that the *Raaga* elucidates the mood of that part of the day, rather than the person who may be undergoing a particular circumstances or an emotion or a medical/emotional ailment. They are recited on a presumption of a mood during that part of the day. So if its evening or early night “*Teevra Maa*” may be used. This is to signify the time of the day where it may be presumed that this *Raaga* is pertaining to that particular time of the day.

*Gurmat Sangeet* on the other hand is intended at sending the message to the devoted listener in *Keertan*, who may be High or Low in sentiment, he may be suffering in emotion or looking for spiritual answers from his life. The swaras, which uplift or relax or cure the subject are used in the *Shabad*. Therefore, the use of “*Raagas*” in *Gurmat Sangeet* is not time based. A Refreshing Raaga or a Bhakti *Raaga* with Bhakti Rass can be brought in any time with *Gurmat Sangeet*.

I may confess that there could be times when the usage of both Hindustaani Classical and *Gurmat Sangeet* could coincide. For example, a classical Singer may be reciting Raag Bhairo early in the morning and a *Raagi* Sikh may be reciting the a *Shabad* of the same Raaga during early morning.

2. *Gurmat Sangeet* prohibits the use of “*Aalap*” or any preceding “swaras” before the *Shabad Keertan* starts. This is specifically prohibited to deprecate the valuation of music and sangeet skills over the message of God. The use of *Taans*, *Sargams*, *Alankaars*, *Taraanas* is very limited

even in between two versus of a *Shabad Keertan*. At no point of time, the *Raagi* ought to show his singing skills, he has to concentrate on the development of the mood and message of the *Shabad Keertan*. The “*Aalap*”, the words used before the *Shabad Keertan* also have to be from the *Shabad Gurbaani*, preferable recited in the *Raaga* prescribed in Sree Guru Granth Sahib. Many Hindu and other similar religions and paaths, also follow the same pattern.

However, in Hindustaani Classical, the emphasis is on the skill of the singer in singing the *Raaga* and to begin it, he or she sings the *Aalap* and the adorns the *Sangeet Skill* with various musical ornament such as *Murkais*, *Taans*, *Taraana* and *Sargam Variations*.

There is less distinction between the instruments used for singing. Both Hindustaani Classical and *Gurmat Sangeet* used to use *Pakhawaj*, then *Jod* and then now the *Tabla*. *Tanpura* was and is common in both. This is by and large now, replaced by the *Harmonium*. *Dilruba*, *Rabab* and *Chimta* for percussion accessory are particular to *Gurmat Sangeet* of special kinds.

### **CONCLUSION – TESTING TIMES AHEAD FOR MAINTENANCE OF THE MARYAADA OF GURMAT SANGEET**

It is truly disheartening to note that about 80 per cent of the *Raagis* of today, are “not” adhering to the *Raagas* prescribed by *Guru Saahibs* while performing *Shabad Keertans*. They don't spend time to fit the *Raaga* into the referred *Shabads*. The principle reason being are three:

1. Lack of *Raaga* knowledge by the *Raagis*.
2. Lack of *Raaga* knowledge by the audience.
3. More emphasis on improving their voice, and display of singing skills. This is done in order to get more work and earn more money.

With respects, it may be stated that some *Hazuri Raagis* also do not know display much knowledge of the *Gurmat Raagas*. Many, simply do not apply them, knowing that the “*sangat audience*” would themselves not recognize the difference and are allowing it. The

moment, many young *Raagis*, finish with the *Keertans*, they are quite a number of times, seen in Jeans, T- Shirts and even goggles. While this is their personal choice, it may at once show that the inclination is less towards upholding traditional values.

Resultantly, what happens is that when a Devotee, goes to be part of the Keertan, he or she gets a limited outcome and effect of the Keertan being sung over there. The message of Gurbaani does reach and delivers its effect, but the cure and the full result would always miss out, as it is not being sung in the prescribed *Raaga*, suggested by the Healing Master – Sree Guru Granth Saahib.

May this soon end and may there be a better evaluation of *Gurmat Sangeet Raagis*.

## ਕੰਪਨੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਮਿਟਾਈ ਕੈਥਲ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ

### ਡਾ. ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ

ਮਾਲਵੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ਨਾਭਾ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਂਦ ਵਾਂਗ ਕੈਥਲੀਏ ਵੀ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਗੋਤੀਏ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਡੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਭਗਤੂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਮਾਲਵੇ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਗਤ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂਪਰ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਬਣਾਈ ਰੱਖਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਮਸੰਦ ਥਾਪਿਆ ਜਿਸ ਤੋਂ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਵੰਸ਼ਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਭਾਈ ਕੇ' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਣ ਲੱਗਾ। ਭਾਈ ਭਗਤੂ ਤੋਂ ਚੌਥੀ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਈ ਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਦਾ ਮੁਖੀ ਬਣਿਆ। ਉਹ ਬੜਾ ਸੂਰਬੀਰ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਭਗਤੂ ਦੇ ਵੰਸ਼ਜ ਅਤੇ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਦਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਤਿਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਬਠਿੰਡੇ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਬੁਲਾਢੇ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਰਾਜਾ ਆਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਿੱਤ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਟ ਕੀਤਾ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ 1766 ਈਸਵੀ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁਰਗਵਾਸ ਹੋਣ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਬੁੱਢਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਿਆ।

ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਿੱਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਗੇ ਵਧਾਇਆ। ਅਫਗਾਨ ਹਾਕਮ ਭੀਖ ਬਖਸ਼ ਤੇ ਨਿਆਮਤ ਖਾਂ, ਅਹਿਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਹਮਲਿਆਂ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਕੈਥਲ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਮੱਲ ਕੇ ਬੈਠ ਗਏ ਸਨ। ਕੈਥਲ ਫ਼ਤਹਿ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਹੋਰ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਰਦਾਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਨੂੰ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਪਠਾਣ ਹਾਕਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਇੱਕ ਹਫ਼ਤਾ ਮੁਕਾਬਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ, ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਨੱਸ ਗਏ। ਇਸ ਜਿੱਤ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੁੱਖ ਸਥਾਨ ਬਣਾਇਆ। ਕਰਨਾਲ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਗਜ਼ਟੀਅਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਖੇ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਣਵਾਉਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਅੰਦਰ ਢੁੱਕਵੇਂ ਟਿਕਾਣਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਛੋਟੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਬਣਵਾਏ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮਾਂਗਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਕੈਥਲ ਤੱਕ ਪਾਣੀ ਦਾ ਨਾਲਾ ਬਣਵਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਖੇਤੀ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਪੂਰੀ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਸਰਸਵਤੀ ਦਰਿਆ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਈ ਥਾਂ ਕੱਚੇ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਬਣਵਾਏ। ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲੀ ਆਈ ਅਤੇ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਖ਼ਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਵੀ ਭਰਿਆ। ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਖ਼ਜ਼ਾਨੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਸ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਜਮ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅਮੀਰੀ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਰ ਖਾਂਦੇ ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਂਦ ਦੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ

\* ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨ, ਦਸਤਕ, 27 ਅਕਤੂਬਰ 2024 ਵਿੱਚ ਪੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਹਿਤ

ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੇ ਕੰਨ ਭਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਬਹਾਨੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਬੁਲਾ ਕੇ ਕੈਦ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਉਸ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅੱਠ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਿਆ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਵਾਅਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਬੰਦਖਲਾਸੀ ਹੋਈ। ਛੇ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਦੋ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੇਣ ਤੱਕ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁੱਤਰ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਕੋਲ ਛੱਡਿਆ।

### **ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਕਾਲ**

1779 ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਹੋਈ ਤਾਂ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਮਾਈ ਭਾਗਾਂ ਨੇ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੂੰ ਦੇਣੀ ਬਣਦੀ ਰਕਮ ਤਾਰ ਕੇ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਛੁਡਾ ਲਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਗੱਦੀ ਸਾਂਭ ਲਈ। ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੇ ਆਲੇਦੁਆਲੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰਾ ਨਵਾਂ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਜਿੱਤ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਰਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲਾਇਆ। ਹਾਂਸੀ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਮਾਲਕ ਜਾਰਜ ਟੌਮਸ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਜੀਂਦ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਹਥਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਾਰਤਾਂ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਮੌਕਿਆਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਰਾਜਾ ਭਾਗ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਡਟ ਕੇ ਖੜ੍ਹਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਜਦ ਈਸਟ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਪੈਰਨ ਨੇ ਹਾਂਸੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਪੈਰਨ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਕੀਤੀ। ਸਿੱਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੁਲਾਹ ਦਾ ਪਰਗਣਾ, ਇੱਕ ਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਨਜ਼ਰਾਨੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਰਤ ਉੱਤੇ, ਤੋਹਫੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਬਣਾਏ ਮਿੱਟੀ ਦੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਪੱਕਾ ਕਿਲ੍ਹਾ ਬਣਵਾਇਆ। ਦੂਰੋਂ ਦਿਸਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਮੀਨਾਰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਦੋਬਾਲਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ।

ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਚੰਗੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਬਣਾਏ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਨਾਲ ਰਲ ਕੇ ਮਰਹੱਟੇ ਜਸਵੰਤ ਰਾਓ ਹੋਲਕਰ ਦਾ ਦਰਿਆ ਸਤਲੁਜ ਤੱਕ ਪਿੱਛਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮਦਦ ਬਦਲੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਨਦ ਬਖ਼ਸ਼ੀ। 1809 ਵਿੱਚ ਈਸਟ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਮਿੱਤਰਤਾ ਸੰਧੀ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਦੀ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਹਾਸਿਲ ਕਰ ਲਈ। ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਨਿੱਘੇ ਸਬੰਧ ਬਣਾਏ ਹੋਏ ਸਨ।

ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੁਰਖਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵੱਧ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਝਦਾਰ ਸਿੱਧ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਨ੍ਹੀਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿੱਚ ਉਹ ਸਤਲੁਜ ਤੋਂ ਪੂਰਬ ਵੱਲ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਜੇ ਨੰਬਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਗਿਣਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਕਾਰਨ ਸਾਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਰਾਜੇ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਜ਼ਤ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਨਾਲ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਸ ਨੇ 33 ਸਾਲ ਰਾਜ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ 1818 ਵਿੱਚ ਉਨੰਜਾ ਸਾਲ ਦੀ ਉਮਰ ਭੋਗ ਕੇ ਸੁਰਗਵਾਸ ਹੋਇਆ।

### **ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਂ**

ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਰਾਜ ਗੱਦੀ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪੀ ਗਈ। ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੋਮਲ ਕਲਾਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਲਗਾਅ ਰੱਖਦਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਅਤੇ ਪਿਹੋਵਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਸੁੰਦਰ ਭਵਨ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕਰਵਾਏ। ਕੈਥਲ ਦੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਜਾਵਟ ਕਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ

ਨਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕਰਨਾਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਅਫਸਰ ਔਕਟਰਲੋਨੀ ਦੀ ਕੋਠੀ ਦੀ ਤਰਜ਼ ਉੱਤੇ ਆਪਣਾ ਮਹਿਲ ਬਣਵਾ ਕੇ ਇੱਥੋਂ ਬਿਦਕਿਆਰ ਤੀਰਥ ਤੱਕ ਜਾਣ ਲਈ ਪੁਲ ਬਣਵਾਇਆ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸਰਸਵਤੀ ਨਦੀ ਉੱਤੇ ਪੱਕਾ ਬੰਨ੍ਹ ਲਵਾਇਆ ਜਿਸ ਨਾਲ ਕੈਥਲ ਤੋਂ 16 ਮੀਲ ਦੂਰ ਤੱਕ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਖੇਤੀ ਲਈ ਪਾਣੀ ਪੁੱਜਦਾ ਹੋਇਆ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਤਾਪ ਸੂਰਜ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਉੱਤਮ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਰਚਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਸਰਪ੍ਰਸਤੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ।

ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ 1837 ਵਿੱਚ ਬਿਮਾਰ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਮੰਜੇ ਉੱਤੇ ਪੈ ਗਿਆ। ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀਆਂ ਦੋ ਸ਼ਾਦੀਆਂ ਹੋਈਆਂ, ਪਰ ਬਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਨਾ ਹੋਇਆ। 1839 ਦੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਉਹ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਬਿਮਾਰ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਸਿਹਤ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਲੈਣ ਆਏ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ ਦੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਸਲਾਹ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਰਨੌਲੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਨਿਕਟ ਪਰਿਵਾਰ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੁਤਬੰਨਾ ਬਣਾ ਲਵੇ, ਪਰ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ਸਲਾਹ ਪਸੰਦ ਨਾ ਆਈ।

### **ਕੈਥਲ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਉੱਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ**

1843 ਤੱਕ ਪੁੱਜਦਿਆਂ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਤ ਹੋਣ ਲੱਗਾ ਕਿ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਸਮਾਂ ਜੀਵਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਹੇਗਾ। ਇਹ ਵੇਖਦਿਆਂ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਜਨਰਲ ਦੇ ਅੰਬਾਲਾ ਸਥਿਤ ਏਜੰਟ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਹੋਣ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਜੀਂਦ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਤਰਜ਼ ਉੱਤੇ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਭਾਈ ਕਾ ਖਾਨਦਾਨ ਦੇ ਵਡੇਰੇ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਾਲਕੀ ਹੇਠਲਾ ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਲਗਭਗ ਇੱਕ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਨਵੇਂ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੋਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਜਾਣ, ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਬਖਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੋਂ ਪਿਛਲੇ ਰਾਜਿਆਂ ਭਾਈ ਦੇਸੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਸਾਲਾਨਾ ਮਾਲੀਆ ਲਗਭਗ ਚਾਰ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਦੇਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੈਥਲ ਤੋਂ 96.5 ਪਿੰਡ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸਨ, ਬਰਤਾਨਵੀ ਰਾਜ ਵਿੱਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਅਤੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਰਣਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਭਾਈਕਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਗੁੱਜਰਵਾਲ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਕਰ ਦੇਣ ਦਾ ਸੁਝਾਅ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨਦੇਹੀ ਵੀ ਕੀਤੀ।

15 ਮਾਰਚ 1843 ਨੂੰ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੁਰਗਵਾਸ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਗਵਰਨਰ ਜਨਰਲ ਪਾਸੋਂ ਆਪਣੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨਗੀ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਅਵਸਰ ਲਈ ਵਿਉਂਤਬੰਦੀ ਕਰੀ ਬੈਠਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਗ੍ਰੀਥਡ ਨੂੰ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਕੈਥਲ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਅਮਲੀ ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਯੋਜਨਾ ਕੈਥਲ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਭੇਜਦਿਆਂ ਇਸ ਉੱਤੇ ਅਮਲ ਕਰਨ ਵਿੱਚ ਸਹਿਯੋਗ ਦੇਣ ਦੀ ਅਪੀਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਕੈਥਲ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰ, ਉੱਥੋਂ ਦਾ ਸੈਨਾਪਤੀ ਸ. ਟੇਕ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਰਾਣੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਕੌਰ ਨੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੇ ਫ਼ੈਸਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਨਾ ਕੀਤਾ। ਫੂਲਕੀਆਂ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਤਿੰਨੋਂ ਰਾਜੇ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਫ਼ੈਸਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ। ਉਹ ਵੇਖਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਜੀਂਦ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਫ਼ੈਸਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਜੀਂਦ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਬਣੀ ਰਹੀ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਮਾਮਲੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੈਥਲ, ਜਿਸ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਜਾਣੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਹੈ, ਰਿਆਸਤ ਕੋਲੋਂ ਖੁੱਸ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਸੂਰਤ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੀ ਮਿਟ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਉਹ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ

ਸਨ ਕਿ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਕੁੱਲ ਇਲਾਕਾ ਨਵੇਂ ਰਾਜੇ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

### ਕੈਥਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ

ਮਿਸਟਰ ਗ੍ਰੀਥਡ 23 ਮਾਰਚ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਥਲ ਪਹੁੰਚਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਰਿਆਸਤੀ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਆ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਵਾਗਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਲਈ ਰਾਖਵੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਰਿਹਾਇਸ਼ ਤੱਕ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਗਏ। ਗ੍ਰੀਥਡ ਨੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਦਾ ਹੁਕਮ ਪੜ੍ਹ ਕੇ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ, ਉੱਤਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਮੁਨਸ਼ੀ ਘਾਸੀ ਰਾਮ ਨੇ ਭਾਈ ਖਾਨਦਾਨ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ ਖਿਦਮਤਾਂ ਗਿਣਾਈਆਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਹੁਕਮ ਕਾਰਨ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਰਾਣੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲਾਂ ਦਾ ਜ਼ਿਕਰ ਕੀਤਾ। ਗ੍ਰੀਥਡ ਨੇ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕੀਤਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਹਿਸ ਵਿੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਪੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਮਲ ਵਿੱਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਦਾ ਪਾਬੰਦ ਹੈ। ਆਖ਼ਰ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਸਪੱਸ਼ਟ ਕਹਿ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਕਿ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮੌਤ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਹੋਣ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਰਸਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੂਰਤੀ ਇੱਕ ਮਹੀਨੇ ਵਿੱਚ ਹੋਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਉੱਤਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਉਚਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝਦੇ।

ਰਿਆਸਤ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਰਾਣੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਕੌਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕੋਈ ਹੁੰਗਾਰਾ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਗ੍ਰੀਥਡ ਨੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਪੈਸਾ ਟਕਾ ਜਾਂ ਹਥਿਆਰ ਕੈਥਲ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਜਾਂ ਅੰਦਰ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਰੋਕਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਦਾਖ਼ਲੇ ਦੇ ਰਾਹਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਫੌਜੀ ਟੁਕੜੀਆਂ ਤਾਇਨਾਤ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤੀਆਂ। ਸ਼ਹਿਰ ਦੀ ਨਾਕਾਬੰਦੀ ਹੋਈ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ 10 ਅਪਰੈਲ ਨੂੰ ਰਿਆਸਤੀ ਸੈਨਿਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਮੋਰਚੇ ਸੰਭਾਲੀ ਬੈਠੀ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਫੌਜ ਉੱਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਕਈ ਸੈਨਿਕ ਮਾਰ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਟਿਕਾਣਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਲੁੱਟਣ ਪਿੱਛੋਂ ਅੱਗ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਸ ਘਟਨਾ ਦੀ ਜਾਣਕਾਰੀ ਮਿਲਣ ਉੱਤੇ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਘਬਰਾ ਗਿਆ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਪਿਆ ਕਿ ਬਗ਼ਾਵਤ ਦੀ ਇਹ ਚੰਗਿਆੜੀ ਦੂਰ ਦੂਰ ਤੱਕ ਫੈਲ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਰੋਕਣ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਹਰ ਹੀਲਾ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਨੇ ਅੰਬਾਲਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਰਹਿੰਦ ਵਿੱਚ ਤਾਇਨਾਤ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਦੇ ਅਫਸਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਫੌਜ ਸਮੇਤ ਤੁਰੰਤ ਕੈਥਲ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਦੇ ਨਾਲਨਾਲ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਅਤੇ ਮੇਰਠ ਵਿਚਲੀ ਫੌਜ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਰਹਿਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼ ਦੇਣ ਲਈ ਆਖਿਆ। ਖੁਦ ਇੱਕ ਵੱਡੀ ਸੈਨਾ ਟੁਕੜੀ ਨਾਲ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਆ ਡੇਰਾ ਲਾਇਆ। ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਡਰ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਬਗ਼ਾਵਤ ਦੀ ਖ਼ਬਰ ਫੈਲਣ ਸਾਰ ਦਰਿਆ ਸਤਲੁਜ ਤੋਂ ਪਾਰਲੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਹਥਿਆਰਬੰਦ ਸਿੱਖ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੀ ਮਦਦ ਵਾਸਤੇ ਆਉਣਗੇ। ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਕਿ ਸਤਲੁਜ ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਪੱਤਣਾਂ ਉੱਤੇ ਚੌਕਸੀ ਵਧਾਈ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਜੋ ਸ਼ਰਾਰਤੀ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦਰਿਆ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਪਾਸੇ ਨਾ ਆ ਸਕਣ।

16 ਅਪਰੈਲ ਨੂੰ ਇੱਕ ਰੈਜੀਮੈਂਟ, ਦੋ ਰਸਾਲਿਆਂ, ਤੋਪਖਾਨੇ ਦੇ ਇੱਕ ਬ੍ਰਿਗੇਡ ਅਤੇ ਚੋਖੀ ਪੈਦਲ ਸੈਨਾ ਨੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਨੂੰ ਘੇਰਾ ਪਾ ਲਿਆ। ਇਹ ਵੇਖ ਕੇ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੀ ਫੌਜ ਪਿੱਛੇ ਹਟ ਗਈ। ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੱਲੜਾ ਭਾਰੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਵੇਖ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਦਾ ਕਬਜ਼ਾ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਨੂੰ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਇਉਂ ਕੈਥਲ ਦੀ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਕੰਪਨੀ ਬਹਾਦਰ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦਾ ਭਾਗ

ਬਣ ਗਈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ-ਨਿਸ਼ਾਨ ਖ਼ਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ।

### **ਵਿਧਵਾਵਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਦਾ ਸਖ਼ਤ ਰਵੱਈਆ**

ਮੌਕਾ ਤਾੜ ਕੇ ਭਾਈ ਉਦੈ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਮਾਤਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੌਰ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਧਵਾ ਸੂਰਜ ਕੌਰ ਕੈਥਲ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਕੇ ਪਿਹੋਵੇ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਕੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਿੱਜੀ ਸੇਵਕ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਕੋਲ ਰਹਿਣ ਲੱਗੀਆਂ। ਜਦੋਂ ਮਹਾਰਾਜਾ ਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਮਿਲੀ ਤਾਂ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਨੂੰ ਕੈਥਲ ਰਾਜ ਘਰਾਣੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੱਭਿਅਕ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਪਰ ਮਿਸਟਰ ਕਲਾਰਕ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰੀ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਖੱਜਲ ਕਰਨ ਉੱਤੇ ਤੁਲਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਦਾ ਦੋਸ਼ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਰਾਣੀ ਸੂਰਜ ਕੌਰ ਵਗੈਰਾ ਤਿੰਨ ਸਾਢੇ ਤਿੰਨ ਲੱਖ ਰੁਪਏ ਮੁੱਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੋਨੇ ਦੀਆਂ ਮੋਹਰਾਂ ਲੈ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਉਹ ਇਸ ਧਨ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਪਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੀਆਂ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੈਨਸ਼ਨ ਦੇਣ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ ਅਤੇ ਉਸ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਗੱਲ ਪੁਗਾਈ।

## ON THE ISC FRONT

LT COL JAGTAR SINGH\*

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(16th September to 15th December 2024)

Our Flagship Guru Nanak Coaching Centre has produced more than excellent results this year where out of 40 students 11 have scored more than 90% marks. 23 students have scored between 80-90% and remaining 8 students have scored between 70-80%. All of them have succeeded in getting admission to their liking in various colleges. We wish them all success in their future studies and employment. We also congratulate the dedicated faculty members and the management of the coaching centre.

### **HONOURING COL JAGTAR SINGH MULTANI (SECRETARY GENERAL) BY VISHAV PUNJABI PARCHAR SABHA, CHANDIGARH**

The ongoing activities related to the Sikh Educational Board became brighter like the rising sun when so many books written by Principal S. Bahadur Singh Gosal were presented to Col. Jagtar Singh Multani.

He emphasized that concepts like the Sikh Vidayak Board and the possibilities of increasing the quality of Sikh schools will definitely bring fruit.

S. Bahadur Singh Gosal and the dignitaries who arrived with him raised the status of the event and gave a warm blessing to Col. Jagtar Singh Multani, who became the first honorable chairman of the Sikh Vidayak Board. Col. Jagtar Singh Multani was presented with Sirepao and Dushala. S. Jagtar Singh Multani is a true 'Karmayogi' and the one who loves the Punjabi mother tongue and takes everyone along, is referred to as 'Rah Dasera' and we pray for his success in all new ventures.

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\* Secretary General ISC, Chandigarh; Email: <[iscchd2006@gmail.com](mailto:iscchd2006@gmail.com)>

### **SIKH VIDAYAK BOARD**

In pursuance to the resolution passed by Sikh Vidayak Foundation, Sri Amritsar, it was decided to appoint Col. Jagtar Singh Multani as the 1st Chairman of Sikh Vidayak Board. In this context, a brief ceremony was organized by ISC for the formal inauguration of the Headquarters of the Sikh Vidayak Board at Pritam Singh Sodhi Memorial Hall in the premises of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Bhawan on 7 October, 2024 at 5.00 PM.

The congregation was addressed by Singh Sahib Prof. Manjit Singh, Ex- Jathedar Sri Akaal Takht Sahib accompanied by Singh Sahib Giani Kewal Singh Ji, Ex- Jathedar Takht Sri Damdama Sahib. Around 100 prominent Sikh personalities from Punjab & Chandigarh including S. Jaswinder Singh Advocate, S. Balwinder Singh Jaura Ex- Secretary SGPC and S. Harpreet Singh from Akaal Purkh ki Fauj participated in the gathering. Prof. Manjit Singh appealed to the Sikh sangat to come forward and render their full cooperation for the success of this historical step initiated by the Sikh intelligentsia to achieve the purpose for which the Sikh Vidayak Board has been established. S. Jaswinder Singh Advocate apprised the audience about the following basic concepts to be followed religiously to improve the standard of education of various Sikh schools/institutions to be affiliated with the Sikh Vidayak Board:-

- i) Teachers' Training
- ii) Propagation of Gurmukhi and Punjabi
- iii) Technical and financial assistance to incapable schools by capable schools
- iv) To capacitate the schools to get grants from Govt. and Non-govt. institutions
- v) Gurmat Sangeet to be made part of the curriculum.
- vi) Sikh martial arts like Gatka to be made part of the curriculum.

The meeting ended with Ardaas by Giani Kewal Singh Ji followed by High Tea. Col. J.S. Multani proposed votes of thanks to the chief guest and all others present in the audience.

Seminar on Human Values: The foundation for Peaceful World

By ISC and Ahamdiyya Muslim Community India on October 22, 2024

ISC and Ahmadiyya Muslim Organisation jointly organized a seminar on **“Human Values- Foundation for a Peaceful World”** on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, 2024. Prof. Param Veer Singh Dean Faculty of Medicine, Department of Sports Science, Punjabi University, Patiala consented and presided over the Seminar as Chief Guest. A well attended function where Mrs. Kiranpreet Kaur Dhama, Ex-Member, Women Commission, Punjab delivered the welcome address. Giani Mubshir Ahmad Khadim introduced about Ahmadiyya organization, its function and Human Development Activities all over the world. S.Sher Jagjit Singh, General Secretary, ISC made a PowerPoint presentation on Human Values for a Peaceful World. Giani Tanveer Ahmad Khadim of Ahamdiyyan Organisation quoted references from Quran, Guru Granth Sahib and Bible that all epics have addressed the Peace in the same way. All speakers in the form of panelists answered the questions from the audience.

The Chief Guest, Prof. Param Veer Singh nicely addressed the audience and spoke about the present situation in India and abroad and said we may have to do much more than such seminars to bring real world peace.

A book titled “Preetan Punjabi Sabhyachar Diyan” written by S. Bahadur Singh Gosal was released on this occasion. Dr. Jaspal Kaur Kang delivered the vote of thanks.

#### **HWTC TEACHERS’ MEETING HELD ON NOVEMBER 16,2024**

A Teachers’ Meeting of HWTC run by International Sikh Confederation was held on 16<sup>th</sup> November, 2024 at 11.00 A.M. in the office of ISC, at Chandigarh. The following members & teachers attended the meeting.

Name of Office Bearer:

Col. J. S. Multani Secretary General  
S.Sher Jagjit Singh, General Secretary.  
Mrs.Sarbjit Kaur-HWTC Coordinator  
S. N.P. Singh - HWTC Coordinator

S. Sarwan Singh, Manager, ISC  
 Col.T.B.S.Bedi, Sr. Member,ISC  
 Ms. Sukiriti Kaur, Sr. Excecutive, ISC  
 Ms. Bhavana, Jr.Excecutive, ISC  
 Mrs. Meenu, Assistant, ISC

Names of Teachers

Ms.Jashanpreet Kaur, Mardanpur  
 Ms.Rupinder Kaur, Madanpur  
 Ms.Rinder Kaur, Madanpur  
 Ms.Sandeep Kaur, Banbhaura, Malerkotla  
 Ms. Manjit Kaur, Sanaur  
 Ms.Ms. Parvinder Kaur, Dahrian  
 Ms.Najot Kaur, Dulladi  
 Ms.Bhupinder Kaur, Dulladi  
 Ms.Kamaljit Kaur, Dulladi

**THE AGENDA FOR THE MEETING WAS CIRCULATED AMONG ALL THE PRESENT**

1. S. Sher Jagjit Singh, General Secreatary, ISC welcomed all the members and teachers attending the meeting. He introduced and thanked all the members to have come all the way from their centers to attend this important meeting. He explained that the purpose of this meeting was to mutually understand each other and to sort out the various issues/problems faced by the teachers in smooth running of HWT centers.
2. S. N.P.Singh Co-coordinator explained the role of teachers and asked them to focus on gurbani moolmantar or shabad or gurus' history learning by students, cleanliness & environment protection, tabla learning, stage performance & diary writing. This will help the students to get better job opportunities.
3. Mrs. Sarbjit Kaur stressed upon the teachers to enroll maximum students by visiting the local or nearby govt. or private schools and convince their teachers / management to send as many children as possible for homework completion on a daily basis.
4. Col. J.S. Multani, Secretary General, ISC also thanked all the

teachers and emphasized upon the value of a teacher's contribution in shaping the future of a child. He urged them to open a whatsapp group of students' parents to update the daily progress of teaching work and get their feedback for improvement.

5. **Felicitation of Students and Teachers:-**Col. Multani also announced the quarterly award/prizes to students based on merit/academic performance of children coupled with their maximum attendance in last three months and annual Prize/Reward to the best 3 teachers based upon the no. of students getting maximum marks in their final exams. Col. Multani wanted every teacher to have at least 30 students in their class for better output. Col. Multani also announced that 100/- per month shall be paid alongwith salary for internet to every teacher.
6. **Establishment of National Sikh Education Board:-** Col. Multani also informed about establishment of a Sikh Vidayak Board, whose headquarters has been set up at Plot No. 1, Sector 28 A, Chandigarh. This board is meant for upgrading the academic as well as skill-set of children by introducing job oriented courses in Sikh /Khalsa schools, where children can learn Sikh history/heritage and Sikh Way of Life along with their regular academic curriculum.
7. **Opening of new HWTCs:-** It was proposed to open a new HWTC at Village Ghaggar Sarai (Rajpura Block) for which Ms. Parvinder Kaur and Ms.Rupinder Kaur will do the survey in the next 15 days by meeting local Sarpanch and Gurdwara management and report to ISC Headquarters soon to complete the opening formality.
8. **Visit to Sikh Heritage/historical monuments:-** As in the past, ISC will arrange visits of HWTC children & teachers to the following heritage and historical shrines and monuments to make them aware about Sikh history and sacrifices:-
  - a) Dastan-e-Shahadat at Sri Chamkaur Sahib,
  - b) Virast-e-Khalsa at Sri Anandpur Sahib
  - c) Sirhind Fateh Memorial at Chappar- Chiri,Mohali.
9. **Career Counseling of HWTC Children for Skill**

**development and Job opportunities:-** It has been decided to organize special camps for career counseling of children passing out 10<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> class from our HWITCs to choose their future academic or entrepreneurial career to settle in life. The major objective of this venture is to advise the younger generation to avoid going abroad for menial jobs in Canada/Australia and instead start their own industrial ventures and business for their own benefit as well as to make Punjab a prosperous state.

10. **Opening of a new Computer Training Centre at Banbhaura:-** Ms. Sandeep Kaur, Teacher informed that many children at Banbhaura (Malerkotla) are interested to learn computer. She told that she has computer diploma and can easily teach computer to students if a computer set is provided to her. Col. Multani assured her that ISC will soon arrange a computer system to start a Computer Training Centre at Banbhaura.
11. **Vote of thanks:-** Mrs. Sarabjit Kaur, Co-ordinator proposed vote of thanks for all who organized the meeting with special thanks to the teachers who are doing yeoman's service for the welfare of underprivileged children and attended the meeting for mutual understanding and benefit.

#### **VISIT TO SHRI ANANDPUR SAHIB FOR SIKH VIDYAK BOARD MEETING**

A team comprising Col J.S. Multani, Chairman of Sikh Vidyak Board and Secretary General ISC, S.Sher Jagjit Singh, General Secretary ISC, S. NP Singh, Coordinator ISC, Dr. Khushaal Singh, Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Chandigarh visited Sri Anadpur Sahib on 17<sup>th</sup> November, Sunday to attend a special meeting of the Sikh Vidyak Board and inauguration of its website at Mighty International School.

Various Sikh luminaries spoke on this occasion highlighting the role of Sikh Vidyak Board to promote sikhi and Punjabi language among sikh Samaj. Adv. Jaswinder Singh explained in detail about the need and responsibility of Sikh Vidyak Board as under:-

- i) To improve the educational standard of Sikh Institutions.

- ii) To help the Sikh institutions to get Govt. and Non- Govt. grants to improve their infrastructure.
- iii) To urge the financially strong institutions to come forward to provide financial and other aid to relatively poor institutions.
- iv) To upgrade the skill set of teachers to impart proper skill based as well as spiritual education to students.
- v) To prepare students not only to compete for civil services but for other national and international jobs/ positions also.
- vi) The board will also endeavor to provide high level coaching in the fields of sports to prepare the students and Skill development programs to excel at national and international competitions
- vii) To minimize the difference between the educational standard of Village level schools and City based schools, a teacher's exchange program will be started.

#### **VISIT TO HOMEWORK TUITION CENTRE MADANPUR**

On 21 November, 2024, The ISC Team Col. Jagtar Singh Multani - Secretary General, Ms. Bhavana - Computer operator, Sachin - Driver cum Photographer and Miss Tejinder Kaur-Teacher of Allampur Home Work Tuition Centre visited a HWTC Madanpur.

We discussed the students and their studies at the Coaching Centre and Gatka classes at other HWTC.

Then, we met the students of Madanpur at Gurdwara. They welcomed us very enthusiastically and cheerfully. We distributed bananas to children. Col Jagtar Singh Multani asked some questions from students and also advised them about their studies for better life skills.

#### **INFORMATION SOUGHT UNDER RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT 2005**

A letter was written to SGPC, Amritsar to seek some important information as follows:-

From: Birendra Kaur

#D 151, Industrial Area, Phase-8 Sector-72, Mohali -160071  
Punjab

To: CPIO  
Office of the President Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak  
Committee, Sri Amritsar

1. SGPC constituted a five-member Committee in January 2015 vide SGPC to formulate rules and norms for qualification, appointments, jurisdiction and retirement of Jathedar of Sikh Takhts, with the then SGPC Secretary S Dalmegh Singh as its Co-Ordinator. The following are the five members:
  - Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, former Director, Centre on Study in Guru Granth Sahib,
  - Prof Jaspal Singh, former Vice-Chancellor, Punjabi University;
  - Dr Kirpal Singh, a Sikh Historian;
  - S Prithipal Singh Kapoor, former pro-VC, Guru Nanak Dev University;
  - Dr Balkar Singh, a Patiala-based Historian.

You are requested to provide the following information:

- a. Copy of the meetings held by the Committee formed for the post of Jathedars of Sikh Takhts, with Date/Time/ Venue as well as the Minutes of the meetings held from time to time.
  - b. Steps undertaken by SGPC, to facilitate the task assigned to the Committee.
  - c. Copy of the final report/ recommendations/ guidelines and any other document(s) submitted by the Committee.
  - d. Date/suggestive date of the implementation of the recommendations of the Committee.
  - e. Progress made thus far with regard to the implementation process.
2. I am submitting RTI Fee Rupees ten vide IPO number 57F 884442 dated 10.10.2024. If there is any further expense involved, kindly intimate me accordingly.

## EXPLORING THE SIKH ROOTS IN EASTERN INDIA

A REVIEW BY PROF HARPAL SINGH\*

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Author: S Jagmohan Singh  
Publishers: Singh Brothers, Amritsar  
Pages: 208  
Price: Not Mentioned

The book under review is an attempt of the author to study the 'various roots and origins and the present conditions of the Sikhs residing in Eastern and North-eastern parts of India'. In a way, it is a tribute to the humble brethren of the Sikh faith who had entered its fold during the travels of Guru Nanak and steadfastly lived as dignified members of the community since then. The extensive visits of Guru Tegh Bahadur and earlier of the Seventh Guru Har Rai reinforced and strengthened their ties further with the religion of Guru Nanak.

The book highlights the pristine image of Sikh religion before the eyes of the reader. It is as much nostalgic as it is unique. Speaking of the natives of the eastern region who adopted the Sikh faith during the sojourns of Guru Nanak and Guru Tegh Bahadur, the author observes that, '....these people constitute a very vital, historical and spiritual component of the mainstream Sikhism'.

The initial followers of Nanak were resourceful traders and landowners. It were they who contributed to the spread of Guru's message further among the less privileged. The widespread Agrahari community comprising different castes and engaged in various

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vocations were among the earlier converts. They came from relatively lower castes and majority of them were artisans working in a variety of trades. Besides they worked as office workers and service providers for the rich trading class of Khatris who were instinctively influenced by the teachings of the Gurus. Their travel from place to place which was necessitated by the trade helped spread the message of Guru Nanak to more and more people. Agraphari being a general term for the converts of the area many of them came from the Bania community of small retailers. Some villages have overwhelming population of these Sikhs. A village named Halhalia has nearly half its inhabitants as Sikhs. Kedli, Chatti and Dumri are another two villages bearing the dominant Sikh culture of eastern Sikhs.

The author has constructed his narrative by gathering personal accounts of these Sikh settlers of the early phase and collected information about their lineage going back to the travels of Guru Nanak and the subsequent two Gurus. The oral tradition of passing on the stories of ancestors has been carried out in a way which is reminiscent of the narrative mirrored in *Janam Sakhis* and the travel stories of some of the camp-follower Sikhs of the Gurus. One such work, 'Safran di Sakhi Pothi' recording travel stories of the Tenth Guru comes readily to the mind.

One more sterling aspect of the spread of Sikh religion in this region is the establishment of regular centres of preachers. 'The major role for propagating Sikhism was performed by Udasi Mahants. Besides, Nirmalas and Gianis also did commendable job in this respect' (p. 2). Udasis at Patna still run 15 schools and two colleges. The Giani centres are suggestive of the schools which came up later in the form of Bungas, which flourished in the Panjab during the times of later Sikh Misls and further after in the rule of Sarkar-i-Khalsa headed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Among the places in East India from where the followers of Sikh religion arose, the larger component came from Bihar. The reason may be attributed to the Ninth Guru who made his headquarters at Patna during his travels, which has also the distinction of being the birthplace

of Guru Gobind Singh. The dedicated services of Udasi preachers and devout Sikh elders had also impressed Mahatma Gandhi when he was on a visit to the areas of North Bihar devastated by a severe earthquake in 1934. The author has produced a letter in the book which was presented to a prominent native Sikh Atma Singh by Mira Behn, a personal assistant to Gandhi ji. It was purportedly written on behalf of the great leader. The coming into existence of the Sodhvanshi Khalsa of the Khatri clan bears the marks of concentrated preaching of Sikh faith in this region. Even the revenue records, according to the author, mark the identity of these Sikhs as Sodh Vanshis. The writer provides a long list of big and small villages where settlements of Sikhs abound. One such village dominated by Sikh numbers is known among the locals as 'Sardar Tola'.

The preacher Phagu Mal is fondly remembered for extensive preaching of the teachings of Guru Nanak. He was appointed as Masand or the main area-preacher by Guru Tegh Bahadur. The memory of his work for the spread of Sikh faith is kept alive by the people till now. Sasaram became the epicentre of the preaching activity due to the tireless efforts of this man. A memorial place for religious congregations 'Chacha Phagu Mal ji' erected in his name is a living testimony to his contribution to the spread of the message of Guru Granth. His followers carried on the ideal of Gurus in creating a community without caste distinctions. It is for this reason that Chacha Phagu Mal Gurdwara is also known among the locals as 'Gurdwara Chau Varni' (the religious place open to the people from all castes). In pursuance of the preachings of Guru Nanak, the sixth Guru Hargobind issued Hukamnamas to give impetus to the ongoing activities initiated by the First Nanak.

The writer has noticed how the smaller communities invent ways of communication for staying and praying together. These Sikhs of the eastern part of India used to blow a conch shell (*Shankh*) for giving a call to fellow Sikhs to join the congregation. In a way it resembles the *Azaan* of Muslims for a call to reach Masjid for performing the Namaz.

The author also views how the much touted Land Ceiling Act

drafted way back by the centre has affected the benevolent role of rich landowner castes. The reduced resources from the shrinking land made him squeeze the monetary donations meant to promote the faith among the poor castes.

The writer is apparently dismayed by the enactment of Gurdwara Act which destroyed the age old and tried tradition of preaching the religion with a vast network of Udasis, Mahants and individual preachers. The Gurdwara Act of 1925 had authorised the newly created SGPC to wrest the control of all centres of religious preaching and learning run by Udasis and Mahants. The grave wrongdoing was pitifully committed on the pretext of punishing the offending Mahants. While the wrongdoers were few, the countless others who were faithfully serving the cause entrusted by the Gurus for generations were also punished. Went along with them the vast land grants attached to the religious centres for supplementing these preaching centres.

The Gurdwara Body has over the years not done more than mere lip service as holding Gurmat Camps. No one attempted to generate a feeling of Sikh Brotherhood among these Sikhs with those living in the Panjab. These Sikhs, though have no matrimonial ties with the Panjab, yet they look up to the state as their base. The writer bemoans the fact that the Sikhs of the Panjab are largely unconcerned about the welfare of these Sikhs whose ancestors were once blessed by the great Gurus (p. 109). Similarly the lower-caste Sikh converts of this region, as in the Panjab, suffer from 'a sense of spatial exclusion and discrimination' (p. 12)

Some Sikhs of this land distinguished themselves as writers and men of literature. Sukha Singh who wrote the valuable work 'Gurbilas Patshahi Chhevin', according to Bhai Kakn Singh Nabha belonged to this region. Likewise, Bawa Sumer Singh remained the Mahant of Gurdwara Patna Sahib for twenty years. He is the scholar who is credited with editing the Faridkoti Teeka. Meanwhile the author has acknowledged the role of numerous other writers who attempted to bring to light the life and plight of the Sikhs of this region (p. 105). Himadari Banerjee gets a special mention for his work 'The Other Sikhs'

on these people. Their presence in the Panjab of today goes mostly unnoticed. According to the author many poor among them came to the Punjab as migrant labour, but many among them later became Sewadars and Granthis in an effort to assimilate themselves in the home of the Sikhs. (p. 166)

The book is replete with photographs shot mostly by the author himself while moving places to collect information about these Sikh followers who were first attracted to the mission of the Gurus.

Decades ago, the destiny brought the family of the author Sardar Jagmohan Singh to this part of the land. One may take it in the spirit of the proverbial observation of noted writer Khushwant Singh that wherever life on this planet exists, a Sikh and the potato is bound to reach there.

The efforts of the author are painstaking and his zeal is unremitting. He has written the book with the feeling and concern of a Sikh. The book is a definite addition to the information previously recorded by several other writers. While the main focus of book concerns the description of the life and culture of the Sikhs living in Bihar, more still, it offers a bird's eye-view of the Sikhs inhabiting in other parts of the eastern region. The author offers reliable details to other prospective researchers who may wish to work more extensively and systematically on this early crop of Guru-followers.

Guru Nanak Chair of JIS University Kolkata is credited with the publication of this book. The Chair, according to its former Vice-Chancellor, is devoted to the research programmes relating to the welfare and culture of the Sikhs living in Bengal and the entire eastern region since the days of Guru Nanak. For its founder Sardar Jodh Singh Narula, the establishment of this reputed university is not less than a dream come true. In a way, he has lived the tradition of his ancestors who were in the forefront of rich Khatri who extended monetary and moral encouragement to the Udasis in their endeavour to spread the message of Guru Nanak.

The Sikh organizations of the Panjab should follow the example of JS Narula and make this book available to wider audiences in order to spread awareness about their less privileged but most significant brethren.

## NEWS & VIEWS

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### **LT GEN R.S SUJLANA RE-ELECTED IOSS PRESIDENT**

Lt. Gen R.S. Sujlana (retd) was unanimously elected President of Institute of Sikh Studies for the year 2025. He has been authorized to select his team of office bearers from among the Institute members. General Sujlana has accepted unanimous election graciously and promised to carry on all the infrastructural, academic and administrative activities of the Institute with commitment and devotion. It is worth mentioning that over the past three years, under the leadership of Lt Gen Sujlana, many activities have been carried out at the Institute of Sikh Studies, including completing the construction of the Institute's library building, fully operationalizing the library, organizing lecture series, and writing high-quality Sikh literature. All the members have full confidence that the Institute will achieve even greater milestones under his leadership.

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### **FIRST-EVER DOCUMENTARY SERIES ON ISSUES OF PUNJAB LAUNCHED**

A series of documentaries touching several issues of Punjab were released at the Chandigarh Press Club on Friday. The free-to-air series will be available on QAUM TV, an OTT platform exclusively dedicated to the screening of documentaries.

Rajeev Kumar, creator of these documentaries and CEO of

QUAM TV, shared, “It is with great pride and a deep sense of purpose that we announce the launch of QAUM TV, the first-ever OTT platform exclusively dedicated to showcasing documentaries about Punjab. This platform is not just a medium of entertainment; it is a movement to bring critical issues affecting our land and people into focus.”

QAUM TV is born out of the desire to shed light on topics that often remain in the shadows — healthcare in underserved areas, education challenges, drug abuse, and the pressing water crisis in Punjab. “By addressing these issues, we aim to create awareness, inspire action, and encourage dialogue among Punjabis worldwide,” he added.

The titles of the documentaries include Pani Punjab De, Hola Mohalla, Pair Soola’n Te V Nachde Rehange, Langh Aaja Pattan Jhana Da Yaar and Babu Mangu Ram Mugowalia. (The Tribune, November 23, 2024)

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### **PAKISTAN GOVT MARKS GURU NANAK’S 555TH BIRTHDAY WITH SPECIAL Rs 55 COMMEMORATIVE COIN**

State Bank of Pakistan will release a special Rs55 commemorative coin to celebrate the 555th birth anniversary of Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, reported Express News on Friday. Issued by the federal government, this unique coin pays homage to the Sikh faith’s revered founder.

The Rs55 coin, consisting of 79% brass, 20% zinc, and 1% nickel, measures 30mm in diameter and weighs 13.5 grams. The coin’s obverse side bears a crescent moon and five-pointed star in the centre, positioned towards the northwest.

Along the upper edge, the words ‘Islamic Republic of Pakistan’ are inscribed in Urdu. Beneath the crescent, two stalks of wheat bend upwards, framing the coin’s year of issue, 2024. The denomination ‘55’ appears to the right of the crescent, with ‘Rupee’ in Urdu on the left.

On the other side, the centre features an image of the memorial to Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. Above the memorial, the words '555th Birthday Celebrations' are inscribed, and under it reads 'SRI GURU NANAK DEV JI.' At the coin's base, the years '1469–2024' are engraved, marking the span since Guru Nanak Dev Ji's birth.

Pakistan is a nation enriched by diverse religious legacies. Baba Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who is honoured as the founder of Sikhism, stands among the distinguished figures native to the land that is now Pakistan.

Sikhism is a global faith with millions of followers worldwide, and its most sacred sites are located in Pakistan. This commemorative coin is available at exchange counters across all State Bank of Pakistan Banking Services Corporation field offices from November 22, 2024.

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#### **SAHNEY APPOINTED MEMBER OF TWO HOUSE PANELS**

Rajya Sabha member Dr Vikramjit Singh Sahney has been appointed a member of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Finance and permanent special invitee member of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on External Affairs.

He played an instrumental role in repatriating Indian nationals stranded abroad, successfully facilitating the return of over 150 individuals after assuming office as an MP. Sahney also played a key role in the 2020 Afghan war when he got 500 Afghan Hindus and Sikhs evacuated.

Sahney said he was honoured to be appointed to the important committees and looked forward to collaborating with his fellow members to address the financial challenges that the nation faced.

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#### **CENTRE ALLOCATES Rs 994 CR IN FINANCIAL AID: MP**

The Union Finance Ministry has allocated Rs 994 crore as financial

assistance to the cash-strapped Punjab Government. This will be an interest-free loan for 50 years.

Announcing this here today, Rajya Sabha member Vikramjit Singh Sahney, who is also a member of the Parliamentary Consultative Committee on Finance, said he made several interventions, including Special Mention in the Monsoon session of Parliament, requesting for special financial assistance to the state.

As per a written response received by him from the Minister of Finance, capital expenditure amounting to Rs 548.93 crore has been approved for Punjab and is being released now, while Rs 445 crore proposals are awaited from the state government.

Sahney said the Ministry of Finance had also agreed to release additional financial assistance to Punjab out of the balance Rs 1 lakh crore for capital expenditure in sectors like urban planning, urban finance, Make in India, one district-one product etc., in which Punjab should target for minimum Rs 5,000-crore grants.

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### **SAHNEY SEEKS SUITABLE BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR PUNJAB**

Sahney emphasised the need for covering more industries under production-linked incentive schemes, support for MSMEs, and providing freight subsidy for reducing logistic costs to industry of Punjab to boost exports.

Rajya Sabha member Vikramjit Singh Sahney on Tuesday urged the Centre to support Punjab with suitable budgetary allocation for infrastructure and sanctioning special projects in view of the burgeoning debt over the state.

He emphasised the need for covering more industries under production-linked incentive schemes, support for MSMEs, and providing freight subsidy for reducing logistic costs to industry of Punjab to boost exports.

The MP stated that for farmers there is a need for a comprehensive

approach focusing on MSP reforms, crop diversification, and infrastructure development to support farmers and mitigate ecological challenges.

He added that emphasis should be on the significance of cooperative federalism with collaborative efforts among national and regional parties to achieve balanced development across all states without any discrimination.

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### **CONDOLENCES POUR IN FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE OVER FORMER PM MANMOHAN SINGH'S DEMISE**

New Delhi, December 27: Condolences have poured in from across the globe following the demise of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh. Leaders from neighbouring countries, including the Maldives and Afghanistan, expressed deep grief over his passing, highlighting his contributions and warm relations with their nations. Condolences pour in from across the globe over former PM Manmohan Singh's demise

### **HARDLY ANY PM WOULD HAVE DONE SO MUCH FOR J&K: OMAR ABDULLAH PRAISES MANMOHAN SINGH FOR HIS CONTRIBUTIONS**

Jammu and Kashmir Chief Minister Omar Abdullah praised former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh for his contributions to the region's progress during his tenure. Abdullah highlighted the crucial support and development initiatives received. A controversy continues over Singh's memorial, while Union Minister Hardeep Singh Puri accused the Congress of creating issues over his cremation at Delhi's Nigambodh Ghat.

### **MANMOHAN SINGH'S FINAL RITES SET FOR SATURDAY; NATION TO OBSERVE 7-DAY MOURNING**

Former Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh passed away on Thursday in Delhi at the age of 92. Known for his transformative leadership and economic reforms, Dr. Singh's demise has prompted

widespread tributes from political leaders across the nation. His last rites, to be conducted with full state honours, are scheduled for Saturday. The central government and Congress Party have announced seven days of mourning. Dr. Singh leaves behind a legacy of integrity, humility, and nation-building achievements.

### **WHEN MANMOHAN SINGH DEFENDED URJIT PATEL FROM OPPN MPs**

Former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh prioritized economic policy sanctity and institutional integrity over partisan politics by defending RBI Governor Urjit Patel during a parliamentary panel questioning on demonetisation. Singh advised Patel not to answer all questions, emphasizing the importance of respecting the institution and the governor's position.

### **PM MODI HONOURS DR MANMOHAN SINGH; SAYS FORMER PM'S LIFE WILL BE REMEMBERED FOR HIS HONESTY**

Prime Minister Narendra Modi mourned the passing of former Prime Minister Dr Manmohan Singh, offering heartfelt condolences to his family and supporters. Modi honoured Dr Singh's legacy, praising him as a "reformer" who contributed significantly to India's growth. The PM expressed deep sorrow and highlighted Singh's lasting impact on the nation. PM Modi honours Dr Manmohan Singh; says Former PM's life will be remembered for his honesty

### **TATA STEEL REMEMBERS MANMOHAN SINGH'S VISIT FOR ITS CENTENARY CELEBRATIONS**

Tata Steel commemorates former Prime Minister Manmohan Singh's visit to Jamshedpur in 2008 for its centenary celebrations. Singh, who passed away recently, marked the event by planting a banyan tree, symbolizing growth and prosperity. He was lauded for his significant role in India's economic reforms.

### **UK HONOURS LEGACY OF INDIA'S 'RELUCTANT PRIME MINISTER' MANMOHAN SINGH**

Dr Manmohan Singh, former Prime Minister of India, passed

away at 92. He is remembered for implementing transformative economic reforms. Many UK leaders and media acknowledged his contributions. Singh's tenure fostered stronger UK-India ties. His accomplishments include lifting millions from poverty and enhancing India's global stature.

**MANMOHAN SINGH: MALAYSIAN PM, BRAZIL PRESIDENT WRITE TOUCHING TRIBUTES; PUTIN DESCRIBES HIM AS OUTSTANDING STATESMAN**

Global leaders, including from the USA, Russia, Japan, Brazil, and multiple neighboring nations, have paid rich tributes to former Indian Prime Minister Dr. Manmohan Singh, highlighting his contribution to India's economic reforms and international relations. Leaders recalled their personal relations, emphasizing his role in enhancing bilateral ties and strategic partnerships.

**FORMER PM MANMOHAN SINGH WAS INDIA'S MAN OF DESTINY: G P HINDUJA**

Late Manmohan Singh, honored for his pivotal role in India's economic transformation, is remembered for his 1991 budget that marked a key turning point for liberalization. G P Hinduja highlights Singh's contributions in breaking protectionist policies and integrating India into the global trading and nuclear mainstream.

**MAURITIUS FLAG TO BE FLOWN AT HALF MAST ON SATURDAY AS MARK OF RESPECT TO FORMER PM MANMOHAN SINGH**

Mauritius will fly its flag at half-mast to honor former Indian Prime Minister Manmohan Singh, who passed away. Mauritian officials attended his funeral in Delhi. The Indian High Commission in Mauritius shared condolences. Indian leaders and Congress party members paid their last respects at the funeral, where Singh was cremated with full state honors at Nigambodh Ghat.