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EDITORIAL

ਹਮਰੀ ਕਰੋ ਹਾਥ ਦੇ ਰੱਛਾ

Sikh Panth, Punjab economy, finances, ecology, environment, Sikh Punjab youth, Sikh society, state governance and demographic structure - are all in doldrums and in a State of turmoil. The whole scenario is frustrating. Things are going from bad to worse every day. All the main organs of Sikh society and the state, be it religion, polity, governance, human source and human conduct, seem to be diseased and stunted. A palpable sense of helplessness and desperation prevails among a sizeable section its people who are God-fearing, morally upright, genuinely concerned about the continuously declining graph of their native motherland and sensitive about the speedily increasing gap between its Sikhism's rich past and heritage and its present degradation. This kind of awareness, rather acute consciousness is physically threatening, mentally disturbing and spiritually most frustrating. Some of the most heart moving sacred verses of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh's verse *Kaviyo Bach Benati Chopai* must have been composed at some such moments of crisis in their lives. We, the lesser mortals, can communicate our pain through our appeals to our present religious and political leaders and masters of our economic well-being. To illustrate our serious concern to the present custodians of religion, polity and state governance, there have been continuous appeals, protests and warnings against the malfunctioning/misgovernance in these area and those responsible for this rot. For instance, despite all the public outrage against some of the most heinous acts of religious blasphemy, sacrilege and State police brutality against the peaceful, devout Sikhs protesting against these crimes, the panthic Shiromani Akali Leadership governing the state during that period neither acted against the perpetrators of these crimes

nor accepted their own dereliction of duty during their tenure. Even after the end of ten years period of their misgovernance and the dismal performance of the Shiromani Akali Dal in the two subsequent state legislative elections held during the last seven years during which their representation in State legislature has been reduced to just three legislators, the Akali leadership has refused to accept their own responsibility. Since religion and politics are inseparable and integral to each other in Sikhism as per the *Miri-Piri* Sikh doctrine with the provision for politics being subservient to religion and mediation by the custodian of the highest Sikh temporal authority Sri Akal Takht is the prescribed Code of Conduct; even that provision and process has failed to resolve this crisis. Even after a massive representation made to the highest authority by a large number of Akali stalwards, majority of whom have themselves been passive collaborators in condoning these criminal acts but now admitting their connivance and tendering their apology, the topmost leader continues to be incorrigible. Even after presenting himself before the highest, religious authority and owning responsibility for all his acts of omission and commission during his tenure and disguising himself as the humblest, devout Sikh and expressing his complete trust in the bonafide authority of Sri Akal Takht and even after having been awarded the highest and the severest indictment of being declared a *Tankhaeeya* (Guilty), he refuses to resign from the presidentship of Shiromani Akali Dal. Human ego and its projection even after being accused and declared guilty by the highest religious authority causing irreparable damage to the parent organization in terms of its reputation and century old heritage is the height of arrogance and selfishness. Revered Sikh Gurus's sacred verses, Gurbani terms Ego (Haumain) as the most chronic psychic malady which destroys not only those who refuse to shed it against all kinds of sane advice, but destroys the whole body politic as well. It proves fatal and disastrous when it afflicts public figures whose behavior has a great bearing on the society. History bears witness to the disastrous consequences of egoistic leaders to for their nations caused by their megalomaniac temperament. On the other hand, the dilly-dallying and withholding of the final decision to award the appropriate quantum

of punishment to the guilty Sikh leader even after declaring him a *Tankhaeeya* is also highly disturbing. Why should those occupying the Divinely sanctioned highest seat of Sikh temporal authority be procrastinating their considered decision. As justice delayed is justice denied, it is creating doubts in the public Sikh mind about the integrity and stature of these decision makers in the light of some of their predecessors' dubious conduct in the past.

Apart from this serious damage to the Sikh religio-political organization, the Shiromani Akali Dal, Sikh society is suffering from a very serious damage due to the malfunctioning of the apex Sikh organization the SGPC and its skewed priorities. Instead of setting up a reliable institution of Sikh religious education for preparing a well-qualified, well trained certified cadre of Sikh preachers equipped with the sound knowledge of Sikh fundamentals, Skill and pedagogy of preaching and propagating Sikh Gurus' teachings to the Sikh masses in Punjab, India and Sikh diaspora, SGPC is spending a major part of its funds and resources on a vast network of its educational institutions which are not only imparting mediocre education but are a big drain on its finances. It is the result of fixing wrong priorities. Sikhi Parchar should have been its topmost priority; secular education should have come next. Institution of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, had sent a complete blue print for the establishment of a model training Institution for Sikh Preachers to the then Jathedar of Sri Akal Takht Dr Harpreet Singh after he expressed his desire to go through this document and forward it for its presentation to the Dharam Parchar Committee of the SGPC. But it had been received and filed never to be opened again. The result is damage done to the Sikh youth who need to be addressed through the skillful use of modern audio-visual and other electronic tools in a hybrid English-Punjabi medium by a cadre of well-trained Sikh preachers. We can learn a lot from the highly successful RSS model and network of training institutions (*Shakhas*) of creating a very committed cadre of Hindu preachers of Sanatan Hindu Dharma. In the absence of any similar significant Sikh preaching, majority of Sikh youth have not only turned apostate with shorn keshas and beards and proudly branding themselves as cut-surds, but

a sizeable number among them have become drug addicts with all its attendant criminal activities such as indulgence in petty thefts, burglaries street snatchings, acts of violence, gangsterism molestation of women and endangering and law and order situation in Punjab. Drug trade and gangsterism are becoming an alternative way of life. In the absence of reliable Sikh parchar, Christianity and its motivated preachers are spreading Christianity speedily almost as they did in the pre-independence days, especially among the poor sections of Sikh society in the border districts of Punjab in the wake of large scale unemployment. The root cause of all the above-mentioned maladies is the complete lack of Sikhi parchar among the Sikh youth and misgovernance of Punjab economy by the political leadership.

Punjab, even after its reorganization as a Punjabi Suba or a Punjabi linguistic state, has been prosperous having robust economy and GDP for a few years till the dark violence-ridden 1980-90 decade. Since then, it has been on the decline continuously and increasing in indebtedness. Now the State indebtedness has become so huge that a major part of State's income is consumed in the servicing of interest on this borrowed Principal amount burden and the mandatory payment of salaries, pensions and other liabilities. As a result of fulfilling these obligatory commitments, a very little portion is left for any development works and generation of meaningful employment for the youth of the State. This is resulting in the large scale brain drain and flight of capital from Punjab to foreign countries and influx on a mass scale of labour class from UP and Bihar into Punjab. They are not only sending their earnings to their parent states but also a large number of them have been settling in Punjab and monopolizing the labour market and seeking permanent domicile in Punjab and upsetting the demographic profile of the State with a long time threat to the State power structure. The Sikh religion, Sikh society, Sikh culture, Punjab economy are under a grave crisis. Combined with this multiple crisis, is the widespread damage being caused to Punjab's ecology consisting of poisoning of its major water bodies, fertile topsoil, alarming depletion of its underground water table and its underground aquifers and air pollution due to the adoption of unnatural crop wheat-paddy cycle, excessive

use of chemicals and artificial fertilizers and unsustainable mining. The net result is unbearable degradation of natural environment. Extreme poisoning of the Buddha Nala and frequently occurring farmers' and labourers' suicides and never-ending farmers' protests and blocking of rail-roads are symptoms of this overall, all round degradation of a once healthy Sikh population and fertile Punjab landscape. Through the columns of this editorial, we have tried to express the cumulative anguish and pain of all those enlightened highly sensitive, devout Sikhs steeped in Sikh ethos and highly worried Sikhs desperately looking for the emergence of some Messianic figure from among them who may have the vision and charisma to break this Gordian knot. Hence, the adoption of the opening line *hamri karo bath de rachha* of Sri Guru Gobind Singh's highly appealing verse as title of this editorial column. When human delinquent conduct crosses all limits, Divine intervention is devoutly wished for and invoked.

ਹਮਰੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟ ਸਭੈ ਤੁਮ ਘਨਵਓ ॥ ਹਾਥ ਦੇਹਿ ਮੋਹਿ ਬਚਾਵਓ ॥
ਸੁਖੀ ਵਸੈ ਮੋਰੋ ਪਰਵਾਰਾ ॥ ਸੇਵਕ ਸਿੱਖ ਸਭੈ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ॥

J.S. GREWAL ON SIKH HISTORY, HISTORIOGRAPHY AND RECENT DEBATES

DR INDU BANGA*

This article is being published in two parts while first part is being published in this issue, the second part will be published in Jan-March 2025 issue of this Journal.

- Editor

INTRODUCTION

The tremendous growth of the discipline of history over the past half a century coincides with J.S. Grewal's multi-faceted contribution to historical research. By the time he joined the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, for Ph.D. in the late fifties, a serious rethinking had started about the nature, scope and method of history in the West. Yet, in the contemporary academic context in Britain, his decision to work on the British historical writing on medieval India was regarded as somewhat unconventional. By now, however, it is well recognized that the vitality and consistency of the discipline of history requires periodic stock taking or reflection by its own practitioners. As a form of history of ideas 'second-order-history' illumines historical reconstruction and interpretation.

After the publication in 1970 of his doctoral thesis on British historians of medieval India, which came to be regarded as a seminal work,¹ Grewal kept up his interest in the history of historical writing

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- Author

while branching out into several other areas of Sikh and Punjab history. In fact, his first research paper on 'J.D. Cunningham and his British Predecessors on the Sikhs' had been published in 1964. By the time he wrote on the 'State of Sikh Studies' in 1973, his monographs on Guru Gobind Singh (conjoint, 1967) and *Guru Nanak in History* (1969) had been published, along with an insightful collection of essays entitled, *From Guru Nanak to Maharaja Ranjit Singh* (1972). The deepening of Grewal's interest in Sikh history thus went hand in hand with reflections on its treatment by *historians*. *Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Persian Chroniclers* (1976) preceded a detailed treatment of the historians of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1980, to be followed by two monographic studies of Ranjit Singh and his times (1981, 1982). In 1990, came out Grewal's 'veritable tour de force', *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, incorporating the latest research, widening and deepening his interest in Sikh history, and extending it to contemporary times.² A monograph on *Guru Nanak in Western Scholarship* was published in 1992, partly in response to the ongoing debate about his status and the nature of his message, to be taken up later in this essay. Two more monographs dealing with controversial issues followed. The tercentenary of the Khalsa in 1999 inspired focus on the historical and historiographical studies of the Khalsa.

All along, Grewal kept on analysing the Sikh and Persian sources and revising and elaborating his earlier understanding of Sikh history and its central issues, best exemplified by his influential collection of essays whose fourth revised and enlarged edition came out in 2007.³ Since then, and among others, Grewal has produced the inter-related studies on the *Guru Granth Sahib* (2009); *The Sikhs: Ideology, Institutions and Identity* (2009); *History, Literature and Identity: Four Centuries of Sikh Tradition* (2011); *Recent Debates in Sikh Studies* (2011); and *Historical Writings on the Sikhs* (2012). His *Historical Studies in Punjabi Literature* (2011) can be regarded as an offshoot of interest in Sikh literature, beginning with an analysis of the *Prem Sumarag* in 1965. Evidently, empirical research, analysis of literature, and history of ideas enmeshed in these works have been mutually illuminating. This is true equally of Grewal's work specifically on regional

and medieval Indian history.⁴

Taking note of his recent publications on Sikh history, the present essay begins with a discussion of Grewal's latest monograph dealing with historical, historiographical, methodological and interpretational issues of fundamental importance to the field of Sikh Studies.

Historical Writings on the Sikhs

SCOPE AND APPROACH

A substantial volume, the *Historical Writings on the Sikhs*, is divided into six parts, presented in terms of 'Western enterprise and Indian response', from the last quarter of the eighteenth to the beginning of the present century.⁵ The first two parts take up works of the British, European and American writers who 'laid the foundations of modern Sikh studies in the broad framework of colonial, "orientalist", and evangelical concerns'. The next three parts include the works of the first three generations of the English educated Indian writers from diverse professional and regional backgrounds. They 'appropriated the Western legacy and tried to improve upon it' in the backdrop of socio-religious and political resurgence during the colonial period. The sixth and the last part of the book dealing with contemporary times exemplifies the widening scope and increasing complexity of historical studies on the Sikhs, which has also resulted in controversies among the Western and Indian scholars over several issues. Altogether, the works of over three scores of writers on the Sikh past have been taken up in this book. With their diverse backgrounds, varied purposes, competing interpretations and differing emphases and nuances, they may be seen as cumulatively constituting, to use Grewal's words, 'our heritage as researchers in the area of Sikh studies' (Preface).

Broadly, three kinds of approaches seem to have been adopted in this book. The works of most of the writers in the first five parts have been analysed on the assumption that their historical thinking

was embedded in their socio-political situations and world-views. Therefore, to determine their relative worth for illuminating the Sikh past, Grewal goes into the scope, thrust, sources, method and limitations in each case. The existential situation of a writer, his avowed purposes and underlying concerns and assumptions are considered relevant for understanding his prejudices, misconceptions and errors, which resulted in several stereotypes. Where possible, as in the case of Trumpp and Macauliffe on Sikhism and the Sikh scripture, a comparative analysis of their works is made to evaluate their relative worth. While analysing the writings of the Indian historians of the colonial period in the next three parts, their formulations are seen in relation to their ideological orientations to the changing socio-political context during the colonial period. In the post-colonial period, however, the widened scope of historical research necessitated a somewhat different approach. Grewal takes up fifteen monographic studies which in his view represent major new themes, sources and approaches and, together, mark a significant departure from the historical writing on the Sikhs before Independence. In the last chapter of the book, the controversies between the professional historians mostly located in the West and those writing as 'Sikh' scholars largely located in India have been approached in terms of the origin and escalation of controversies and the issues involved.

WESTERN ENTERPRISE

Turning to the foundational texts in part one, the author traces the beginnings of interest in the Sikh past under the East India Company from 1784, and situates the analysis of each writing in the rapidly changing political context and purposes of the British until 1849, the year of annexation. On the maxim that knowledge was power, appraisals of the resources of the Sikhs as the potential political adversaries could have more meaning for the British if seen in relation to the Sikh past. Thus, an interest in Sikh history is evident in the writings of Charles Wilkins, Antoine-Louis Henri Polier, George Forster and James Browne which covered the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Their endeavour synchronized with the rise of the East India

Company into political power in Bengal and that of the Sikhs in the Punjab. Establishment of British supremacy over Delhi in 1803, and over the cis-Satlej Sikh chiefs in 1809 resulted in John Malcolm's Sketch of the Sikhs which was published in book form in 1812. Henry Prinsep gave an assessment of Ranjit Singh's financial and military resources after the Governor General William Bentinck sought to contain Ranjit Singh's advance towards Sind in 1831. While Prinsep considered the possibility of the Company annexing his territories after his death, the British writers of the 1840s - W.G. Osborne, W.L.M'Gregor, G.C. Smyth and H.H. Wilson - unequivocally supported an aggressive policy towards Ranjit Singh's state and successors.

The only discordant note in this expansionist stance was struck by J.D. Cunningham's History of the Sikhs. Its publication ironically coincided with annexation in 1849. Decried in the official circles for its criticism of the British authorities, Cunningham's work was eventually acclaimed as a 'classic'. It stands out, among other things, for his appreciation for Sikhism as a distinct faith, an innate sympathy for the Sikhs as a young nation, objective assessment of his British predecessors on the Sikhs, erudite interpretation of a vast range of Sikh sources and, above all, 'his sound judgement in selecting his facts with a strict regard to historical truth'.⁶

In part two of his book, Grewal discusses the British, European and American writers in the period under the crown. Interestingly, from 1865 to 1930 nearly a dozen British administrators and military officers wrote on the Sikh past mainly to justify annexation and British rule, trace the history of the loyal Sikh rulers and aristocracy, provide information about Sikh religion and customs to the recruiting and commanding officers of the army, and to harness the support of the Sikh people as collaborators. As may be expected *a priori*, the points of emphasis changed with the changing political context. However, these writers took no serious interest in the Sikh past, they had no appreciation for the Sikh tradition, and their general attitude towards the Sikhs remained unsympathetic. Moreover, with the exception of Lepel Griffin who collected information about the chiefs and families

of note, all other writers depended on the published works, mostly by Malcolm and Trumpp, using these selectively to suit their purposes.

On the assumption that there was a link between the celebrated martial spirit of the Sikhs and their faith, the bureaucracy encouraged the study of their religion and scripture, first by Ernest Trumpp, a German missionary, and then by Max Arthur Macauliffe, a British civil servant, who wrote in direct reaction to Trumpp. Grewal compares the two writers, also taking note of N.G Barrier's recent defence of Trumpp's work, and comes to the conclusion that the latter's work was essentially unsympathetic and extremely misleading. In Grewal's assessment, Trumpp's understanding was faulty, his translation was literal and flawed, and his interpretation of Sikhism amounted to 'misrepresentation' on several crucial points.⁷ He was highly sceptical about the use of *Janamsakhis* for the historical life of Guru Nanak who was said to be greatly indebted to Hindu philosophy for all his important doctrines, and especially to Kabir for his theistic ideas. Trumpp maintained that Sikhism remained a Hindu sect.

By contrast, Macauliffe's approach towards Sikhism was sympathetic and his attitude towards Sikh orthodoxy was considerate. He evaluated the different Sikh sources and looked upon Sikhism 'as the most original dispensation' with 'many "moral and political" merits'.⁸ His translation of the Sikh scripture and some other sources was closer to the original. Yet, Macauliffe too could not transcend his immediate context. He uncritically accepted some post-eventum prophecies because these suited the colonial state and the loyalist Sikh scholarship. At places, he accommodated the orthodox Sikh view against his own judgment about the reliability of a particular source. On the whole, 'Macauliffe was acceptable to the Sikhs primarily because his translation was closer to the original, and his interpretation of the Sikh tradition was faithful to the sources he used'.⁹ Moreover, by widening the scope of the early Sikh tradition, he provided the basis for the later writings on Sikhism. His translation and interpretation suggested to Dorothy Field in 1914 that 'Sikhism was a world religion "rather than a reformed sect of Hindus"'.¹⁰

Turning to the works of John Clarke Archer and C.H. Loehlin, two American missionaries, Grewal notices interesting similarities and differences between them. Archer's comparative study of the Sikhs in relation to other religions, and Loehlin's work on *The Sikhs and their Scriptures* were first published in 1946. In 1971, Loehlin published his study of the Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood. Together, the two writers bridged Western scholarship of the colonial and post-colonial periods. At the end of his analyses of their works, Grewal observes that while the two agreed that Sikhism emerged as a world religion, they differed in their conception of the nature of the Sikh faith in the beginning. Loehlin believed that Sikhism was a synthesis of Bhakti Hinduism and Sufi Islam, and that Guru Nanak was indebted to both Vaishnava Bhakti and Kabir. While they agreed on the development of the Sikh Panth as evolutionary, Archer laid emphasis on the martial activity of Guru Hargobind, and Loehlin focused on the tenth Guru as completing the process of militarization. Despite their broad agreement over the invocation of the Goddess by Guru Gobind Singh, personal Guruship ending after his death, Guruship vested in the Granth Sahib, and the need to determine the authenticity of the Kartarpur Pothi, there are differences of emphasis and detail between Archer and Loehlin. Loehlin regards the Dasam Granth as one of the 'two books of scripture'. As a whole he does not clarify any issue.

Grewal draws attention to some other views peculiar to the two writers. Archer was the first Western scholar to postulate a difference between the Nanak of history and Nanak of faith, and to suggest that the Khalsa rahit (code of conduct) as well as the doctrines of Guru Granth and Guru Panth came to be established gradually during the eighteenth century. Loehlin emphasized the gap between the ideal of equality and the ground realities by pointing to the caste restrictions for matrimony, and denial of equality to the lower castes in social relations and worship. It is possible to see the bearing of the missionary orientation of the two writers on these formulations which, significantly, were picked up later by W.H. McLeod. There was a

palpable influence of Trumpp on Loehlin as well as McLeod.

INDIAN RESPONSE

The next three parts take up the historical writing on the Sikhs by Indians from the 1890s to the 1950s, ending with an analysis of Teja Singh and Ganda Singh's well-known work, *A Short History of the Sikhs*.

In 1891, Syad Muhammad Latif published a substantial volume on the History of the Punjab since the earliest time to the present. Over half of its 650 pages are given to the history of the Sikhs as the immediate predecessors of the British. He used a large number of non-English sources, mainly Persian, and his treatment was essentially unsympathetic, justifying annexation and praising British rule. As an Extra Judicial Assistant Commissioner in the Punjab, Latif hoped for reward from the government, which he got in 1892. He wrote as a loyal Muslim and his work reflected the emerging communal consciousness in North India. For Sikh history, at any rate, it leaves a dead trail.

The other three writers in part three of the book happened to be educated Sikhs who belonged to the emergent professional middle class and whose scholarship was inspired by their faith and sympathy for the Sikh tradition. Sewaram Singh Thapar, a lawyer and later a District and Sessions Judge, published a monograph on the life and teaching of Guru Nanak in 1904. Bhagat Lakshman Singh, a professor and a journalist, wrote on the life of Guru Gobind Singh in 1909, and on the Sikh martyrs in 1919. Khazan Singh, an Extra Assistant Commissioner, produced 'the first comprehensive work on the history and religion of the Sikhs' in 1914. Responding to the writings of the Western writers, all three of them sought to correct the existing misrepresentations. They laid emphasis on the distinctiveness of the Sikh faith and Sikh identity. They were concerned with the correct understanding about the Sikh movement, doctrines and institutions. For example, Sewaram Singh underlined that 'Guru Nanak enunciated the basic principles for the guidance of his disciples'; Bhagat Lakshman

Singh emphasized that ‘Guru Gobind Singh’s achievement was made possible by the work of the predecessors’ or that martyrdom was ‘an integral part of the Sikh tradition’; and Khazan Singh suggested that ‘the “touchstone” for assaying any work on Sikhism was available in the Adi Granth and the Vars of Bhai Gurdas’.¹¹ In Grewal’s assessment, the three writers had a good knowledge of the Sikh sources which they used critically and interpreted ‘in human and rational terms’.¹² There were occasional errors of judgment or compromises in deference to tradition. As a whole, the three writers could be taken as the early representatives of modern ‘Sikh’ scholarship. Their concern for the Sikh past was related to their concern for the present and future of the Sikhs. Interestingly, writing in the backdrop of the Singh Sabha movement, ‘they did not look upon Sikh identity as a basis of Sikh politics’.¹³

In part four, Grewal analyses the writings of the two well-known Bengali historians – Indubhusan Banerjee and Narendra Krishna Sinha – which were well-received as comprehensive scholarly studies and remained part of the university syllabi for four decades or so. First published in the 1930s, the works of both the historians reflected the influence of the Freedom Struggle and its undercurrents during the twenties and the thirties.

In the course of his analysis of Banerjee’s study of the *Evolution of the Khalsa* in two volumes, Grewal draws attention to its basic limitations arising partly from the author’s conceptualization inspired by his environment, and partly from his inability to deconstruct Sikh sources. Assuming that Guru Nanak was a ‘Vaishnava reformer’, Banerjee failed to grasp ‘the core of the message of the *Janamsakhis*’ about ‘the uniqueness of Guru Nanak’s mission’.¹⁴ For Banerjee, thus, there was ‘nothing in the ideology of Guru Nanak’ which could lead to ‘transformation of Sikhism’. He tried to explain it ‘in terms of “Muslim persecution”, the ideological and institutional developments under the successors of Guru Nanak, and the innate traits of the Jats’.¹⁵ These assumptions clouded Banerjee’s judgment and he not only failed to appreciate the creative responses of Guru Nanak and

Guru Gobind Singh, but also overlooked the ideological continuities between the first and the last Guru. Moreover, Banerjee wrote as a Hindu nationalist.¹⁶ In short, the ideas that informed Banerjee's research 'induced him to force on his evidence an interpretation that it was not strong enough to support'.¹⁷

Inspired by J.D. Cunningham's work, and dedicating his *Rise of the Sikh Power* to him, Sinha subscribed to his formulation of 'theocratic confederate feudalism' for the eighteenth century Sikh polity. Drawing a parallel between the rise of the Sikhs and that of the Marathas, Sinha underlined 'the collective endeavour of a united people' who were led successfully by 'comparatively obscure men'. He appreciated their role in checking 'the Durrani menace'. In Grewal's words, 'for Sinha, the rise of Sikh power was a nationalist enterprise, both Indian and Hindu'.¹⁸ By comparison, in his study of Ranjit Singh, Sinha was much less appreciative of his 'military monarchy' and of Ranjit Singh himself both as a person and as a ruler. He was credited nonetheless with saving the Punjab, Kashmir and the north-west for India from the Afghans. Sinha wished, however, that instead of 'yielding' to the British, Ranjit Singh had gone to war against them, irrespective of the consequences. While borrowing his formulations from modern European history, Sinha allowed his judgments to be influenced also by the contemporary political environment in India. Like Banerjee, Sinha's works too suffered from the limitations of conceptualization and sources.

The fifth part of the book deals with 'the native historians of the Punjab', beginning with Gokul Chand Narang's doctoral study. First published in 1912, and revised and enlarged several times till the 1960s, his *Transformation of Sikhism* remained consistent in its basic premise that Sikhism was a Hindu sect and that Sikh movement was a Hindu movement from the first to the tenth Guru. Banda Bahadur, however, taught the Hindus how to conquer and rule, thereby making Sikhism 'less sectarian and more nationalistic' in its character. Grewal suggests that Narang 'looked upon the Sikhs as prototypes of the Arya Samajists'.¹⁹ Ironically, while he highlighted the 'life-and-death struggle'

and political achievement of the Khalsa in the post-Banda period, for the history of the Sikhs under colonial rule, Narang dwelt on the theme of loyalty. Until after the attainment of independence, 'Narang looked upon himself as a "missionary of Hindu-Sikh unity"'.²⁰ He had no sympathy for the Sikh struggle for what he calls 'Khalistan' and the Akali agitation for a Punjabi-speaking state. Like Indubhusan Banerjee, Narang 'tried to appropriate the Sikh past for Hindu nationalism'. While Narang's 'assumptions and approach' marred his interpretation even in the first edition of his work,²¹ 'the later editions can be seen as "a journalistic exercise" or as "a piece of political writing rather than a writing of history"'.²²

The next historian taken up is Hari Ram Gupta who can be seen as chronologically bridging the pre and post-Independence historical writing on the Sikhs. His most important work on Sikh history was his doctoral thesis published in 1939 as *History of the Sikhs from 1739 to 1768*. Its sequel came out in two volumes in 1944 as the history respectively of the cis and trans-Satlej Sikhs from 1769 to 1799. The first and the third volumes give a connected and on the whole meaningful account of the political activity of the trans-Satlej Sikhs who fought against the Mughals and Afghans and developed institutions and practices that contributed towards the ultimate triumph of the Sikhs and occupation of territories. The second volume on the politics and warfare of the cis-Satlej Sikhs, however, 'does not contribute to our understanding of the political process'. In Gupta's treatment, the Sikh chiefs of this tract emerged as selfish plunderers who subordinated collective interest to their individual interests, and who had no hesitation in accepting political subordination as vassals. Gupta referred to them as the Phulkian misl, 'though there is no evidence for treating the Phulkian chiefs as a single unit'. Moreover, Gupta failed 'to see that all the important Sikh chiefs were acting independently of others'. If they were virtually autonomous in the cis-Satlej tract, in the trans-Satlej area 'they were acting as monarchs and Ranjit Singh was a born monarch'.²³

Gupta evinced admiration for the trans-Satlej Sikhs who repulsed the Afghan invasions and established sovereign rule in the Punjab. By

turning the tide of 'foreign' aggression after 800 years and by securing the frontier region of 'our country', they performed a 'national duty'. In this 'equation of Muslims with foreigner', Gupta revealed an overlapping of 'Indian nationalism' with 'Hindu nationalism',²⁴ though he was far removed from Narang's unabashed 'Hinduized perspective positing Hindu-Muslim divide as a central aspect of Indian society'.²⁵ Gupta's sympathetic treatment brought out the 'intrinsic worth' of the Khalsa and 'their tenacity of purpose and resourcefulness'.

Using a number of Persian, English, Gurmukhi and Marathi sources, Gupta 'may be seen as interpreting eighteenth century Sikh history largely through his facts'. He was meticulous about persons, places and events, but stretched his 'contemporary evidence' to 'anything that came from the eighteenth century and even the early decades of the nineteenth century'. As a whole, his work can be seen as constituting 'a clear and substantial advance over Sinha in terms of factual detail and authenticity and in terms of political development phase by phase'. However, continues Grewal, Gupta's History 'does not contribute anything serious' to the study of Sikh polity, while economic, social and cultural aspects are 'barely mentioned'.²⁶

G.L. Chopra was the first historian of Ranjit Singh to get a doctorate from London which he published in 1928 as the Punjab as a Sovereign State. With its critical use of unpublished Persian and English sources available in London, extensive annotation, three maps, and seven appendices (six of which illumine the text), Chopra's work can be considered 'scholarly'. He systematically studied the creation and structure of Ranjit Singh's state and attributed its ultimate decline to some 'subtle and fundamental causes' beyond his control. Chopra disagreed with his British predecessors over the character and religious beliefs of Ranjit Singh, his court and civil administration. It was underlined that there was neither any religious discrimination nor any 'drain of wealth' under Ranjit Singh. He involved all religious communities of the Punjab in his enterprise, but it was a mistake on his part to allow the Dogras to acquire vast territory and influence. As Grewal puts it, 'an undercurrent of Punjabi nationalism' was evident in Chopra who assumed the existence of three wellmarked religious

communities in the Punjab.²⁷

A 'strong Punjabi sentiment' is evident also in Sita Ram Kohli's work on Ranjit Singh and his successors. As the Keeper of Records at Lahore, he had access to a diverse range of sources in Persian, English, Urdu and Punjabi and even some artifacts which he used for his various publications on the early nineteenth century Punjab. Kohli was not inclined to treat any of the existing sources and recent studies as 'authorities' though he appreciated J.D. Cunningham's sympathetic approach. Kohli's comprehensive study of Ranjit Singh in Urdu (1933) and Punjabi (1953) dwells on his early life, political history, diplomatic relations, military organization, revenue and civil administration, and his idea of sovereignty. Ranjit Singh did not give importance to the symbols of royalty like the crown and the throne, but he could lay emphasis on his sovereign status through other means. In Kohli's view, his greatest service to the country was the unification of the Punjab which entailed peace and prosperity for a large part of the country.

Kohli studied the eventful decade after Ranjit Singh in a separate volume entitled, *Sunset of the Sikh Empire*, which was published posthumously. While meticulously presenting the fast-changing political scenario at Lahore and the political considerations of the British, Kohli narrated the sequence of events leading to the outbreak of the Anglo-Sikh War and what Grewal calls the 'deliberate subversion of a protected state' subsequently.²⁸ Despite Khushwant Singh's substantial editing of the last three chapters, the *Sunset* remained Kohli's work 'with great empathy for the Khalsa'.²⁹ His approach was marked by intellectual integrity, logical presentation and lucidity of style. He was 'a pioneer in bringing new sources to light'; he was 'also a pioneer in giving special attention to the army of Ranjit Singh, and his revenue administration'.³⁰

The last work analysed by Grewal is *A Short History of the Sikhs* by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh, which represents 'a kind of transition from the colonial to contemporary Sikh studies'.³¹ By then, a string of 'Sikh scholars' had produced encyclopaedic, textual, philological, linguistic, scriptural, philosophical, grammatical and biographical

studies in Punjabi and English.³² Historical approach is evident in the works particularly of Teja Singh, Karam Singh, ‘the historian’, and Ganda Singh. Through his several publications on Sikhism, Sikh ideals and institutions, Teja Singh laid emphasis on Sikhism as ‘an original system’. Representing the Singh Sabha concern for Sikh history, Karam Singh collected unpublished evidence about the period of Sikh rule in Punjabi, Persian and English. His articles on problems of Sikh history and monographs on Banda Singh and Raja Ala Singh presented ‘rational interpretation of empirical evidence’ in Punjabi, with an open-minded approach to the sources. ‘Interest in biography, original source materials, and issues or themes of contemporary interest’ was evident also in Ganda Singh’s writings. Reflecting all these concerns and approaches during the transitional phase, *A Short History* can be regarded as ‘its most important publication’, which ‘served as a good introduction to Sikh history for six decades’.³³

Laying emphasis on ‘scientific approach’, Teja Singh and Ganda Singh claimed their history to be a just and impartial account from a secular viewpoint. They covered the period of Sikh history in three unequal phases: From 1469 to 1708, the ten Gurus laid its ‘religious foundations’; from 1708 to 1716, Banda Singh laid its ‘political foundations’; and the period from 1716 to 1765 was marked by ‘persecution leading to power’. The authors underlined that Sikhism was founded as a new faith from the very beginning, and that Sikh ideology and institutions became the basis of the Sikh social order. The Sikh ideology for which they used the term ‘character’ (sum of ideas, attitudes, ethics and values) enabled the Sikhs to respond to the trying situations constructively. This empathetic and insightful study evinced familiarity with the sources from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, with a cautious use of Persian and English accounts and greater reliance on the contemporary Sikh sources, including the *Guru Granth Sahib*.

However, as Grewal points out, the authors did not always ‘make a distinction between strictly “contemporary” and “near contemporary” evidence’. Moreover, there is no credible evidence for the ideas that Guru Gobind Singh agreed to perform *hom* for the Goddess (even if to disillusion the people); that it was Banda Singh who first thought

of sovereign rule; that he abolished the *zamindari* system; that the *rakhi* system was different from the occupation of territories by the Sikhs later on; or that the concept of *misdari* was relevant for the period of Sikh rule which, incidentally, was not covered in *A Short History*.³⁴ Recent research has drawn attention towards these lacunae in the political history of the Sikhs as presented by Teja Singh and Ganda Singh. By now, in fact, the scope of Sikh history has widened sufficiently to cover social, cultural, economic and institutional aspects.

IN RETROSPECT

The contours of modern historical writing on the Sikhs took shape over the past century and a half. What was a bare outline at the end of the eighteenth century got filled up gradually by the time J.D. Cunningham published his sympathetic yet scholarly *History of the Sikhs* in 1849. In the first half of the colonial period historical writings on the Sikhs moved either in neutral gear or consciously away from Cunningham, adding to stereotypes and misconceptions. A convergence of traditional Sikh scholarship (inspired by the Singh Sabha resurgence) with the Western scholarship (inspired by colonial necessity) resulted in Max Arthur Macauliffe's multi-volume work published in 1909, weaving tradition with narrative. It was intelligible alike to the Western and Indian readers, and its influence can be discerned in the later writings of the American missionaries. By then, and as a corrective to the generally unsympathetic Western writings, the first generation of the English educated 'Sikh' scholars came to the fore, using Sikh sources, laying emphasis on the distinctiveness of Sikhism, and expressing concern about the position of the Sikhs in contemporary times. The growth of modern education and the march of Indian nationalism, albeit under-towed by communalism, inspired a cross-section of Punjabi and Bengali scholars to study Sikh history from various standpoints. The traditional Sikh scholars also came forth with a diverse range of studies in Punjabi as noted by Grewal. A convergence of some of their concerns with those of modern scholars is evident in Teja Singh and Ganda Singh's *A Short History*.

While classifying the writers according to their background and

period, Grewal rightly looks upon them as the products of their particular situations. Through his deconstruction of each work, capturing its nuances and intricacies, pointing out its fine points and inaccuracies, and unravelling its author's purposes, concerns and predilections, Grewal determines the degree of its reliability and comparative worth for Sikh history. His analysis exposes the prejudices and hollowness of the writings of the British administrators and military officers, particularly in the post-annexation period. Their relevance lay more in affording insights into the thinking and priorities of the colonialists in their own time. By and large, the works of only those writers – whether Western or Indian – turned out to be more lasting for those who used the sources critically while respecting the Sikh tradition. With the exception of Syad Muhammad Latif, Indian scholars attempted that, albeit with varying degree of success. All along, they were asking new questions, unearthing new sources, refining the earlier interpretations, and gaining maturity, respectability and readership in the process. According to Grewal:

What is common to the Indian historians is their conviction that their understanding and their interpretation of the Sikh past was more meaningful than that of the Western writers. Adopting Western methodology, they created 'modern' historical writing.

Looking back, it is possible to see that the works of J.D. Cunningham and some Indian scholars turned out to be important milestones in the historiography of the Sikhs, identifying and illumining the different periods of Sikh history. Some of these studies blazed trails and some came to be regarded as classics for their sound treatment, empathetic understanding and lucidity of style. Some works have remained relevant for posterity only as the mirrors of their own time, and for the views of the authors; they have entered history in the sense of their contents and interpretations having been rejected or subsumed by the later research. Together, however, the works analysed in the book constitute the 'heritage from the colonial period', to be 'reinforced, expanded and enriched after India's Independence'.³⁵

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3. Between 2007 and 1972 when this collection was first published there was nearly cent per cent increase in its volume, though some essays have been taken out in the light of fresh thinking. See note 43 for full reference.
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9. *Ibid.*, p. 225.
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17. Grewal, *Historical Writings*, p. 323.
18. *Ibid.*, p. 332.
19. *Ibid.*, p. 359.
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 360, 362.

21. K.L. Tuteja, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 365.
22. Fauja Singh, quoted in *ibid.*, p. 363.
23. *Ibid.*, p. 397.
24. *Ibid.*, p. 396.
25. K.L. Tuteja, 'Interpreting Sikh History: A Study of Gokul Chand Narang's *Transformation of Sikhism*', in *Historical Diversities: Society, Politics and Culture*, ed. K.L. Tuteja and Sunita Pathania (New Delhi: Manohar, 2008), p. 425.
26. Grewal, *Historical Writings*, p. 398.
27. *Ibid.*, p. 417.
28. *Ibid.*, pp. 439-41.
29. *Ibid.*, p.12.
30. *Ibid.*, p.442. See also Fauja Singh, 'Sita Ram Kohli', *Historians and Historiography of the Punjab*, ed. Fauja Singh (New Delhi: Oriental Publishers, 1978), pp. 336-37.
31. Grewal, *Historical Writings*, p. 444.
32. These scholars are: Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Bhai Jodh Singh, Sir Jogendra Singh, G.B. Singh, Giani Sher Singh, Narain Singh, Sahib Singh, Teja Singh, Karam Singh and Ganda Singh. *Ibid.*, pp.445-46.
33. *Ibid.*, pp. 445-46, 467.
34. *Ibid.*, pp. 467-68. Elsewhere, Grewal points out that Teja Singh and Ganda Singh 'look upon Guru Gobind Singh as the creator of a nation and yet they are reluctant to ascribe any political purposes directly to him'. 'Study of Sikhism, Sikh History and Sikh Literature', in *Approaches to History: Essays in Indian Historiography*, ed. Sabyasachi Bhattacharya (Delhi: Primus Books/ Indian Council of Historical Research, 2011), p. 289.
35. Grewal, *Historical Writings*, p. 12.

FIGHTING FOR PUNJAB CAUSES IN INDIAN PARLIAMENT

DR HARDEV SINGH VIRK*

“Fighting for Sikh Causes in Indian Parliament” was edited by me in 2021 on the basis of documents supplied by Sardar Tarlochan Singh (Ex-MP, Rajya Sabha). Sardar Vikramjit Singh Sawhney (presently MP Rajya Sabha) funded this project and book was freely distributed by Arsee Publishers, New Delhi. It got wide publicity on discussion forums before parliamentary elections 2024. It will augur well if Members of Parliament from Punjab start fighting for the “Punjab Causes” collectively, rising above the party interests, as displayed recently in Indian Parliament.

After retirement, my research interests were focussed on “Groundwater Contamination of Punjab due to Uranium and other Heavy Metals”. More than two dozen research papers have been published in International Journals. Punjab suffers from two maladies of extreme nature: (i) Its groundwater is depleted beyond recovery in almost all blocks due to overexploitation, and (ii) It is highly contaminated due to presence of pollutants of all types rendering it unfit for drinking and irrigation. Before summing up results of my investigations, I may recall the role played by Parliamentarians of Punjab.

Uranium poisoning in Punjab first made news in March 2009, when a South African Clinical Metal Toxicologist, Carin Smit [1], visiting Faridkot city in Punjab found surprisingly high levels of uranium in 88% of the blood samples collected from amongst mentally

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retarded children in the Malwa region of Punjab. This issue was raised in Parliament and fruitful discussion was held to resolve it. As a consequence, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) provided liberal grants to GND University Physics Department for carrying out research on groundwater contamination. Tata Memorial Cancer hospital was also involved and its branch became operational in Sangrur to evaluate cancer risk due to heavy metal contamination. The famous “Cancer Train” to Bikaner is no more needed in Punjab.

S. Partap Singh Bajwa (Member, Rajya Sabha) raised a Starred Question No. 39 in Parliament on groundwater contamination in Punjab which was answered by Uma Bharti, the then Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation, on 6th Feb. 2017.

Will the Minister of Water Resources, River Development and Ganga Rejuvenation be pleased to state:

- a) the prescribed World Health Organization (WHO) limits for chemicals like Aluminum, Arsenic Lead, Uranium. Mercury and Chromium in groundwater, chemical-wise;
- b) whether any of the districts in Punjab have higher concentration of the aforementioned chemical in groundwater and if so, the details thereof and the reasons therefor; and
- c) whether any study has been undertaken/ completed to gauge the potential health impact of these chemicals in groundwater and if so, the findings thereof?

The details are available from archives of Parliament Library proceedings as under:

*39. SHRI PARTAP SINGH BAJWA

The gist of Minister’s reply is summed up in a table regarding contaminants in Punjab:

CONTAMINANTS IN GROUND WATER IN PUNJAB

Arsenic	Lead	Chromium	Uranium
Mansa, Amritsar,	Amritsar,	Amritsar, Bathinda	Amritsar, Bathinda,
Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur,	Bathinda,	Gurdaspur,	Barnala, Faridkot,
Kapurthala, Ropar,	Ferozepur,	Kapurthala,	Fatehgarh Sahib,

Faridkot, Nawashahar, Sangrur, Taran Taran	Gurdaspur, Muktsar, Ropar	Mansa, Ropar, Barnala, Sangrur, SAS Nagar, Taran Taran	Ferozepur, Gurdaspur, Hoshiarpur, Kapurthala, Jalandhar, Ludhiana, Mansa, Moga, SBS Nagar, Patiala, Ropar, Sangrur, Taran Taran
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The reply was based on groundwater data collected by Department of Water Supply and Sanitation (DWSS) of Punjab Government, SAS Nagar (Mohali) under the aegis of World Bank Project, and generated by Regional Advanced Water Testing Laboratory (RAWTL) based in Mohali. Our study is also based on groundwater data supplied by DWSS.

On July 26, The Tribune published a report "Dangerous amount of toxicity in Punjab groundwater showing presence of harmful uranium, lead beyond permissible limits". Congress MP, Charanjit Singh Channi, raised this issue in Parliament and Minister of State for Jal Shakti, Raj Bhushan Chaudhary, replied using data provided by Central Ground Water Board (CGWB). The summary of Minister's reply is as follows:

MINISTER REPLIES TO EX-CM CHANNI'S POSER

According to the minister, groundwater samples showed dangerous concentrations of contaminants such as nitrate, iron, arsenic, selenium, chromium, manganese, nickel, cadmium, lead and uranium, all exceeding permissible limits set by the Bureau of Indian Standards. Heavy metals and anthropogenic pollutants beyond the permissible limits for human consumption have been reported in isolated pockets in groundwater of Punjab.

OVERUSE OF FERTILISERS, PESTICIDES TO BLAME?

Experts attribute the contamination largely to the overuse of fertilisers and pesticides. Punjab leads the country in fertiliser consumption, with an annual usage of 375.63 kg of urea and 91.49 kg of diammonium phosphate per hectare.

HEALTH PROBLEMS

High levels of magnesium can lead to depression and nerve problems, while excessive sodium intake can cause nausea, muscle

ELEMENTS DETECTED AFTER STUDY OF 924 SAMPLES

Nitrate	118 samples (above 45 mg/l limit)
Manganese	38 samples (above 0.3 mg/l limit)
Nickel	1 sample (above 0.02 mg/l limit)
Iron	5.52% samples (above 1 mg/l limit)
Arsenic	45 samples (above 10 µg/l limit)
Selenium	4 samples (above 10 µg/l limit)

twitching, and in severe cases, fatality.

The Minister's reply is based on CGWB data collected randomly from 924 locations. DWSS data covers the entire Punjab with more than 8200 samples analysed at RAWTL, Mohali. My research is based on DWSS data collected from all districts; hence it is more comprehensive and represents a far better scenario of groundwater contamination in Punjab. A summary of our findings is listed as under:

Our group in GND University was the first to report high Uranium content in groundwater and correlate it with cancer occurrence in the Malwa belt of Punjab. My recent investigations [2-6] based on DWSS data reveal a different scenario in Punjab. Majha belt is highly contaminated with Arsenic, Doaba belt with Selenium, and Malwa belt with Uranium contamination in groundwater. Our Current Science paper (25 June, 2024) reports carcinogenic and non-carcinogenic health hazards for the population of Majha belt of Punjab: "*The predicted values for cancer induction in children and adults of Amritsar district are 500 and 360 per million respectively. Mitigation of arsenic in groundwater is an urgent need in the Majha belt of Punjab*".

Other important conclusions of our study using DWSS data of RAWTL are as follows:

1. Patiala district is a “Hot Spot” due to high Fluoride, Nitrate, Sulphate, Nickel, and Cadmium contamination in groundwater, in addition to Uranium.
2. Amritsar district is a “Hot Spot” of Arsenic contamination in Punjab. More than 50% villages with high Arsenic in Punjab are found in this district.
3. Hoshiarpur is a “Hot Spot” of Chromium contamination of groundwater. More than 80% villages with high chromium are found in this district.
4. Mercury contamination of groundwater is rampant in Ferozepur district.
5. Lead contamination is wide spread in Punjab with highest number of villages found in Jalandhar and Gurdaspur districts.
6. Uranium contamination is rampant in the 10 districts of Malwa belt.
7. Mitigation measures are in progress by DWSS under the World Bank Project.
8. Heavy metal contamination in groundwater is attributed to intensive use of fertilisers and weedicides in addition to geogenic sources which come into play due to over-exploitation of groundwater resources in Punjab.
9. A simple solution to the problem is also suggested: (i) promote Organic farming in Punjab, (ii) stop free supply of power to Tubewells, and (iii) adopt a cropping pattern which breaks the wheat-paddy cycle.
10. Punjab is on the brink of a looming disaster if mitigation measures are not implemented in near future.

Clock is ticking fast for Punjab to act, otherwise the backbone of Punjab, its peasantry, will be destroyed! I am reminded of a couplet of Oliver Goldsmith in his celebrated poem “The Deserted Village”:

Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay:

Princes and lords may flourish, or may fade—
 A breath can make them, as a breath has made:
 But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
 When once destroyed, can never be supplied.

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End Notes

1. Vikramjit Singh Sawhney, MP Rajya Sabha, is raising Punjab issues in Parliament boldly. He asked about solution of declining groundwater level in Punjab. The Minister Jal Shakti, CR Patil, informed him that 18 districts are in red zone due to overexploitation of groundwater in Punjab. Sawhney wanted Punjab to be included under Atul Bhujal Yojana, a World Bank Project. Haryana and six more states are beneficiaries under this scheme. The Minister informed him that Punjab has not fulfilled the criteria.
2. Under crop diversification, the Central Govt. sanctioned Rs. 293 Crore to Punjab on June 10. The scheme failed to be implemented during this paddy season due to red tape of bureaucracy in Punjab.
3. Punjab also suffers due to tensions between the Centre and State governments.

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SIKH ACROSS THE SEAS
– SIKH EMIGRATION ABROAD –

D.S. MANGAT*

According to the Ministry of External Affairs Govt of India report released on May 21, 2024, ‘There are 35.4 million (35,421,987 to be exact) Non-Resident Indians (NRIs) and Persons of Indian Origin (PIOs) including Overseas Citizens of India (OCIs) residing outside of India.’ About 20 million of these Indians live and work in the Persian Gulf countries. In some of these countries, the Indian diaspora forms a sizable proportion of that country’s population, like in Qatar, they form around 85% of the total population of the country (2005 estimates) and in United Arab Emirates 75% of the total population of the country. The Indians living abroad form the world’s largest diaspora. About 2.5 million Indians migrate overseas annually which is the highest annual number of migrants in the world. From constitutional perspective the Overseas Citizenship of India does not extend Indian citizenship rights, to the OCI card holders along with restriction on ‘voting rights’, and government jobs. As a matter of fact, the OCI card entitles foreign passport-holder a permanent visa for visiting India. Unlike in Europe and north America, the west Asian and the Gulf countries do not extend the right to citizenship or permanent residence status to the foreigners on work visa. That is partly why the Indian diaspora in these countries maintain close links with their country and contribute lots of foreign exchange through remittances lots of foreign exchange to India. According to the Ministry of Overseas Indian Affairs records, India received US\$125 Billion in foreign exchange in 2023, which is a big boost to India’s foreign trade.

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Around 40% of India's remittances flow to Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Punjab, Andhra Pradesh, and Uttar Pradesh. Reserve Bank of India's records indicated in 2012, that 30.8% of the total remittances were from West Asia, 29.4% from North America and 19.5% from Europe. These remittances contributed 3.4% of the GDP of India in 2023-2024. According to the Pew Research Centre, top contributors are United Arab Emirates (UAE) US\$ 13.826 billion, United States US\$ 11,715 billion, Saudi Arabia US\$ 11.239 billion and UK US\$ 3.941 billion and so on.

Indomania or Indophilia is considered love and admiration for India, its culture and its people. With reference to, 'The Formation of Human Population in South and Central Asia' by Narasimhan, Vagheesh M., it is believed that the 'Indus periphery' population was spread out in Central Asia during the Bronze Age. They may have migrated from the Indus Valley Civilization and settled down at BMAC (Bactria-Margiana Archaeological Complex) also known as Oxus Civilization.

According to the 'St, Petersburg City News' on March 16, 2016, under the heading, 'The Indian Diaspora in Russia' the Indian merchant diaspora in Central Asia and Arabia emerged in the 16th century and remained active for over four hundred years. In 1610, a trade post was set up at Astrakhan at the mouth of Volga was the first place during the Tsardom of Russia. In the 18th century, the Russian chroniclers reported the presence of the Hindu traders in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Encyclopaedia Iranica Vol. VIII states that Multani people from Multan, Shikarpur and Mawar of both Hindu and Muslim background acted as bankers and merchants in Safavid Persia. Hindu merchants were massacred by the Ottomans. Due to the Ottoman-Afghan war of 1722-1727 in Iran, the Indian merchant community plummeted. In the Kerman province of Iran, near the town of Kerman, there was a 'Caravanserai' (A road-side resting place built along the trade routes also called the 'Silk Roads' covering Asia, North-Africa and Southeast Europe. These caravanserais helped the traders for promoting market for their goods, exchange of information and

introducing traders from different countries. These caravanserais were called by different names in the Islamic world like 'khan', wikala or funduq. They played a central role in promoting economic, cultural, religious and political interactions between the eastern and the western world.) Indian traders were mentioned by Jean Chardin, Jean de Thevenot and F. A. Kotov in Persia living along with Jews and Armenians. Indian traders of Sikh and Hindu background lived among the Qajar and the Zand Dynasties in Persia after a clamp down by Nader Shah and the Afghan Ghilzar wars in Iran.

According to George Forster, in 1783, Samarqandi and Bukharan traders bought indigo from the merchants of Hindu origin in Kandahar. Lumsden mentioned that there were 350 stores owned by the Hindu traders in Kandahar. Sikhs and Hindus traded textiles, finance and precious metals in Kandahar in the 18th century. By 1776 the Peshawar Hindus were doing money-lending business in Kabul. The Peshawari and Shikarpuri Indian traders were involved in grain, Ferghana cotton and in legal money-lending business in the Bukharan Emirate. Hindus and Bahais lived in Baluchistan and Khorasan in Iran. Muslim Uyghurs would shout insults on the Hindu traders in 1907 in Poskam and Yarkand. In the Islamic world the Muslim attitude was very hostile towards Hindu traders. The Hindu money lenders and merchants were the targets of hostility in Xinjiang, an autonomous region in northwest China till the British Consul-General ensured their safety. Similarly, the Indian traders had started travelling to the southeast Asia since the time of Ashoka the Great.

More recently the British had abolished slavery through the British Slavery Act of 1833 which took effect on August 1, 1834. But they still needed workers for their colonies. In order to fulfil that need they created a category of forcible, 'Indentured labour' under the 'Indian Indenture System' whom they could use under a contract, in their colonies without paying much for a stipulated length of time usually five years. The indentured workers used to be Bhojpuri speaking from Bhojpur district in Uttar Pradesh or Awadhi speaking from Bihar. Main destinations for the indentured workers were Mauritius, Guyana,

Trinidad and Tobago, Suriname, Caribbean Countries (Jamaica, Guadeloupe, Martinique, Belize, Barbados, Grenada, Saint Vincent and the Saint Lucia) Fiji, Reunion, Seychelles, Malaysia, Singapore, East Africa (Kenya, Somalia, Tanzania, Uganda) and South Africa. So, when the indentured labourers were sent abroad, at the end of their term some of them chose to stay there and seek employment. Gujrati and Sindhi merchants and traders settled in the Arabian Peninsula, Aden, Oman, Bahrain, Dubai, South Africa and other East African countries which were British colonies. The Indian Rupee was the legal currency in many countries of the Arabian Peninsula. Baloch, Sindhi, Rajasthani, Kashmiri and Punjabi camel drivers were brought to Australia.

SIKH (PUNJABI) EMIGRATION TO CHINA

Punjabis have been known for being on the look-out for greener pastures (Explorers of economic opportunities) all over the world. During early 1970, I had a chance to stay in Europe for nine or so months, I noticed thousands of visitors from east and west Punjab. From times immemorial, people from this area have been 'on the move' as has been mentioned by Dr. Buddha Parkash in his book, "Evolution of Heroic Tradition in Ancient Punjab". **TRADERS:-** Punjabi Khattris and Hindu traders traversed along the Silk Roads from Ladakh to central Asia including China. Punjabi Khattris played a stellar role in promoting trade along the Silk Roads up to China. Mr. Robert Shaw and Mr. Aurel Stein were accompanied by Tara Singh (in 1867) and Rai Bahadur Lal Singh (1860-1930), respectively. **SOLDIERS:-** According to Swaran Singh Kahlon in his 'Sikh Migration of Great Historical Interest', soon after the annexation of the Lahore Durbar, the British started recruiting the Punjabi Sikhs to serve in the Shanghai Municipal Police and Hongkong Police. Mr. Bibek Bhandari states in his, "The Forgotten History of Sikhs in Shanghai", that the British were reluctant to hire too many Chinese men for the Police force because they did not trust them. So, they decided to hire Sikhs.

SHANGHAI INTERNATIONAL POLICE (1854)

According to the 'Historical Dictionary of Sikhism' by W. H.

McLeod, a contingent of Sikh Policemen arrived in Hongkong in 1867. The recruitment for Shanghai Police Force began in 1884, in 1886 for Tianjin Police Force followed by Tientsin, Amoy, Hankow and Wuhan. Their number in the police force remained any where from 500-800. According to the, 'Lording Over the Locals: When Red Turbans were a Familiar Sight', by Bivash Mukarjee, in 1884 there were only 16 Sikh policemen in Shanghai, in 1910, the number rose to 159, in 1920, there were 513, in 1934 there were 634 and in 1942 there were 464 Sikhs were employed in Shanghai. Sikh Policemen participated in putting down Shanghai riots in 1905.

ASSASSINATION OF BUDHA SINGH

Budha Singh was born in the Majha region in 1870, and moved to Shanghai in 1902 to join the Shanghai Municipal Force and rose through the ranks to become Havildar in February, 1906 and Jamadar (A rare accomplishment among the Sikh policemen) in 1911. Being aggressive, he served the local Sikh Gurdwara (Doang Baoxing Road Gurdwara) as a treasurer and later as Secretary. Captain E. M. I. Barrett had started using Budha Singh as an informant regarding the activities of the radical Sikh individuals in the Shanghai congregation especially during the Ghadar movement. The dedicated Sikhs of Shanghai and the Ghadarites were apprehended by the British authorities with the help of Budha Singh. Budha Singh was threatened from time to time for his anti-national activities. Finally, on the morning of April 6, 1927, Budha Singh was shot to death by 'Harbant Singh, a member of the Ghadar party'. At the time of his murder, Budha Singh was on duty on the front gate of the Central Police Station within the Shanghai International Settlement. Before this, there was an identical case in Vancouver (Canada). Mr. William Charles Hopkinson was passing intelligence information about the activities of the Indians to the Canadian authorities. He was assassinated on October, 21, 1914, by Meva Singh Lopoke.

Apart from Police, the Sikhs in Shanghai also worked as watchmen and guards at banks, wharves, nightclubs and hotels. Many were employed as prison guards. Some Sikhs were also involved in money-

lending business as a second job. According to the, 'Captivating History of Sikhs in Old Shanghai' by Rhea Almeida, the Sikh money-landers had a reputation for being 'ruthless'. They also worked as warehouse workers at big businesses. For these reasons the local Chinese population despised the Sikhs in general.

Mostly, the bonded Sikh policemen would return after the expiry of their term in service. But some would choose to marry the Chinese ladies and raise their families in Shanghai. They built Gurdwaras (Sikh Shrines) for collective worship by the congregation. There are several Gurdwaras functioning in China and Hongkong. Some of them are in Keqiao (Yiwu) named 'Sach Dham' established in October, 2011 by the Sindhi Sikhs. With reference to, "Shanghai's Secret Gurdwara" by Anju Kaur, 'A secret Gurdwara is functioning on the top floor of a luxurious, private residence located in an affluent neighbourhood on the outskirts of Shanghai. Times of India, reported about it in 2017 that it was established in around 2006 by a Sikh business man, Satbir Singh, a long-time resident of Hongkong. Regular religious service and caretaking of the Gurdwara is performed by a full-time Granthi. Daily kirtan service is performed in the morning and evening. Around thirty people attend the service on Sunday. During Gurburab celebrations the attendance goes up to one hundred. "On July 19, 1925, a group of 25 reached Amritsar from Shanghai, (China)."¹ The reference is also available to this participation in the historical records of the Shanghai Sikh Gurdwaras with the picture of the Jatha on their departure in the month of February, 1925.

In 1924, Rabindra Nath Tagore is believed to have visited the Gurdwara on Doang Baoxing Road, during his visit. In 1932, Indian field hockey legend Mr. Dhayan Chand also visited the same Gurdwara.

Bibek Bhandari mentions in his writing, 'Forgotten History of Sikhs in Shanghai', with reference to Mr. Yin Cao, that the role of Shanghai-based Sikhs played in both the Indian independence movement and Chinese nationalist movement has been disregarded by both the national histories of modern India and China. He further

¹ A Brief History of The Sikhs, Devinder Singh Mangat, p. 429

adds that the Chinese national history focuses on the contributions made by the Chinese themselves, ignoring non-Chinese who assisted in their nationalist movement. In the meanwhile, the Indian national history focuses on the efforts of the Indian National Congress and ignores the efforts of the Sikh diaspora in the independence movement of India.

INDIAN EMIGRATION TO AFRICAN COUNTRIES;

According to Renu Modi in her, “The Indian Diaspora in Africa” mentions the existence of trade relations between the Dravidians and the Babylonians even in the 7th century B.C. Indian coastal communities had established trade and cultural ties with East Asia, Central Asia and East Africa during the pre-colonial era. After the abolition of slavery in the British Empire in 1834, the British started using forcible labour under the ‘Indian Indenture System’ they created to fulfil their need for labour in their colonies. Some of the ‘indentured labourers’ after completing their initial term they were forced to renew their contract after which they would decide to settle there permanently. Estimates suggest that between 1829-1926, about 769,500 Indians migrated to Mauritius, South Africa, Seychelles and East African regions. In Africa, the Indian labourers numbering around 3.5 million, mostly worked in sugarcane plantations.

During the twentieth century labour demand changed in Africa. According to the, “The Report of the General Manager of Uganda Railway 1918-1919’, ’22, A European Officer thoroughly well acquainted with India and Indians was sent over to India in 1918, with instructions to recruit 357 Indians for all departments- Station Masters, Signallers, Artisans, etc. He returned in April 1919, and had only been able to sign on 83% of those required. It is hoped, however, that now that military operations have ceased our requirements will be met, but the difficulty of meeting our wants from India has made it very clear that we should look to this country for our supply.’ It shows the Indians played a key role in the construction of Railways and its success.

According to the recent estimates of the Indian government,

indicate that 2,710,654 Indians live in 46 countries in Africa. The concentration of Indian population varies across Africa. In Mauritius, 70% of the total population is of Indian background. Lots of Sikhs from Punjab worked in African countries in forest industry and Artisans from Phagwara contributed a lot for technical support in all kind of newly developing industry in Africa. When they returned, they imported Mercedes cars from overseas. There may still be an old Mercedes still parked in some garage from 1950s or even earlier in Phagwara, Punjab which has been an Agro-industrial hub along with legendary Moga Artisans since the early twentieth century.

SIKH EMIGRATION TO AUSTRALIA

According to the 2021 census, 976,000 Indians live in Australia and with reference to September 2023, figures there are 122,391 Indian students as well. Out of the Indians, 210,000 Sikhs are included in those numbers forming the country's fastest growing fifth-largest ethnic group. Highest Sikh concentration is in Victoria, New South Wales and Queensland. During Pre-Federation time (1830s-1901) Sikhs seem to have arrived during late 1830s when the slowing down of 'Penal transport' of convicts to New South Wales (Queensland and Victoria), before it was completely abolished in 1840. 1836 records indicate a man with the last name 'McCoy' recruiting 50 Sikh workers for his Sugar plantations in Australia. 1860 onwards, cameleers and hawkers were brought in to Australia to help settle and populate Australia's vast arid interior. The Sikhs were a recognizable among those new settlers who worked as cameleers and hawkers (selling goods door to door on foot or on a wagon). Sikh hawkers were a common sight towards the end of the 19th century. Hawking was based on credit right to the consumer who used to pay after the harvesting of crops. The hawkers sold wide variety of goods like work wear, farming goods, fashionable clothing and sewing needles for the ladies of the household. All hawkers required licenses which became restricted to British subjects after 1890. Afghans, Assyrians and Chinese were denied license renewals after 1890. That gave the Sikh hawkers a monopoly. Some of them became successful businessmen. Two of the most successful

Sikh hawkers were Baba Ram Singh and Otim (Uttam Singh) who established 'The People Stores' in 1907. Baba Ram Singh is believed to have brought the first Guru Granth Sahib to Australia in early 1920s.

Due to the enactment of 'White Australia Policy' between 1901-1973 (Federation) Sikhs were restricted to enter Australia. According to the historians, number of Indians in Australia in 1901 was between 4700-7600. According to the 1911 census Indian population dropped to 3698 and in 1921 only 2200 Indians (mostly Sikhs) were left. After the conclusion of the WW. I, image of the Sikhs in Australia improved. Sikhs were classified a 'Martial Race' by the officers of the British Empire. Australian Sikhs were viewed preferentially in the face of Japanese industrialised and expansionist policy. Indians were extended limited property rights, right to vote and allowed pension. During 1930s the Sikhs began to utilise their new-found privileges to bring their sons over from Punjab to work as labourers, Sugar cane farm workers, banana plantation workers (in Woolgoolga) and in the construction of the railways. During the WW II, Australia suffered from shortage of manpower, since the white population was recruited into the army to serve overseas. During 1950s and 1960s, the Sikhs started purchasing their own banana farms and bringing their wives and children from Punjab and start raising their families in Australia.

RACIAL DISCRIMINATION ACT OF 1975;

A new chapter in the lives of the Australians started with the enactment of the Racial Discrimination Act on June 11, 1975, by the Edward Gough Whitlam government, outlawing the racial discrimination. After this act the Sikh migration to Australia increased dramatically. Sikhs began to move from India, Kenya, Uganda, Malaysia, Singapore, Fiji and the United Kingdom. Sikhs prefer Australia because it is a free and stable country with better opportunities. Progressing from being indentured labourers to hawkers in the early 19th century, now they are in every profession from driving taxis, to accountants, engineers, medical professionals and lawyers. They also own and operate their own businesses.

LEGACY

The Australian Sikh Heritage Trail, is a group of interconnected pathways in Adenia Park, Riverton, Western Australia, is a grand monument dedicated to commemorate the history of the Sikh pioneers in Australia. The winding trail features interpretive signage, plaques, benches and a covered area and boardwalk by the river. Information on the signs displays the themes, such as Sikh farmers, Sikh wrestlers, Sikh Anzacs, Sikh hawkers and Sikh entrepreneurs. Sikh Temples (Gurdwaras or places of Worship) are an essential part of Sikh way of life. There are several Gurdwaras in Australia where Sikh congregations assemble to celebrate their religious functions connected with their births and birthdays, engagements, marriages and deaths. Some of the Gurdwaras are in New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Victoria and Western Australian cities. All these Gurdwaras have Langar (Community Kitchen) attached to them, where vegetarian food is served to the congregation as well as to the needy, without any distinction of caste, colour, gender, social status and religion. It is served to all the high and low in one-line denoting equality and fraternity. The Gurus message of 'love, compassion and Charhdi Kala (Positive mental attitude combined with resilience) is conveyed.

SIKH MIGRATION TO THE UNITED KINGDOM

According to the British Sikh Report 'An Insight into the British Sikh Community' of 2013, "There has been a Sikh presence in Britain for almost 160 years, with the first Sikh known to have settled here being Maharaja Dulip Singh, in 1854. Since then, there have been a number of waves of Sikh migrants to Britain, most notably following the Second world War when the Britain was reaching out to the commonwealth during its post-war reconstruction period. Each wave of Sikh migrants to the UK have brought their own cultural beliefs to these shores and yet managed to integrate themselves within British society, whilst retaining their distinct identity," Prior to the second world war, Britain had very little population of Sikh students and door to door salesmen selling their wares throughout the country. For the first half of the 20th century, the only Gurdwara serving the needs

of the congregation was established in 1911 in Putney, which was moved to Shepherds Bush in 1913. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala made a generous donation for the construction of the Gurdwara. At that time, this Gurdwara was the first port of call of all Sikhs. During the period between the WW II and 1960, lots of male Sikhs migrated to UK to fulfil the needs of the expanding economy which had led to the labour shortages. It is believed that the Sikh population of Southall grew exponentially during the 1950s. The recruitment officer of a newly opened rubber factory had worked along side the Punjabi Sikhs as an army officer the second World War and was familiar with their work ethics. He was willing to hire them in the factory. Such personal connections helped the new settlers in the UK. Roger Ballard conducted a study of the Sikhs of Britain in 1972 according to which, “By 1939 almost every large city seemed to have had a small number of Sikh residents, for the most part engaged in selling clothes in the markets. At the end of the war number slowly rising, and large contingents began to arrive, particularly in the late 1950s and early 1960s.”

According to the census of 2021, number of Sikhs in Britain was over 520,000 and accounted for 0.92% of England’s population. It forms country’s fourth-largest religious group. As of 2006 the number of Sikh Gurdwaras stood at 352. Largest Sikh population concentration is in West Midlands and greater London. The proportion of English Sikhs who identified themselves as ‘Indian’ declined from 91.6% in 2001 to 76% in 2011, the proportion of English Sikhs who identified as “Other Asian” rose from 4.6% to 12% and the proportion of English Sikhs who identified as “Other Ethnic Group” rose from 0.7% to 9.5%.

EDUCATION AND THE SIKH MEDIA

As of 2016, there were 13 schools were operating in UK which impart Sikh values along with the national curriculum. These schools mostly outperform the public schools, due to strict discipline. The Sikh media is very aggressively educating the masses through print media as well as Radio and television. There are four major Sikh TV

channels in UK. One of the channels provides 24-hour Gurbani recitation on the air. The British Sikh Reports are the result of lots of hard work by the people, who collected large amount of data and covered extensive areas of Sikh way of life. It is a laborious work that was started in 2013 and published every year. The 'British Sikh Report of 2020', on page 20, covers under the heading 'Employment and Education', survey states that 79% of Sikh men and women are employed or self-employed. More women tend to work part time. That data presents a promising picture of the vibrant community.

POLITICAL AWARENESS AMONG THE BRITISH SIKHS

Indians as a whole are highly involved politically wherever they settle permanently. According to the BBC news of July 11, 2024, in the recent British general election of July 4, 2024, twenty-eight members of parliament of Indian origin were elected out of whom 11 are Sikhs. That is an impressive performance by the Sikh community. Preet Kaur Gill, the first Sikh woman to be elected to the House of Commons in 2017, told BBC Radio WM, "It was a privilege and an honour to take up the role and see more Sikh MPs in Parliament. It's absolutely brilliant to see a record level of Sikh representation in Parliament, the Labour Party now has 11 Sikh members of Parliament." She added there was still a lot to do, however, to better serve the British Sikh community. Five of the MPs who won are women. It is not that only the Indians vote for Indians, the British voters elect them all. Twenty-eight Indians can not win with the support of the Indian community alone. In the new British Parliament of 650, Labour party won 412 seats and Sunak's Conservatives won 121 seats. Female representation in the newly elected Parliament is 40% (263 female MPs). New British Prime Minister, Mr. Keir Starmer, presently, chose one minister of Indian origin in his cabinet. She is Lisa Nandy, who has been re-elected from Wigan and has been appointed Culture Secretary in the Keir Starmer's Cabinet and Shabana Mahmood, a British of Pakistani origin, has been appointed Justice Secretary.

THE STRUGGLE OF RAMGARHIAS FOR THEIR RIGHTS, AGAINST THE BRITISH BLACK LAW

GURDEV SINGH*

From ancient times, we have been victims of caste discrimination. Throughout history, various great individuals have made efforts to eradicate these discriminations. Even the Sikh Gurus worked tirelessly to guide us and eliminate these feelings from within us. Unfortunately, we have not been able to eradicate this poison of caste discrimination from within ourselves, and today this social malady of caste is growing day by day.

The rulers of the time took full advantage of this, which made it easier for them to enslave us. Before the time of the Sikh Misls, and during the time of the Sikh Misls, and even during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, when he unified all the Misls into a large Sikh kingdom, many blacksmiths, carpenters (later known as Ramgarhias), and other castes were significant landowners in Punjab. While Jat landlords primarily engaged in agriculture, many blacksmiths, carpenters, and masons also worked in both agriculture and their ancestral crafts. These blacksmiths and carpenters were substantial landowners in large villages and areas.

PUNJAB UNDER THE BRITISH RULE

From ancient documents, we gather some information, which we will certainly consider. In 1839, when Maharaja Ranjit Singh passed away, the British began to enter Punjab. Soon, they occupied the entire Punjab. There is no doubt that some selfish and greedy people of Punjab fully supported the Britishers. They collaborated with the British

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government for their own convenience.

When the British completely took over Punjab politically, they also wanted to enslave us religiously to weaken us. Various laws were created to take control of our religious places. At one point in 1877, it was even decided to auction Sri Darbar Sahib (Amritsar), but fortunately, that scheme did not succeed due to Guru Ram Das Ji's grace. Then, in 1900, a new law was made to create discord among us on caste lines and to weaken us, known as the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900. The act was brought at the time of Lord Curzon. The general narrative was that landlords and moneylenders would take over the lands of innocent people by giving them loans. But the real intention was to create divisions among Punjabis and collect maximum revenue (tax) for the British government. Most of these moneylenders were Baniyas, Khattris, Mahajans, and some large Jat landlords.

According to this law (Punjab Alienation of Land Act), only Jat landlords could own agricultural land, and non-Jats (blacksmiths, carpenters, masons, Khattris, Mahajans, and other similar communities) were deprived of land ownership rights. According to Section 3 (1, 2, 3) of this law, both the seller and buyer of land had to belong to the Jat landlord community.

If the buyer belonged to a non-Jat landlord community and it was necessary to make the transaction, permission had to be obtained from the district revenue officer. The revenue officer had the full authority to approve or reject the application.

The worst effect of this law was that the entire Sikh community was divided into two factions: Jat landlords and non-Jat landlords. Another significant change was that Jats began to see themselves closer to Hindu and Muslim Jats and started to view their Amritdhari Sikh brothers as separate. Under this law, many Ramgarhia brothers lost their lands. Similarly, the lands of many Sehajdhari Sikh farmers were also taken away. Jat landlords saw this as a major victory and began to consider non-landlords as inferior. The damage caused by this can still be seen today. Many non-Ramgarhia organizations at the time saw themselves as special allies of the British and occupied major

government and other high positions.

At the time this law was made, Raja Sir Harnam Singh Ahluwalia of Kapurthala, who was only one a member of the council, opposed it. However, the Sikh organizations that were dominant in the Sikh community at that time supported the British. Dr. Gokul Chand Narang, in his book “Transformation of Sikhism,” writes that the most powerful Sikh organization of the time was the Singh Sabha movement. If it had united the entire Sikh community and opposed this law as a strong force, it could have been stopped. But they remained silent, perhaps not foreseeing the long-term consequences of this law, which would once again entangle the Sikh community in the same caste system from which the Tenth Guru had liberated us. However, even within that organization, the influence of Jat landlords was probably stronger.

Mainly the capital of Punjab was at Lahore, but in British period the summer capital was always moved to Shimla. This act alerted the all non cultivating communities. In 1902 a monthly paper was started from Lahore with the name: (**Ramgarhia Patrika**). This newspaper brought awareness in all Ramgarhias too. The head of Bagrian cast S. Arjun singh Bagrian also owned thousands of acres of land which was confiscated by this law.

14 June 1908 there was a big meeting held of Ramgarhias and **Ramgarhia Sabha Punjab** was founded.

1922 the news paper with the name “ **Ramgarhia gazette**” was started from Shimla. Both these news papers Ramgarhia Patirka and Ramgarhia gazette worked really hard to bring the awareness about this black law among Ramgarhia brethrens. A big conference was held at Lahore and “ **Ramgarhia central Board**” was founded. Similar meetings were held in all over Punjab and outside punjab state to spread the awareness and to raise the voice against this law. In 1931 S.Ishar singh along with Dr. Nand singh seehra and Kulwant singh Contractor met the Governor of Punjab related to this subject. Even in 1933 The governor of Punjab came to Phagwara personality to meet Dr. Nand singh seehra.

In 1940 some prominent Ramgarhia personnel started visiting the nearby and far of villages to spread awareness and to make a unity of people against this law.

We should also be thankful to the **Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla** for starting a strong opposition to this black law in 1913. They began collecting government statistics. Although this law was repealed in 1946-1947, no changes were recorded in government records for Sikh farmers, nor were they included in the cultivator's category. Cases were filed in the Shimla High Court. To pursue this case, many dedicated Ramgarhias even moved their businesses to Shimla. This struggle continued for a long time, and finally, on 23 June 1950, they succeeded in their mission.

Here is some information and government statistics obtained through **Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla Gazette**:

In 1913, Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla presented a memorandum to **Sir Umar Karaj**, detailing the land ownership and significance of the Ramgarhia community.

In 1939, through S. Teja Singh B.A., Secretary of Young Men Ramgarhia Association Lahore, these statistics were presented in the Punjab Assembly through **Nawab Muzaffar Khan**.

Statistics collected by district patwaris and tehsildars of ten districts presented to the Punjab government included the following areas: Hoshiarpur, Dasuya, Garhshankar, Una, Jalandhar, Nakodar, Phillaur, Nawanshahr, Lahore, Kasur, Moga, Chunian, Zira, Ferozepur, Muktsar, Fazilka, Ajnala, Amritsar, Tarn Taran, Batala, Gurdaspur, Pathankot, Sialkot, Shakargarh, Narowal, Pasrur, Daska, Ambala, Ropar, Kharar, Ludhiana, Narayangarh, Jagadhri, Jagraon, Samrala, Sheikhpura, Shahdara, and Nankana Sahib.

Total landowners in these areas were:

- Ramgarhia Sardars = 30,545
 - Marus = 8,028
 - Jagirdars = 127
 - Mafidars = 38
 - Numberdars = 63

Details of lands confiscated:

1. In 17 villages of Lahore: 494 acres, 2 kanals, 4 marlas
2. In 12 villages of Amritsar: 720 acres, 7 kanals, 13 marlas
3. In 67 villages of Gurdaspur: 840 acres, 3 kanals, 17 marlas
4. In 20 villages of Hoshiarpur: 260 acres, 2 kanals, 10 marlas
5. In village Sikhwala of Ferozepur: 1,552 acres
6. In Bagrian: over 1,000 acres of land went from Ramgarhias.

This struggle continued, and finally, the government had to grant equal rights to the Ramgarhias.

THE DECISION OF LAHORE HIGH COURT:

“Ganda Singh vs. Dassaundha Singh and others A.I.R. 1931 Lahore 637 page 640 – (The blacksmith and carpenter belong to the original class. Although their ancestral profession can be said to be carpentry and blacksmithing, they are more closely aligned with the landlord classes).”

Senior Sub-Judge Sheikhpura S. Bhagat Singh B.A.P.C.S.’s 1943 decision:

“Blacksmiths and carpenters are made of the landlord classes, whose ancestors made carpentry and blacksmithing their auxiliary profession along with agriculture. (Without this craftsmanship, agriculture would have never been possible, : *author*). During the time of the Sikh Misls, their Misl was Ramgarhia, led by Sardar Jassa Singh Ramgarhia. Ramgarhias fall under the landlord law. Hindu Dharma Shastra does not apply to them.”

Mr. Hardy I.C.S., District and Additional Sessions Judge, in 1944, during the appeal by the opposition, upheld the 1943 decision of Sub-Judge Sheikhpura and dismissed the appeal against Ramgarhia.

(Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla obtained this information from the book “Glimpses of Ramgarhia Glory”)

NOTIFICATIONS REGARDING RAMGARHIAS AS CULTIVATORS:

1. Shimla-East, Friday, June 23, 1950, Department of Revenue’s June 1950 notification number 4797-R.-50-3464, using the

powers given under the Fourth Part of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900, the **Governor of Punjab is pleased to declare that the group of people known as Ramgarhia shall be considered “agriculturists” in all districts of Punjab from today.**

2. Every individual of the Ramgarhia community residing in Punjab shall be considered “agriculturist” under this law.
3. In all districts of Punjab, the Ramgarhia community will be counted among “A-District communities.”

Signed: Raghbir Singh Deputy Secretary, Government of Punjab
- Department of Revenue

Note: Due to the efforts of Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla, the Punjab government, in its notification number 6309, R. 50-5007 dated September 20, 1950, removed the word “Sikh” from the Ramgarhia title and declared all Ramgarhias, Hindu and Sikh alike, as “agriculturists.”

PEPSU NOTIFICATION:

Department of Revenue Notification number 314-B-50-11-50 Patiala, February 1950. Using the powers given under the Fourth Part of the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900, the Rajpramukh is pleased to declare that the group of people known as Ramgarhias shall be considered “agriculturists” in all districts of PEPSU (Patiala and East Punjab States Union) from today.

DEPUTY SECRETARY, PATIALA AND EAST PUNJAB STATES UNION

Thus, the persistent efforts of Ramgarhia Sabha Shimla resulted in the Ramgarhias being granted equal rights. However, the adverse effects of the discriminatory law, the Punjab Alienation of Land Act 1900, continued to impact many Ramgarhias. The ultimate conclusion is that we must learn from this history and work to root out the poison of caste differences from within us, striving to become true followers of the Sikh Gurus.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it is evident that the struggle of the Ramgarhias for their and other non cultivating community rights was long and arduous. The caste-based discrimination they faced was deeply entrenched and legally sanctioned by the British colonial administration. However, through persistent efforts and legal battles, the Ramgarhia community was able to secure their and other non cultivating community rights as cultivators and landowners. This historical struggle highlights the importance of unity and resilience in the face of discrimination and serves as a reminder of the need to eradicate caste-based distinctions within the Sikh community and beyond.

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I AM THE GURU'S BANDA FOR EVER AND EVER!

LT GEN R.S. SUJLANA*

Bowing before Guru Gobind Singh Ji, the Bairagi declared, 'I am the Guru's Banda till my last breath, what is the Hukam? You are blessed as Banda Singh Bahadur, northwards you go, collect and rejuvenate the Khalsa, I too am coming soon;

My spirit will always be with you, here is my Nishan and five arrows to protect you, five leaders to advice and Hukam Namahs for the Khalsa to join you. Touching the Guru's feet and blessed by him, Banda sets on course, fully determined to fulfill the mission bestowed.

Merging in a caravan, Banda's arduous journey begins in 1708, an epic of valour was awaiting to unfold; through Marathas and Rajputs lands he travels incognito, avoiding the evil Mughal eye, he arrives north of Delhi to set base at Kharkhauda in 1709.

The populace here lives in fear as dacoits run riot, to add to their misery, the Mughal Alims cruel to the hilt; Banda vows to ameliorate their misery, the Hukam Namahs reach the Khalsa, they come in a flood with Talwars and horses few, fully ready to take on the challenge at hand;

Banda eggs them on, swordsmanship, stamina and strength they imbibe, on gram and water they learn to survive, stealth they learn to surprise the foe, strike thunderbolt like and disappear before the enemy regains balance,

The dacoits are targeted, the Mughals are at bay, all no not how to counter the enemy unseen; the populace breaths freely and God they thank for sending his messenger and rush to touch his feet; no says

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Banda, 'I am only the Guru's Banda, for ever and ever!

The spirits are soaring, it's time for real action, opportunity dawns, the Khalsas prove their worth; the enemy is smothered, arms and horse are collected as booty, the cash in the kitty all goes to the needy and poor!

Word spreads of Banda's largesse, local support is absolute, morale is sky high, the power of the peasant is on the rise, the Nagara sounds, the Ardas is said, Banda flashes his sword, the men show their readiness by raising their weapons!

A dash is announced, the rumble of thundering hooves is earthquake like, a haze of dust rises thick and wide, the sun is hidden, the Mughals wonder how come this unexpected eclipse?

Through the haze, suddenly a sea of fluttering blue and yellow flags emerge, carried by galloping horsemen, erect in the stirrups, with glistening swords and 'Bole So Nihal' rents the air, a full throttle charge hits the enemy head on!

Another wave of foot soldiers follows, with just daggers and hoes, they cut through the enemy like professionals' unseen; the enemy has no chance to counter the Khalsa, like nine pins their bastions fall one after another;

The enemy is on the run, weaponry and cannons are bagged in plenty; Samana, Sanaur, Ghuram, Thaska, Thanesar, Mustafabad, Kapuri, Sadhaura and Lohgarh are under the Khalsa sway,

Banda is cheered, the men say victory is all yours, no says Banda, it's all the Gurus' Blessing and resilience of the Khalsa, I am just the Guru's Banda for ever and ever!

Banda feels the pulse; men and horse need some rest, to Lohgarh they head and establish a base; amidst thunderous Jaikaras, the Khalsa flag is raised and coins are struck, the first capital of the Sikhs is announced to the world!

Up ahead lies the bastion of Sirhind, Wazir Khan holds firmly with a force undefeated, but the Khalsa is undeterred, to Chappar Chiri Banda moves, the Khalsa from the north joins him there, battle lines

are drawn, ready for the stiff action ahead!

Wazir Khan is sure that victory lies at his feet, he advances with flags aflutter and 'Ya Alis' in plenty, hordes of elephants' swarm ahead, six thousand horsemen, eight thousand archers and barqandaz follow,

A barrage by the Mughal cannons shatters the Khalsa defences, the weak hearted and looters start to flee; being static is disastrous so a headlong charge is ordered, the injured elephants go berserk, the guns cannot fire, it's confusion galore,

If that was not enough, 'Follow me' shouts Banda, he leads a cavalry charge onto Wazir Khan's flank, with two fronts to counter the enemy is at a total loss, a slaughter follows, Wazir Khan lays dead, the Mughal pride is dusted and done!

Sirhind falls in May 1710, the men hail Banda, but he says no, first let's remember the young Sahibzadas, Zorawar Singh and Fateh Singh, put mercilessly to death and raise a gurudwara in their memory, 'I am just the Guru's Banda for ever and ever!

So nipat to Sirhind the Khalsa standard flutters; the Zamindars here are put to their place, the yoke on the tiller is lifted forever. Banda is restless, so to the Ganga- Jamuna Doab he heads, Saharanpur, Muzaffarnagar, Nanauta, and many others fall,

At Jalalabad however Banda's path is blocked, his absence back home gives the Mughals confidence to trouble the people, the monsoons too are approaching fast, so before it's too late he turns homewards and soon is present back in Jalandhar.

Far south in the Deccan Bahadur Shah learns of Banda's enigma, feared and in awe, by one and all in the Mughal ranks; Delhi, the capital is clearly in danger, the emperor sets back for the north. At Ajmer he halts to pacify the Rajputs, here the Pirzadas accost him, save us from Banda!

An edict is passed 'Slaughter all worshippers of Nanak' (Nanak Prastan ra har ja kih ba-yaband ba -qatl rasanand) where ever seen; a heavy advance guard is unleashed to kill the menace ruling in Punjab;

The Khalsas are caught with their guard totally down, the odds are overwhelming but yet they resist, their massacre is immense, cruelty is severe, with their heads pyramids are formed and many are strung on poles by their hair, the Central Asian cruelty is openly at play;

The news is encouraging, but the emperor knows the danger is far from over, he goes not to Delhi but direct to Punjab, leading a juggernaut unseen, the Sikhs stand up determined with sword, but they have no counter for the heavy Mughal cannon fire;

Khalsa riders and horses are blown sky high, but still at Lohgarh they manage to hold fort, the Mughals are sure that Banda is trapped, his end is foretold, but still the fear of Banda's black magic lurks in their minds, their forward movement is marked with precaution;

A sudden loud blast shatters the night silence, taken aback the Mughal advance comes to a grinding halt, they wonder what it is up in Banda's sleeve next? For Banda the enemy halt and caution is enough, so with many followers he escapes unseen into dense jungles of Nahan!

Lohgarh and Taragarh fall to the Mughals, but Banda is nowhere dead or alive, they realise they have been fooled by the pseudo-Banda in hand, the hawk had flown, the owl was netted (Baz Parida a hum ba dam uftada ast Masir-ul-umara)!

The emperor fumes and shouts at his generals, "The jackal has escaped from you so many dogs!" The brunt is borne by Rustam Dil Khan and his commanders, they hang their heads in shame to the curses of their emperor!

At Anandgarh Banda re-surfaces and collects the Sikhs, to strike again at Pathankot and Gurdaspur, but the guerilla in him, senses enemy superiority, he quickly disengages and disappears to Reasi, the year is 1712, the emperor dies without fulfilling his vow,

Jahandar follows but is challenged by Farrukh Siyar, a battle for the Mughal crown is at hand, Banda lets not the opportunity go by so back to Sadhaura- Lohgarh he finds his way but again pulls back, to the hills and safety of Dera Baba Banda.

Siyar patiently awaits, his plans are set, Banda returns in 1715,

initial victories are gained but he misreads the situation, Siyar throws the gauntlet and traps him near Gurdas Nangal at Bande Wali Theh with a stranglehold siege, even cats and dogs have no escape,

For ten months Banda holds out amidst adversities untold, without food, water or ammunition the misery is intense, with no opportunity to escape, a surrender is enforced; 740 with Banda are kept alive, for torture and ignominy to Delhi they are brought.

The Barbarity is terrible to instill fear and break their will, daily a few are put to sword, in front of cheering crowds, but not one Khalsa seeks pardon or apostatizes, they only step forward, shouting at the executioner, 'Mukte take me first!'

Banda is last on 09 June 1716, forced to kill his infant son, his skin is peeled, limbs are cut, but the Banda is unmoved, dharma and vows are kept uppermost, he remembers Guru Gobind, and as he takes his last breath he prays, 'Wahe Guru, Wahe Guru, I am your Banda, for ever and ever!'

EXPLORING THE ETHNIC BACKGROUND OF BANDA SINGH BAHADAR

INDERJEET SINGH*

INTRODUCTION

Banda Singh Bahadar is an enigmatic and intriguing character in the early 18th-century history of Northern India. During his short stint from 1709-16, he shook the foundation of the Mughal Empire in India. Very little is known about the early life of Banda Singh and speculations by early writers have been presented as history and irrefutable truth. This short article will critically explore the ethnic background of Banda Singh and how in the 20th century it got embodied with contrasting philosophies.

EARLY SIKH WRITINGS

John Malcolm (1812) sums up the status of the Banda Singh amongst Sikhs during the earlier nineteenth century. He writes that 'they do not revere his memory, and he is termed by some of their authors, a heretic who, intoxicated with victory, endeavoured to change the religious institutions and laws of Guru Gobind Singh.'¹The accusations made by traditional Sikh scribes against Banda Singh were that he married despite being told against it. He introduced the greeting 'Fateh Darshan' to replace the Khalsa salutation of 'Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa! Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh'. Further Banda Singh was accused of promoting a vegetarian diet.

Ratan Singh Bhangu (1841) author of *Sri Guru Panth Prakash* (commonly known as *Parchin Panth Prakash*) who devoted several chapters of the Banda does not refer to him as Singh or Khalsa even

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once in writings!²

Giani Gian Singh (1822-1921) was the first Sikh who wrote the whole Sikh history and unlike earlier Sikh writers who wrote in poetry, he wrote in prose and modern-day Punjabi. His *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa* (post Guru period books were later named *Shamsber Khalsa* and *Raj Khalsa*) written in several volumes in Urdu and Punjabi from 1890 onwards became very famous, also repeated the above allegations against Banda Singh without questioning or probing the accusations.

Karam Singh Historian (1884-1930) was perhaps one of the earliest Sikhs who studied and analysed history critically. He and later Prof. Ganda Singh (1900-87) argued against these accusations logically. Sikhs are not forbidden to marry hence it is not possible that Banda Singh received any such commandment for Guru Gobind Singh. Banda may have styled himself as a King, but the coins he issued, considered signs of sovereignty, were in the name of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh. Misls Sardars and Maharaja Ranjit Singh followed this practice. Banda introduced a new salutation 'Fateh Darshan' not to replace 'Wahe Guru Ji Ka Khalsa Wahe Guru Ji Ki Fateh' but the new salutation was an additional one. However, it was rejected by the Khalsa.³

BHAI PARMANAND ON BANDA

Karam Singh Historian (1907) authored a Punjabi book, *Banda Bahadar* which was published by Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar. This was an honest attempt to write a biography on Banda Singh Bahadar however the author commented in the book that he had been unable to find a reference that suggested Banda was administered *Khande de Pabul*.⁴ This erroneous comment was picked by a prominent leader of Hindu Mahasabha and a member of the Ghadr Party, Bhai Parmanand.

Bhai Paramanad was considered as one of the descendants of the Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Sati Das who accompanied Guru Tegh Bahadar to Delhi in 1675 and were also martyred by the Mughals. Their grandfather, father, and other descendants severed the Sikh Gurus with distinction. They were given the title of 'Bhai' which means brother as a mark of respect and recognition of their contribution.

Bhai Parmanand also belonged to the Chhibber clan of village Kariala in district Jhelum (now in district Chakwal). It is not uncommon, but every clan member claimed the lineage of the martyred family. The Singh Sabha movement at the time was staunchly promoting the separate Sikh identity. Bhai Parmanand followed the opposite philosophy that believed that Sikhs are Hindus.

Bhai Parmanand (1921) wrote a book in Hindi titled *Veer Vairagi*. In the foreword, the writer tried to prove Banda was a Hindu ascetic who laid the foundation of Hindu rule in Punjab. He credited Banda for completing the 'unfinished work' of Guru Gobind Singh.⁵ He wants to remind Sikhs that his ancestor Bhai Dharam Singh was appointed Diwan by Guru Gobind Singh. In a way, he acknowledges that his ancestors became Khalsa. Kesar Singh Chhibber (1769) writes that his father Gurbaksh Singh (son of Dharam Singh) was the daroghah or manager of Mata Sundri Ji, wife of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.⁶

Bhai Parmanand asserts that Sikhs are Hindus which seems strange because his book emphasises that it was Banda Vairagi, a Hindu ascetic who revolted against the tyrannical rule of Mughal. As the writer felt that Sikhs were Hindus then admitting that Banda took *Khande de Pabul* like some of his ancestors should not have been an issue. However, he was adamant that Banda remained a staunch Vairagi (ascetic) Hindu throughout his life and considered him the hero of Hindus.⁷

Karam Singh Historian (1928) as a rebuttal to Bhai Parmanand's book written in Urdu, *Banda Kaun Tha*. This was translated into Punjabi and published in 1934. In these works, he used Persian and Punjabi sources to prove Banda and his soldiers were Sikhs.⁸ The next year, Prof. Ganda Singh wrote his monumental work, *Life of Banda Singh Bahadur* which even after 90 years (almost) inspires readers and authors alike. However, despite this outstanding work, there were still some skeptical historians.

DID BANDA BECOME A KHALSA?

Prof. Hari Ram Gupta (1902 -92) celebrated historian who wrote 5 volumes on the History of Sikhs has written that Guru Gobind

Singh made Banda his disciple but did not give *Khande de Pahul* hence he was not a Khalsa.⁹

This is in sharp contrast to Prof. Ganda Singh who has provided names of 35 historians from Hindu, Sikh, Muslim, and Christian religions who wrote that Banda was a Sikh. Surprisingly and disappointingly Prof. Gupta gives only one name to back his claim. He states that Giani Gian Singh of *Guru Panth Prakash* (first edition 1880) wrote that Banda was not made a Khalsa. The *Guru Panth Prakash* clearly states that Banda was made a disciple and Sikh by Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

*Shahr Nanded Godavari Tat, Othare Joi Jay. Bande Ko Nij Sikh Kar, Pathae Punjab Desaye. |2|*¹⁰

In *Tawarikh Guru Khalsa*, Giani Gian Singh writes that Madho Das became *Guru Ka Sikh* and was named Banda Singh.¹¹

Prof. Gupta makes a rare mistake. Bhai Parmanand's ancestor wrote that Banda took *Khande de Pahul* and became Khalsa. Kesar Singh Chhibber (1769) in *Bansavalinama Dasan Patshabian Ka* writes *Pahul Guru Ki Chhak Ke, Banya Singh Hathbiya |623|*¹²

WHAT WAS BANDA SINGH'S CLAN OR TRIBE?

Banda was born Madho/Lachman Das in a humble background, and little is known about his childhood or youth. Giani Gian Singh in *Shamsber Khalsa Part 1* was the first historian who remarked about the clan of Banda Singh. He states that Banda was a Rajput according to an old book/manuscript (*pothi*). The name of Banda's father is given as Ram Dev Kshatri is stated as an owner (*maalik*) of 2-3 villages. The Giani does not provide any details of this old manuscript hence no one has seen it.¹³ Bhai Parmanand and Prof. Gupta also noted Banda as Rajput citing Giani Gian Singh.

Karam Singh Historian (1905) wrote a book on Banda Singh titled *Banda Bahadar* where he states that Banda's father was Ram Dev who was a Bhardwaj Rajput and as he was not a government official, he did not have much money! The financial status of Ram Dev was that of the middle class (*vichle mail*). In terms of profession, Karam Singh

is slightly vague and simply writes that he same line of work as his fellow community members.¹⁴ The historian does not provide any reference to the Bhardwaj clan.

Prof. Ganda Singh (1935) writes that Ram Dev was an ordinary ploughman Rajput of the Bhardwaj clan and Banda was born in poor circumstances. Interestingly from the owner of 2-3 villages, Ram Dev was now depicted as a poor farmer.¹⁵ The esteemed historian provides Giani Gian Singh and Karam Singh Historian as references regarding this assertion.

BANDA AS A KHATRI

Farsi chronicler Khafi Khan (1731) in *Muntakhabu 'i Lubab* writes 'From amongst the Khattris, (some) who regarded themselves in secret as the followers and disciples of that rebel," approached Muhammad Amin Khan and other intermediaries of nobles with offers of large sums of money in return for that wicked man's life being spared, but this was not listened to.'¹⁶ It is interesting to note that Khattris are stated as secret followers of Banda, and they offered a pay-off to the Mughals if Banda's life could be spared.

Budh Singh Arora (1783) in *Risala -i-Nanak Shah* written in Farsi states that Banda was prior friends and had immense faith in Guru Gobind Singh.¹⁷ Based on these historical records, some people have suggested that Banda was from a Khatri background. Although these are much older accounts, the evidence is conjectural.

During the years from 1884 to 1900, R.C. Temple authored three volumes of *The Legends of the Panjab*. The Vol 3 in the preface refers to, LXIX The Story of Banda Bairagi, amongst others which have been prepared for publication but not yet published.¹⁸

HA Rose compiled *A Glossary of the Tribes and Castes of the Punjab and North West Frontier Province* in three volumes based on the Census Report for the Punjab, 1883, by Denzil Ibbetson and the Census Report for the Punjab, 1892, by Edward Maclagan. These three volumes were published between 1911 and 1919. The ballad *Abwal I Lachhman Das urf Banda Sahib Chela Guru Singh Sahib* by Hakim Rai which was perhaps

noted and prepared by R. C. Temple was now published by H.A. Rose. In the first line of the ballad, Hakim Rai says that Banda belonged to the Sodhi Khatri lineage.¹⁹ Earlier in the footnote, Rose mentions that according to another account, Banda was a Punjabi Khatri of Sialkot district.²⁰

Sahib Kaur, the second wife of Banda Singh Bahadar and his son Ranjit Singh survived him.²¹ The Gurdwara Dera Baba Banda Singh Bahadar at Reasi, 75 km from Jammu is headed by Baba Jatinder Pal Singh Sodhi a descendant of Banda Singh Bahadar. Mahant/Baba Fateh Singh was a contemporary of Maharaja Ranjit Singh who bestowed 4 jagirs to him.²²

The records at the above Dera state that Banda Singh Bahadar was the spiritual (*Naadi*) son of Guru Gobind Singh. The name of the biological father of Banda is not mentioned in the genealogical table (*kursinama*). This is also stated in the old *Pande Vahis* in Hardwar.²³

CLAIM OF BANDA AS MOHYAL BRAHMIN

P.N. Bali (1986) in *The History of the Mohyals* claimed that Banda was a Chhibber Brahmin without any reference.²⁴ This contention seems odd as Banda was not mentioned in T.P. Russell Stracey's (1911) authored book, *The History of the Mubiyals, the Militant Brahman Race of India* which was compiled for the General Muhiyal Sabha.²⁵ Lahore. A reprint edition was published in Lahore in 1938. Again, there is no reference to Banda in this edition.

CONCLUSION

Banda took *Khande de Pahul* and became Khalsa and came to be known as Banda Singh Bahadar. It seems strange when some people and institutions prefer him to call him Bairagi as ascetic are wonderers and remain single throughout their life. After becoming Khalsa, Banda married twice and had children.

There is no denying that Banda was a Hindu ascetic before he became a Khalsa. There is something called shared history and heritage. Bhai Parmanand and Prof. Hari Ram Gupta are wrong when they assert

that Banda remained Hindu throughout his life and never took *Khande de Pabul*. Bhai Parmanand's ancestor Kesar Singh Chhibber (1769) wrote that Banda took *Khande de Pabul* and became Khalsa.

Let's examine an existing case. In 1989, a young man of 23 years of age and a budding musician by the name of Dileep Kumar who belonged to the Hindu religion embraced Islam and changed his name to Allah Rakha Rahman. The young man then achieves success and fame as a film music scorer across India and rest of the world. Would we call A.R. Rahman by his old name Dileep Kumar, 100 years from now?

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GURU NANAK: A PROPHET IN SIKH TRADITION AND INTERFAITH CONTEXTS

DR JASBIR SINGH SARNA*

The incarnation of Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the manifest Parbrahm form, took place in Bharat-varsha at a time when the condition of the worldly beings was extremely sad and pitiable. *Bhavishya Purana*, as the name suggests, focuses on the future events. It belongs to Sattva Guna. In this Purana, in the words of Lord Brahma, the virtues of lord Sun are mentioned. It has 129 chapters with 28000 *shlokas*. In this Purana, a glimpse of thousands of years ago is found about Guru Nanak as follows:

ਏਵੰਵੈ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਾਚੁਰਯੰ ਭਵਿੱਖਯਤਿ ਯਦਾ ਕਲੇ ॥੩੩॥
ਤਦੈਵ ਲੋਕ ਰਖਯਾਰਥ ਮਲੇਛਾਨਾ ਨਾਸ਼ ਹੇਤੁਬੋ ॥
ਵਿ ਪਸਚਮੇਤੁ ਸੁਭੇ ਦੇਸੋ ਬੇਦੀ ਬੰਸੇਚ ਨਾਨਕੋ ਨਾਮਨਾ ॥੩੪॥
ਭੁਵ ਰਾਜ ਰਿਖੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੈਕ ਮਾਨਸ: ॥
ਭਵਿੱਖਤੀ ਕਲਉ ਸਕੰਦ ਤਤ ਬਿਤਯੰ ਕਲਯਾ ਹਰੇ ॥੩੫॥”

(ਭਵਿੱਖਤ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਉਤਾਰਧ, 28 ,233-34)

In this way, when the power of religion will be weakening in the near future, when Kalyug will happen, so at that time, for the protection of the people and for the destruction of Malechas in the Bedi clan of the Shubh Desh (Punjab) of the Western direction, Nanak will be the incarnation of a king-sage named Nanak. He will bring knowledge from the Divine and will be his human appearance. He will call forth the conflicts of the coming Kalyug period, the miseries, and kleshas of the living beings of that time.

Although some scholars are doubtful about the veracity of such predictions about Guru Nanak from these ancient Sanskrit texts, these

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lines do occur in this classic text. *Bhavishya Purana* is one of the eighteen major works in the Purana genre of Hinduism written in Sanskrit.

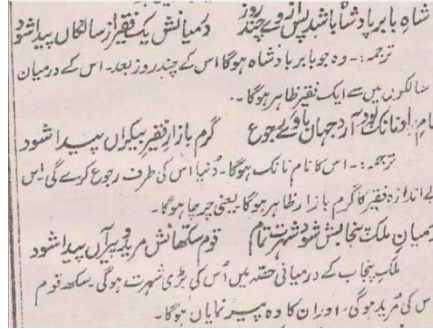
Guru Nanak Sahib bestowed the treasure of “Naam” not for any particular sect, but for the salvation of beings of all castes worldwide. Many ancient Muslim saints and mystics have also made predictions about his universality, which are present in writings. Pir Wali Niamat Ullah Shah writes in Persian :

ਸ਼ਾਹਿ ਬਾਬਰ ਹੁਕਮਰਾਂ ਬਾਸ਼ਦ ਪਸ ਅਜ ਵੇ ਚੰਦਰੋਜ਼। ਦਰਮਿਆਨਸ਼ ਯਕ ਫ਼ਕੀਰ
ਅਜ ਸਾਲਕਾ ਪੈਦਾ ਖਵੰਦ। ਨਾਮ ਉ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਵੰਦ ਆਰਦ ਜਹਾਂ ਬਾਵੇ ਰਜੂਅ। ਗਰਮ
ਬਾਜ਼ਾਰੀ ਫ਼ਕੀਰੀ ਏ ਕਰਾਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਸਵੰਦ। ਦਰਮਿਆਨਸ਼ ਮੁਲਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਵੰਦ ਸੁਹਰਤ
ਤਮਾਮ। ਕੋਮਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਨਿਸ਼ ਮੁਰੀਦੇ ਪੀਰ ਆ ਪੈਦਾ ਸਵੰਦ। ਕੋਮਿ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਅਦਲ ਕਰਦਨ
ਬਰ ਰਿਹਾ। ਤਾ ਚੇਹਲ ਇਨਸਾਫ਼ ਈ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਮਾ। ਪਾਂਚ ਸਦੇ ਇਸ਼ਤਾਦੇ ਹਿਜਰੀ ਬੂਦ ਚੂੰ
ਈ ਗੁਫਤਾ ਸੁਦ। ਯੱਕ ਹਜ਼ਾਰੋ ਸੇ ਸਦੇ ਈਸ਼ਤਾਦ ਈ ਅੰਦਰ ਜਮਾ।

Niamat Ullah Shah’s prognostication regarding Guru Nanak Sahib holds considerable historical and cultural significance. He prophesied that during the reign of Emperor Babur, a remarkable Mystic reformer would emerge in the world. This figure would be none other than Nanak, whose renown would proliferate globally, engendering widespread veneration. Guru Nanak’s acclaim would notably flourish in the Punjab region, where his disciples would form the Sikh community, of which he would be the spiritual guide (pir). This Sikh nation was foretold to administer justice equitably among all people and would govern for a duration of forty years.

This saint appeared approximately 547 years before Guru Nanak Sahib. His tomb is said to be on the Sonmarg mountains in Kashmir. He wrote a prophetic book in Persian about the conditions starting after his death. In this book, he wrote about the conditions from 580 Hijri to 1380 Hijri, covering 800 years. Among them, the following couplet about Guru Nanak Sahib is noteworthy:

Bud Nanak arife mard Khuda.



Raazha-e-marfat jo raah kusha.

Lekin e marde Khuda able wafa.

Kird qaumen ke jab hai jaa raha.

(The man of God, Nanak, will appear in the latter times.

He will reveal the mysteries that the previous prophets could not unveil.

But this man of God will be a person of fidelity.

He will arise when the community is in need.)

This assertion underscores the far-reaching impact and enduring legacy of Guru Nanak's spiritual leadership. The veracity of Niamat Ullah Shah's foresight is considered pivotal and important in the historical narrative concerning Guru Nanak. These are some of the stories about Satguru Nanak Dev ji, thousands of years before his appearance, which are not found about any other person in the world.

In many Persian manuscripts, Guru Nanak's glorious attributes are preserved as:

“Nanak-Panthis are the followers of their Sikh prophets”
(*Chahar Gulshan*, 1759-60, Rai Chatarman, Persian MSs no.92, Patna)

“As he (Nanak) had for a long time detached himself from the world and its entanglements, as in the court of God no man's labor is lost, he attained to the position of a pious divine.” (*Imad-u-Sa'adat*, 1223 A.H, 1808 A.D by Sayyed Ghulam Ali Khan, 1864)

“From his very infancy, signs of the manifestation of miracles and divine luster begin to appear in him. And the news of his secret revelations and the realization of the true one spread in the whole world.” (*Khalis Namah* by Ratan Chand Bal, Persian manuscript no 167, Lahore)

Bhai Gurdas Ji's verses paint a vivid picture of Guru Nanak as a profound spiritual leader whose attributes align closely with those of a prophet. This recognition is deeply rooted in both Sikh and interfaith traditions, reflecting Guru Nanak's universal appeal and his embodiment of prophetic qualities. Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikhism, is revered by various names across different countries and

regions, reflecting his widespread influence. The prominent names includes :*Punjab*: Baba Nanak, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, Nanak Nirankari, Nanak Tapa, *Bhutan, Nepal, Sikkim, Tibet*: Guru Rinpoche, Guru Nana, Nanak Lama, *Southern Tibet*: Bhadra Guru, *Nepal*: Nanak Rishi-Dhomari, *Arab Countries*: Nanak Pir, *Jada, Syria, Kaaba-Mecca*, Wali Hind, *Russia*: Ura Tube, *Cairo, Egypt*: Nanak Wali, *Indo-Turkistan*: Guru Nanak Wali, *Alkoot and Baghdad Area*: Baba Nanak , Baba Nana, *Mazār-e-Sharif, Afghanistan*: Balgadhan, *Bukhara, Russia*: Nanak Qalander. These diverse appellations illustrate Guru Nanak's universal appeal and profound spiritual legacy.

According to Bhai Gurdas ji:

ਗੰਗ ਬਨਾਰਸ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣਾਂ ਮਕਾ ਕਾਬਾ॥
 ਘਰਿ ਘਰਿ ਬਾਬਾ ਗਾਵੀਐ ਵਜਨਿ ਤਾਲ ਮ੍ਰਿਦੰਗੁ ਰਬਾਬਾ॥
 ਭਗਤਿ ਵਛਲੁ ਹੋਇ ਆਇਆ ਪਤਿਤ ਉਧਾਰਣੁ ਅਜਬੁ ਅਜਾਬਾ॥
 ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਇ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਹੋਇ ਤਰਾਬਾ॥
 ਚੰਦਨੁ ਵਾਸੁ ਵਣਾਸਪਤਿ ਅਵਲਿ ਦੇਮ ਨ ਸੇਮ ਖਰਾਬਾ॥
 ਹੁਕਮੈ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਭ ਕੋ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਕਿਸ ਦੀ ਕਰੈ ਜਵਾਬਾ॥
 ਜਾਹਰ ਪੀਰੁ ਜਗਤੁ ਗੁਰ ਬਾਬਾ ॥

ਬਾਬਾ ਫਿਰ ਮੱਕੇ ਗਯਾ ਨੀਲ ਬਸਤ੍ਰ ਧਾਰੇ ਬਨਵਾਰੀ॥
 ਆਸਾ ਹੱਥ ਕਿਤਾਬ ਕੱਛ ਕੂਜਾ ਬਾਂਗ ਮੁਸੱਲਾ ਧਾਰੀ॥
 ਬੈਠਾ ਜਾਇ ਮਸੀਤ ਵਿਚ ਜਿਥੇ ਹਾਜੀ ਹੱਜ ਗੁਜਾਰੀ॥
 ਜਾਂ ਬਾਬਾ ਸੁੱਤਾ ਰਾਤ ਨੂੰ ਵੱਲ ਮਹਿਰਾਬੇ ਪਾਂਇ ਪਸਾਰੀ॥
 ਜੀਵਨ ਮਾਰੀ ਲਤ ਦੀ ਕੇੜ੍ਹਾ ਸੁਤਾ ਕੁਫਰ ਕੁਫਾਰੀ॥
 ਲਤਾਂ ਵਲ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਦੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਰ ਪਇਆ ਹੋਇ ਬਜਗਾਰੀ॥
 ਟੰਗੋਂ ਪਕੜ ਘਸੀਟਿਆ ਫਿਰਿਆ ਮੱਕਾ ਕਲਾ ਦਿਖਾਰੀ॥
 ਹੋਇ ਹੈਰਾਨ ਕਰੇਨ ਜੁਹਾਰੀ ॥੩੨

(Baba (Guru Nanak) then wore blue clothes (like Muslims) and went to Mecca, the holy place of Muslims. He was the personification of God in this garb. He carried a long staff in his hand, a book/notebook under his arm-pit and a prayer mat (musalla) used by the Muslim faithfuls when offering Namaz. He went and sat in the holy mosque where those who came on Hajj were performing their Hajj rituals. As the night fell, Baba laid down to sleep with his legs and feet extended towards the holy stone (Kaba). A devotee and a religious leader of sort named 'Jiwan' kicked Baba with his foot and asked

who was that infidel sleeping like a cheat and a faithless person. O man! Why are you lying here with your legs extended towards God? Why are you becoming a sinner? Jiwan got hold of Baba's feet and dragged his legs so as to turn them away from the direction of Ka'ba. Baba showed such divine power so as to turn the holy shrine (Mecca) in the direction his feet were moved to. Bewildered; all present started supplicating before him.(32)

'Prophet' is said to be a great person who has the following four qualities besides other qualities:-

1. Kitab [religious book] such as Quran Sharif.
2. Ummat [follower] means, his followers.
3. "Mu'jizat" (miracles) 'meaning' spiritual power.
4. Companions [close servants] like Hazrat Muhammad Sahib Ji's four friends - Khalifa Abu Bakr, Khalifa Umar, Khalifa Uthman, Khalifa Ali.

In religious traditions, the title of a prophet is often reserved for those who exhibit distinct qualities. These qualities include possessing a holy book, having a dedicated following (ummah), performing miracles (mojizat), and being surrounded by close companions. Analyzing Guru Nanak's life through these criteria reveals his alignment with these attributes, thereby affirming his prophetic stature.

Kitab (Religious Book): Guru Nanak's hymns and teachings, compiled in the Guru Granth Sahib, serve as the spiritual and doctrinal foundation for Sikhs, akin to how the Quran functions in Islam. His verses are considered divinely inspired and hold a central place in Sikh worship and daily life.

Ummat (Followers): Guru Nanak's following, the Sikh Sangat, has grown from a small group of disciples into a global community. Despite facing historical adversities such as the Mughal rule, invasions by Abdali, and British colonialism, the Sikh community has persevered and flourished, reflecting the enduring strength of their faith.

Mu'jizat (Miracles or Spiritual Power): Accounts of Guru

Nanak's Spiritual Powers /miracles are numerous in Makka Madina and other travels and well-documented as mentioned above. These include the famous incident of the imprint of his hand (panja) on a stone, Panja Sahib (Hasan abdal) ,In Leh - Ladakh a boulder still bears the indelible marks resembling Guru Ji in a meditative posture. Now known as 'Gurdwara Pathar Sahib.' The transformation of bitter sand into sweet pudding(Hasan Abdal), and the creation of sweet water from a bitter spring . These miracles, though extraordinary, are also seen as manifestations of his spiritual prowess and connection to the divine.

Companions: Just as the Prophet Muhammad had his close companions, Guru Nanak was accompanied by devoted followers such as Baba Buddha ji and Guru Angad Dev Ji (Bhai Lehna). These companions played pivotal roles in the early development of the Sikh faith and were instrumental in continuing Guru Nanak's mission after his death.

Guru Nanak's Unique Position Among Religious Figures: The reverence for Guru Nanak extends beyond the Sikh tradition. He is also honored by Hindus and Muslims, who recognize his spiritual authority and universal message. His interfaith appeal is exemplified in the harmonious coexistence of his Hindu and Muslim followers, even in the face of disputes over his final rites. The respect for Guru Nanak as "Nabi Nanak" or "Wali Allah" highlights the acknowledgment of his prophethood by devout adherents of other faiths. This recognition is further illustrated in the poetic tribute by Alahyar Khan 'Jogi', who celebrated Guru Nanak as a divine emissary sent to guide humanity, transcending religious boundaries.

Historical and Scholarly Perspectives: Pandit Rajji Arya's observations in 'Arya Musafar Masak Patra' provide an additional layer of scholarly endorsement. He notes the alignment of Guru Nanak's life and teachings with the attributes traditionally associated with prophets. This endorsement from a Hindu scholar underscores the universal acknowledgment of Guru Nanak's spiritual significance. Moreover, the reflections of an Iranian woman in Amritsar further

validate Guru Nanak's prophetic qualities. She emphasizes that while many prophets are recognized within their respective traditions, Guru Nanak uniquely embodies all prophetic attributes and is revered by non-Muslims as well, underscoring his universal and inclusive spirituality. When I consider Baba Nanak, it becomes unmistakably evident that he embodies these four elements:

Baba Nanak Kitab Darad, Baba Nanak Ummat Darad, Baba Nanak Mu'jizat Darad, Baba Nanak Companions Darad.

Elderly Muslims, filled with spiritual fervor and conviction, acknowledge this. Therefore, without doubt and with good fortune, Baba Nanak is recognized as a prophet.

Conclusion : Guru Nanak's life and teachings resonate with the characteristics of a prophet, as evidenced by the reverence he commands across different religious traditions. His contributions to spiritual discourse, his miraculous deeds, and the enduring strength of the Sikh community all affirm his prophetic stature. In this light, Guru Nanak can be seen not only as the founder of Sikhism but also as a universal prophet whose message transcends religious and cultural boundaries.

JAPUJI
ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF PAURIS/ STANZAS 28-31

PROF KULWANT SINGH*

JAPUJI

ਮੁੰਦਾ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸਰਮੁ ਪਤੁ ਝੋਲੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਹਿ ਬਿਭੂਤਿ॥
ਖਿੰਥਾ ਕਾਲੁ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਡੰਡਾ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ॥
ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥
ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ ॥੨੮॥
munda santokh saram pat jholee dhi-aan kee karahi bibhoot.
khinthaa kaal ku-aaree kaa-i-aa jugat dandaa parteet.
aa-ee panthee sagal jamaatee man jeetai jag jeet.
aadays tisai aadays.
aad aneel anaad anaahat jug jug ayko vays. ||28||

ਭੁਗਤਿ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਦਇਆ ਭੰਡਾਰਣਿ ਘਟਿ ਘਟਿ ਵਾਜਹਿ ਨਾਦ ॥
ਆਪਿ ਨਾਥੁ ਨਾਥੀ ਸਭ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਰਿਧਿ ਸਿਧਿ ਅਵਰਾ ਸਾਦ ॥
ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਵਿਜੋਗੁ ਦੁਇ ਕਾਰ ਚਲਾਵਹਿ ਲੇਖੇ ਆਵਹਿ ਭਾਗ ॥
ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥
ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ ॥੨੯॥
bhugat gi-aan da-i-aa bhandaaran ghat ghat vaajeh naad.
aap naath naathee sabh jaa kee ridh sidh avraa saad.
sanjog vijog du-ay kaar chalaaveh laykhay aavahi bhaag.
aadays tisai aadays.
aad aneel anaad anaahat jug jug ayko vays. ||29||

ਏਕਾ ਮਾਈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਵਿਆਈ ਤਿਨਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ॥
ਇਕੁ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਭੰਡਾਰੀ ਇਕੁ ਲਾਏ ਦੀਬਾਣੁ ॥
ਜਿਵ ਤਿਸੁ ਭਾਵੈ ਤਿਵੈ ਚਲਾਵੈ ਜਿਵ ਹੋਵੈ ਫੁਰਮਾਣੁ ॥
ਓਹੁ ਵੇਖੈ ਓਨਾ ਨਦਰਿ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਏਹੁ ਵਿਡਾਣੁ ॥
ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥

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TRANSLATION

Consider contentment as your earrings and hardwork as begging bowl;
 And consider contemplation as ash smeared around your body.
 Consider fear of death as a ragged cloth protecting your celebate body;
 And consider adherence to yogic code as your yogic staff.
 Be a member of *Aaee sect* of Yogis believing in universal brotherhood;
 And consider conquest over your mind as conquest of the whole world.
 Cultivating these virtues will make you a true yogi;
 And say salutation unto the Divine Lord in deed.
 Who is eternal, immaculate, immutable and immortal;
 And whose writ continues to prevail through out ages. ||28||

Consider spiritual enlightenment as stock of your sustenance;
 And universal compassion as its main dispenser.
 Consider Divine power as supreme Lord of entire creation;
 And all other yogic feats as counterfeit displays.
 Communion and separation from the Divine are two processes;
 Based on the consequences of one's deeds in the past.
 Realising this, shall make you worthy of being devout and obedient;
 And entitled to make salutation to the Divine Cosmic power.
 Which is eternal, immaculate, immutable and immortal;
 Which continues to prevail uniformly through out the ages. ||29||

Out of the planned union between primordial masculine Divine Power;
 And feminine matter, three offsprings were manifestly born.
 While one became the creator and second the sustainer;
 The third one came to be the destroyer of the creation.
 He guides and monitors them as per His own volition;

ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ ॥੩੦॥
 aykaa maa-ee jugat vi-aa-ee tin chaylay parvaan.
 ik sansaaree ik bhandaaree ik laa-ay deebaan.
 Jiv tis bhaavai tivai chalaavai Jiv hovai furmaan.
 oh vaykhai onaa nadar na aavai bahutaa ayhu vidaan.
 aadays tisai aadays.
 aad aneel anaad anaahat jug jug ayko vays.

ਆਸਣੁ ਲੋਇ ਲੋਇ ਭੰਡਾਰ ॥
 ਜੋ ਕਿਛੁ ਪਾਇਆ ਸੁ ਏਕਾ ਵਾਰ॥
 ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਵੇਖੈ ਸਿਰਜਣਹਾਰੁ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਸਾਚੀ ਕਾਰ ॥
 ਆਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥
 ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ ॥ ੩੧ ॥
 aasan lo-ay lo-ay bhandaar.
 jo kichh paa-i-aa so aykaa vaar.
 kar kar vaykhai sirjanhaar.
 naanak sachay kee saachee kaar.
 aadays tisai aadays.
 aad aneel anaad anaahat jug jug ayko vays. ||31||

And they carry on their assigned duties as per His directions.
 What is most intriguing about this whole process is;
 That he himself remains invisible while looking over them.
 Realising the unique mystery of this threefold process;
 Respectful salutation be unto such a magnanimous creator.
 Who is eternal, immaculate, immutable and immortal;
 And who continues to hold his universal sway throughout ages. || 30 ||

His majestic presence exists in countless regions of His;
 So are His provisions available in those regions.
 Inexhaustible are His provisions everywhere;
 As He has made all the provisions once for all.
 He keeps on looking after His entire creation;
 As he himself is the sole creator of His creation.
 Nanak, just and fair is His dispensation;
 As He himself is just, fair and true indeed.
 Salutations be to him who is so benevolent;
 And He be hailed again and again for His generosity.
 He is eternal, immaculate, immutable and immortal;
 Who continues to hold His sway uniformly over all ages. || 31 ||

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## INTERPRETATION OF PAURI/ STANZA 28-31 OF GURU NANAK'S JAPUJI

Addressing the contemporary Nath Yogis in these four stanzas (28-31) Guru Nanak stresses upon the cultivation of right moral and human values in life instead of wearing the outward yogic symbols by them. These values are contentment, honest hardwork, meditation or contemplation, continuous remembrance of death, leading a planned streamlined life, compassion and benevolence, self-restraint and detachment.

The corresponding representative yogic symbols worn and displayed by Nath Yogis are earrings, begging bowl, sling pouch, smearing of human body with ash, carrying wooden staff and practicing code of yogic conduct, etc. It is through the cultivation of these values that a union with the cosmic Divine Power can be achieved and spiritual enlightenment achieved. Contrary to the yogic pathway of the Nath Yogis involving undergoing several bodily penances and observance of austerities, Guru Nanak's spiritual pathway consists of leading the life of a householder, earning one's livelihood through earnest means, continuous remembrance of god's sacred name and imbibing its Divine attributes like universal love, compassion, charity in the normal course of life called *sehaj* way of life. Guru Nanak's spiritual pathway is the spontaneous, natural way of life without forcible imposition of any bodily penances. Instead of escaping from the problems of life and society, it is a meaningful way of making both life and society better and worth living.

□

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੇਇ ॥

(ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੨੪੫)

## NEHRU, INDIRA GANDHI AND THE PUNJAB

DR TEJWANT SINGH GILL\*

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A mention of the Punjab in the context of Jawaharlal Nehru's policies and programmes before and after Independence brings to mind a relationship that was intricate from the very beginning. It becomes evident from the corpus of his writings, speeches, interviews and statements that Nehru began to reflect on the Punjab in the 1920s.<sup>1</sup> His reflections show that the religious composition of the people as much as the political complexion of the province was his primary concern.

Nehru did not feel the urge to ponder over the nature and culture of the Punjab. Acclaiming it as a fertile land inhabited by brave and virile people, he did not reckon with what the *panj-aab* of the Persian chronicles evoked with regard to its natural habitus. This had nothing to do with Nehru's historiography. Its poetic paradigm was nurtured upon male-female or lover-beloved syndrome, which impelled him to write about India as nobility-incarnate with a 'strong and serene face-strong and yet calm and determined, that ancient face which is ever young and vibrant. The lover-beloved aspect of this syndrome led him to glorify the service of the motherland as 'a unique experience... such an experience as though full of turmoils and hardships is good for a nation.'<sup>2</sup>

Nehru's reflections on the Punjab were occasioned by another

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paradigm of his historiography. Being ideological, he was impelled to take note of the diversity marking the unity of the country. It was under the burden of this impulse that he sought to relate the problems of the people to the economic, social, political and religious factors of their life. Literacy, planning, industrialization and socialism were the measures which he suggested for their growth as against communalism, parochialism and linguism which kept them underdeveloped and backward.

These two paradigms operated in converging parallelism in Nehru's mind. When he reflected upon India as a civilisational unity, it was usually the first paradigm that impelled him to glorify her achievement in the fields of spirituality, literature and culture. Drawn to her poverty at the present historical juncture, he employed the second paradigm to frame policies and programmes for ameliorating the condition of the vast multitude of her people. Impelled to describe the natural beauty of his native land, Kashmir, he invariably took recourse to the poetic means of the first paradigm. Through these means he would evoke the protuberances, curvatures and apertures of this mountainous region as if it were identical with the female body. While reflecting upon the other regions of India, particularly Bengal and the Punjab, which nurtured no feelings of identity and self-identity, he found only the second paradigm relevant for his purpose.

## I

Nehru found three religious communities marking the composition of the Punjabi people. They were the Muslims, the Hindus and the Sikhs in order of percentage. Nehru felt that though with the largest percentage, the Muslims were not the addressee to whom as an addressor he could address his message. They were not even the recipients whom as a speaker he could have the disposition to forward his discourse. To all intents and purposes, his address or discourse sought to exclude them as the other. For, without any involvement of the sort, the Muslims could formally be his listeners. The large-scale killing of the Muslims particularly in the erstwhile Patiala state in the

aftermath of the partition did trouble him a lot. The expression that he gave to his troubled state of mind was also agonising. However, its significance at that juncture was only gestural or gesticulative.

The exclusion of Muslims as the addressee of his message and the recipients of his discourse was valid because Nehru felt that they aligned themselves politically either with a feudal party, like the Unionist Party under the leadership of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan. Sir Sundar Singh Majithia and Sir Chhotu Ram, or with a communal organisation like the Muslim League led by the cohorts of Muhammad Ali Jinnah. This provoked his ire so much that to guarantee their separation from the Hindus and the Sikhs, he started approving of the partition of the country that he had earlier opposed with vehemence. The rationale that he provided was that for the health and survival of the body, it is advisable to amputate the diseased or the paralytic limb. The use of disease imagery that he employed in this regard in his writings, statements, speeches and interviews, included in his Selected Works in the second series, is evident enough. 'We agreed because we felt that India's political and social life was being undermined and poisoned by continuous inner conflict and we wanted to put an end to this so that people may consider the questions facing us dispassionately.'<sup>3</sup> That this sought to invert the norms of the paradigm drawing sustenance from the male-female or lover-beloved syndrome, did not visibly exasperate him.

Nehru treated the Hindus of the Punjab as the addressees for whom his address was of significance or the recipients for whom his discourse carried meaning. But they were addressees or recipients of the passive sort. This remained Nehru's position till the time of the partition. His rationale was drawn from the suppression to which they in the course of history had been subjected by the Muslim rulers. Though their invasions made the Hindus aware of the Islamic message of equality and fraternity, they were so caste ridden that it elicited no positive response from them. As recorded in *The Discovery of India*, Islam 'produced powerful psychological reactions among the people and filled them with bitterness'. Nehru felt constrained further to

remark: 'There was no objection to a new religion but there was strong objection to anything which forcibly interfered with and upset their way of life'.<sup>4</sup>

The Sikhs at this juncture were the fittest people whom in the active sense of the word Nehru wanted to be the addressee. He was arrested at Jaito in 1923. During his short internment, he prepared a statement which he proposed to read in his self-defence in the court at Nabha.

The text of this 'statement' is available in a volume of the first series of The Selected Works, It is an eloquent expression of Nehru's admiration for the Sikhs, their indomitable courage and selfless sacrifice. In its concluding paragraph he rejoiced that he was being tried for a cause that 'the Sikhs had made their own'. He marvelled at 'the courage and sacrifice of the Sikhs' and wished for an opportunity to show his 'deep admiration for them by some form of service. When the opportunity was there, he hoped to prove worthy of their high tradition and fine courage.'<sup>5</sup> To impart a proper climax to his enthusiastic admiration, he ended his statement with the traditional salutation of Sat Sri Akal which signifies the Sikh's faith in the invincibility of truth and its praxis.

The event convinced Nehru of the need to bring into the national fold the *morcha* launched by the Sikhs under the leadership of the Akalis. It was at his suggestion that a publicity-cell was set up at Amritsar for this purpose. He recommended the names of A.T. Gidwani and K.M. Pannikar for conducting the affairs of the publicity-cell. Their reports bore testimony to the fact that the basic hindrance in the way of the Sikh espousal of the national cause under the leadership of the Congress Party was the strain that prevailed between the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Nehru's perception of the communal strain revealed to him the negative feature of the Sikh-Hindu relationship. He realised that the Sikhs were obdurate and had no generous word or gesture for the people of the other community. This perception of their obduracy was fair enough but the historical reasons for the Sikhs adopting such an attitude are not articulated anywhere in his writings. He did not



take adequate note of the fact that in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries the Sikhs had waged relentless struggle both against the Mughal governors and the Afghan invaders. This struggle bore fruit in the form of sovereign Sikh rule in late eighteenth century and under Maharaja Ranjit Singh. It was for the first time that the Punjab felt itself as a sovereign entity. This sovereignty also laid claim to the fact that the Muslims and the Hindus comprising 90 per cent of the population accepted the political hegemony of the Sikhs. Likewise the Sikhs had no compunction in consenting to the cultural supremacy.

In his *Glimpses of World History*, Nehru had words of praise for Maharaja Ranjit Singh. To his engaged mind, Ranjit Singh's kingdom was 'a great Sikh State' that 'weakened and began to break up after his death. Ruefully recollecting that it was not possible even for the later Mughals to suppress the Sikhs when they were a hunted minority group, he commented that it illustrated the old maxim: one rises in adversity and falls after a success is attained.<sup>6</sup> By the time he came to write *The Discovery of India* his mind, had got reflective enough. In this new state of mind he found Ranjit Singh's kingdom 'a marginal state' that could not succeed in the real struggle for supremacy against the British.<sup>7</sup> Both these observations are profound but they do not encompass the whole problematic of the Sikh kingdom and the traumatic impact of its end on the Sikh psyche. Rather than dialectical and historical, these observations entailed a positivistic perception.

For all the defining and redefining involved, Nehru did not articulate how this traumatic impact resulted in a sort of disorientation for the Sikhs. Howsoever vague, he had an inkling of this disorientation. That is why he felt that Sikh nationalism that arose from the end of the nineteenth century was only a 'sectional nationalism' working for a more distinct and separate existence. At the same time its negative aspect was offset by what he viewed as positive, that is, 'an amazing exhibition of courage and endurance.'<sup>8</sup> Thus an element of criticism, albeit a mild one, was added to his enthusiastic admiration for the Sikhs. As compared to this criticism, it was condemnation, though compassionate, that he reserved for the Hindus at this historical

juncture. In the second volume of the series, he recorded the bitterness that the Hindus had invariably nurtured for the Muslims and the Sikhs. Characterising it as an essential feature of the Hindu psyche, he found that 'this bitterness of the Hindu against the Sikh and the Muslim' was chiefly due to 'the realisation of his utter weakness and humiliation'. The irony of the situation was that this bitterness, instead of urging him to better himself or make himself stronger, turned to 'hatred and curses'.

That his criticism did not get the better of Nehru's admiration for the Sikhs was proved by the deep regard that he had for their organising capacity. As compared to the Hindus and Muslims the Sikhs formed a minority, marginal in number to the multitude of the two majorities. All the same he found them invulnerable not because the Hindus and the Muslims were considerate but because the Sikhs were well-organised and even ready 'to defend themselves from unrighteous attacks'. He felt that the fissure in the Hindu- Sikh relations had deprived the Congress 'of much of the good of the Akali civil disobedience'. Since the Akali civil disobedience was something to be emulated, he wanted this fissure to end. He found that both the communities wanted this undesirable divide to go but nothing could be done because 'each was afraid of lowering its prestige by taking the first step'.<sup>9</sup>

The organising capacity of the Sikhs, he thought, could be useful both at the national and the international level. The national purpose could be served by bringing the morcha launched by the Sikhs under the hegemony of the Akalis into the broad framework of the satyagraha espoused and initiated by the Congress Party. To serve the international purpose, however, it was desirable to associate the Sikhs with the movement against imperialism.

In the third volume there is a letter by Nehru to an organiser of the Sikh League, presumably Mangal Singh Gill, suggesting 'it will suit the Sikh League better to become an associate body...of the league against Imperialism'. He conveyed this information to V. Chattopadhyaya who was then the most important Indian working for

the Congress. At the same time, Nehru expressed the fear that the leaders concerned were 'hardly likely to pay much attention' to the matter because they seemed 'to have developed a very strong communal outlook'.<sup>10</sup>

For all his scepticism, Nehru cherished the hope that the Sikhs would advocate the cause of anti-fascism at the international level. That he had no such hope from the Hindus and Muslims is evident from the double spectre of fascism that he found lurking over India on the eve of the partition. In the first volume of *The Selected Works* in the second series, he confirmed the growth of fascist tendencies amongst the Hindus and the Muslims. It was his conviction that 'the two-pronged Indian fascism threatened to wipe out the proud culture and civilisation' of the country.

Regarding them as two opposing forces, he believed that the components of India's two-pronged fascism, mutually contributed to the growth of each other. Equi-distant in theoretical perspective, they did not provoke him in an equal measure. It was the Muslim fascism under the leadership of the Muslim League that in the first instance he was led to oppose after the formation of the Interim Government. He believed that 'the best manner in which the existing situation' could be improved was 'by educating the Muslim peasantry against the poisonous communal propaganda of the league'.

However, Nehru failed to embark on this ideological programme on account of communal riots in several parts of the country. He felt that any compromise with the Muslim League was impossible because its leaders had 'intellectual and mental affinity with senior Government officials like Governors'. In the event, 'mass slaughter, arson, burning of human beings, rapes, abduction on a large scale, forcible conversions and all manner of other things' exasperated him most. He could hold out a general threat that if anybody has mistaken his silence, he does not or give a sermon in appreciation of 'courage and strength' along with advice that they had to be directed to proper channels and not frittered away in outbursts of communal frenzy.<sup>11</sup>

The deteriorating situation in the country made Nehru so helpless

that he felt like putting the whole blame on Hindu fascism. It seemed that he felt like putting the whole blame to him that 'the responsibility for the disturbances lies on as they are in a majority'. He remained fraught with doubt, disillusion and agony. Caught in a predicament, he either condemned such psychic factors as animality, or fear and 'anarchy of the mind the involved self-sacrifice almost as a metaphysical panacea. Urging the students to do relief work, will congratulate the students if a few of them have to die in their endeavour to restore confidence'.<sup>12</sup>

That Nehru did not apprehend the growth of fascist tendency among the Sikhs a factor of which the members of this community can be proud even at the present historical juncture. It is also a tribute to his secular outlook that is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to maintain in India even now. More so, it was difficult to maintain such a secular outlook before Independence when political activity was disposed to derive vital impulse from communal and religious considerations.

## II

After Independence when Pakistan became a separate country and the Muslims claimed to have realised their destiny, Nehru's perception changed with regard to the Sikhs as well. Either his priorities changed or a deep disillusionment set in his mind about their intentions. From now onwards, he began to address the Hindus as his addressees of the active sort, with the Sikhs feeling themselves rendered passive recipients of his discourse. It was Nehru's perversion perhaps that in the emergent situation, the Sikhs were no longer an imperative for countering the Muslim communalism as they had been earlier. Feeling themselves thus reduced in significance, the Sikhs became self-centered and in this self-centredness, Nehru magnified it to the extent of feeling that the Sikhs posed a danger to decode their disposition centred in their selfcentredness. Nehru regarded it as a danger to the edifice of secularism that he sought to build so assiduously in the country.

No wonder, in Nehru's perception every claim put forth by the Sikhs became suspect. Even their genuine claims of which the one to

the linguistic reorganisation of the Punjab was incontrovertible, became controversial. So much so that he got skeptical about the linguistic veracity of even the Punjabi language. In the thirteenth volume of the second series, he pointed out to Bhim Sen Sachar, the then Chief Minister of the Punjab, that 'Gurmukhi was not advanced to be a medium of instruction after the matriculation'. Here the substitution of Gurmukhi, the name of the script, for the Punjabi language, was rather strange. Then in a letter to C.M. Trivedi, the then Governor of the Punjab, he passed an inexcusable stricture on Punjabi literature itself. Without entertaining any doubt about his misinformation, verging on disinformation, he wrote: 'There is hardly any literature in Gurmukhi, so far as I know except some sacred literature'.<sup>13</sup> How one wishes that he had avoided the subterfuge of an immodest assertion through a modest claim. In his speech in the Lok Sabha delivered on 30 August 1961, he gave expression to his skepticism in a circumlocutory way. Reiterating that Punjabi was the language of Punjab, he referred to the usage of Persian script. He forgot that the Persian script was common with the Muslim writers whereas the non-Muslim writers had invariably employed the Gurmukhi script. Then he claimed that Punjabi was a home language.<sup>14</sup> It was an ambiguous way of calling it a dialect. He forgot that Dogri, a dialect to which his Government awarded the status of language, was actually a spoken form of Punjabi. In fact, Punjabi under its ambience had several other dialects in the eastern and the western parts of the Punjab.

Nehru ardently championed Punjab's claim to literacy and progress. Perhaps he visualized some sort of a common culture to grow in the Punjab. May be, the Regional Formula was a measure in the same direction. The Regional Formula identified a Punjabi and a Hindi region. In the former region Punjabi was to be the primary language with Hindi as the secondary one. Likewise, in the latter region Hindi was to be the primary language and Punjabi as the secondary one. Both the regions were to be administered by two regional committees, claiming substantial powers. Nehru believed that with the implementation of the Regional Formula no further question would be left out from the language point of view. This was rather a wishful

thinking because in recalcitrance he had to confess that in the wake of problems relating to power politics between the Hindus and the Sikhs, it did not even solve the language question. Symptomatic of it was the census of 1961 in which the Hindus settled in the Punjabi region were instigated to declare Hindi as their mother-tongue. In all candidness Nehru felt that it was not a truthful statement and it did a lot of harm’.

Holding the Akali Dal and certain Hindu organisations as equally guilty for causing this strain, the Congress had recourse to the policy of deferral. Smacking of manipulation in the vulgar sense of the word, this policy provided the Congress with political space for rule in the Punjab. The damage this rule caused to the social and cultural fabric was tremendous. Nehru, with all his subtlety and sobriety, failed to award hegemonic meaning to his own value-based strategy as distinct from the opportunistic policy of his party. As a result his vision of the Hindus and the Sikhs as ‘interwoven like the warp and woof of a fabric’ proved to be an illusion. No less illusory was the commitment he candidly articulated in the following words:

What troubles me is that if we separate them applying the principle of division, we shall be tearing a finely woven tapestry into two bits and spoil it. Such a tearing process will have awful consequences. Tearing up an integrated community into two is a terrible thing. With all my desire to be flexible, I find it impossible to adapt myself to the idea.<sup>15</sup>

Rather than grow into a resilient strategy to resolve the issue, this sort of thinking resulted in a diffident policy, meant to complicate it further. No wonder the Akalis got extremely desperate, launched one morcha after the other. They even talked in a vein sounding secessionist to chauvinistic ears. So the issue lingered on till Mrs Indira Gandhi made it explosive on the one hand by granting a truncated Punjabi Suba and on the other hand by dispossessing it of its resources.

### III

Recapitulation of events after Nehru’s death in 1964 shows that the policy to resolve this highly convoluted problem has been one

step forward and two steps back. Nehru's diffidence was replaced by 'doubleness' that became more and more the hallmark of Indira Gandhi's policy. As one step forward, she accepted the demand for linguistic reorganisation of the Punjab. When the Punjabi state was actually reorganised it became evident that two steps had been taken backwards. Happy with the thought that their long cherished demand was accepted, the Sikhs felt nonetheless exasperated to find that the reorganised state was a truncated state. The exclusion of Chandigarh and other Punjabi speaking areas which were in the parent state under the Regional Formula, and the central control over water, disconcerted them so much that they felt cheated if not betrayed by the whole exercise.

To cover up the raw deal meted out to the reorganised state, Indira Gandhi had recourse to a subterfuge. To please the Sikhs, she played to the gallery by identifying her lineage with a cherished event in their history in utter disregard of historical veracity. In a speech on the occasion of the tri-centenary celebrations of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, known to have laid down his life for the religious cause of the Kashmiri Pandits, she sought to underline her identification with the Sikh community. The Hindus of Kashmir had approached Guru Tegh Bahadur with the complaint that they were being forced to change their religion: 'That was the time when many families including mine were compelled to leave Kashmir and settle elsewhere so that they did not have to give up their religion'

The second sentence implied that her family too was beholden to the Guru for his martyrdom. It also owed a special gratitude to the savant who 'stood up not merely for his co-religionists but for followers of other religions also'.<sup>16</sup> Her observation was nothing less than a concoction. Jawaharlal Nehru has given an altogether different version of his ancestor's migration from his native land. It was several decades after the Guru's martyrdom that his ancestor 'came down from that mountain valley to seek fame and fortune in the rich plains below'.<sup>17</sup> Not religious oppression but search for fame and fortune was the motive for migration from Kashmir.

Indira Gandhi's speech gave no consolation to the Sikhs in their exasperation. Short of the inclusion of Chandigarh and the Punjabi-speaking areas into the reorganised state and the settlement of the river-waters dispute in accordance with the riparian principle, nothing could pacify and conciliate them. For Indira Gandhi this was an impossible proposition. So, in the Sikh psyche, the impression got ingrained that she was biased against the Punjabi Suba. The territorial issue and the water-dispute substantiate the charge. Rather than resolve Rajasthan's demand for water at the national level, she regarded it solely as a responsibility devolving upon the Punjab. In lieu of Chandigarh she insisted upon Punjabi areas to be transferred to Haryana though the Regional Formula had specified it for the parent state.

As a diversionary tactic, Indira Gandhi encouraged the Akali leaders to raise in the first instance the so-called religious demands. They would readily succumb to this temptation, dictated partly by their political naivety and partly by their vested interests. Hypothetical as those religious demands were, she had no hesitation in accepting them. She would have no compunction then in using this acceptance as a gloss to cover her duplicity in respect of the substantial demands of the reorganised state. Thus on 4 July 1984, when replying to discussion on the White Paper on the Punjab she was in a tight corner, the acceptance of the so-called religious demands came to her rescue almost as a reprieve. As certified by her, they pertained to (a) banning of intoxicants in Amritsar, (b) relaying of *kirtan* on All India Radio from the Golden Temple, (c) permission for Sikh passengers to carry *kirpan* on domestic flights, and (d) an All-India Gurdwara Bill for awarding control to the SGPC of all historical *gurdwaras* situated in India.

It is doubtful whether orders to the effect have been carried out though over twelve years have gone by since their acceptance was announced. Whether any advantage would have accrued to Sikhism and the Sikh community from their acceptance is a matter of even more doubtful conjecture. Only the All India Gurdwara Bill might have made a difference and for that reason perhaps absolutely nothing



has happened on that score. Indira Gandhi did of course get the opportunity to forward a claim of this sort: 'I was specially pleased that my relationship with the Sikh community was a close one and a very friendly one. And I cannot imagine that any Sikh should think that I would do anything, that I would be responsible for anything that could hurt their feelings'.<sup>18</sup>

Supposing a grain of truth to be there in what she pleaded, the point to know is as to who gave the hurt and that too to the extent of destroying the Akal Takht, burning the Sikh Museum and the Reference Library, and destroying so many valuable gifts and rare manuscripts. Since all this destruction could not be wished away at will, so she had to explain it and that she did by a characteristic ambiguity which actually explains nothing:

I do not want to go into the details of who built up whom because nobody built up any person. It is the situation and the circumstances which built up a person and that person took advantage of it, whether he really was in control of the situation himself, I am not in a position to say. If I did not take any names it was because of this. Otherwise also I rarely take names. But I feel there were certain forces behind these happenings, some may be within the country, some be outside.<sup>19</sup>

In this paragraph, a demonic person, presumably Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale, was being valorized and rendered anonymous. The motive to valorize him and render him anonymous was not stated but her innocent denial was substantiating it as if through textual subversion. So the problem before her was retrospectively to obliterate his links with the Congress Party. What better method could there be for that than portray herself as a 'damsel-in-distress'.

Adept in this tactic, she portrayed herself as a person who had suffered so much abuse:

I have said before in this House and I say it again that I have heard abuse since I was a small child. I have had falsehood flung against my family and those were the days when I used to lose my temper. But long ago, I had decided that it was not worth my while losing my

temper with such people.

As if the domestic and social context was not enough, she related to it the international context as well: ‘How is it that all these forces are directed against me? Against India also, but more especially against me’.

This scenario, more appropriate for a damsel-in-distress in a film, was not suited to the world of politics in which violent forces unleashed by her were intent upon her elimination. She was eliminated by her own security-guards. She left her mantle to a young man whose sole qualification rested in being a prince-charming. He tried to solve a political problem by state terror. After his cruel death, this policy has been implemented further with devilish skill. So the Punjab is back to normal as it is claimed by all and sundry. If now there is nothing wrong with this long suffering land, it is perhaps in the sense in which Bertolt Brecht wrote of Germany by invoking her through an addressor who had nothing wrong with him her:

For nothing  
Can be wrong with me if I myself  
Am nothing.<sup>20</sup>

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## ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਤੋਂ ਪੀੜਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ\*

### ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਕੇ ਸੀ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ

ਦੇਸ਼ ਆਜ਼ਾਦ ਹੋਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਦਲ ਸੱਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੋਵੇ, ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੀ ਭੇਦਭਾਵ ਦੀ ਨੀਤੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਇਤ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਹਿਲ ਸਿੱਖ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਲਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਾਅਦਿਆਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 'ਆਜ਼ਾਦੀ ਦਾ ਨਿੱਘ ਮਾਨਣ' ਵਾਲਾ ਕੋਈ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਦਰਜਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦੇ ਸੁਲਘਦੇ ਯੁੱਧਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਸਿੱਖ ਹੋਮਲੈਂਡ' ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਘੁਸਰ ਮੁਸਰ ਨੂੰ ਜਨਮ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਨਾਲੇ-ਨਾਲ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਬੋਲੀ ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਉਠਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ।

ਮਾਸਟਰ ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਮੰਗ ਲਹਿਰ ਬਣ ਗਈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼, ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਯਾਤਰਾਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਜਜ਼ਬੇ ਨੇ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਆਧਾਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਪਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਕੰਨ 'ਤੇ ਜੂ ਨਾ ਸਰਕਦੀ ਦੇਖਣ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦੀ ਚੋਭ, ਚਸਕ ਬਣ ਗਈ। ਦੇਖਣ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਸ ਲਹਿਰ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਲਈ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਪਰ ਅਕਾਲੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਨਸ਼ਾ ਬਣਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਬਹੁਲਤਾ ਵਾਲੇ ਸੂਬੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਿਆਸੀ ਸੱਤਾ ਹਾਸਲ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਰੰਗ ਦੇ ਕੇ ਸ਼੍ਰੋਮਣੀ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕ ਕਮੇਟੀ ਦਾ ਸਮਰਥਨ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਕਰ ਲਿਆ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਸਮੁੱਚੇ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਬਣਾ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਸ਼ਾਲੀ ਲਹਿਰ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ।

ਉੱਪਰ, 1956 ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਬਣੇ ਪਰਤਾਪ ਸਿੰਘ ਕੈਰੋਂ ਅਤੇ ਤਤਕਾਲੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਜਵਾਹਰ ਲਾਲ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇੱਕ ਦੁੱਕੜ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨੇਤਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਪੱਖ ਵਿਚ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਕੁਝ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਸੰਗਠਨ ਵੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬੇ ਦੇ ਉਲਟ ਸਨ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵੰਡ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਹਿਮਾਚਲ, ਰਾਜਸਥਾਨ, ਉੱਤਰ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਨਾਲ ਲਗਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਹਿੰਦੀ ਬਹੁਲਤਾ ਵਾਲਾ ਗਰੇਟਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਬਣਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ ਪਰ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਾਰ-ਵਾਰ ਜੇਲ੍ਹ ਭਰਨਾ, ਤਾਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗੈਰ-ਹਾਜ਼ਰੀ ਵਿਚ ਸੰਤ ਫਤਹਿ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ ਮਰਨ ਵਰਤ ਦਾ ਐਲਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨੇਤਾ ਸੇਠ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਥ ਦੀ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਡੈਪੂਟੇਸ਼ਨ (ਇਕ ਡੈਪੂਟੇਸ਼ਨ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਵ ਨਗਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ) 'ਚ ਸ਼ਮੂਲੀਅਤ ਨੇ ਨਹਿਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਨਰਮ ਕਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ। 1962 ਦੇ ਚੀਨੀ ਹਮਲੇ

\* ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨ, ਸਤੰਬਰ 28, 2024 ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਧੰਨਵਾਦ ਸਹਿਤ

ਅਤੇ 1965 'ਚ ਭਾਰਤ-ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ ਯੁੱਧ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੌਰਵਮਈ ਭੂਮਿਕਾ ਨੇ ਗਰਮ ਲੋਹੇ 'ਤੇ ਸੱਟ ਲਗਾਈ ਤੇ ਅੰਤ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੇ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਨਵੰਬਰ 1966 ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬਾ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ।

ਕੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬੇ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤੀ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਤਕਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਖਤਮ ਹੋ ਗਈ? ਨਹੀਂ, ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਨਹੀਂ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਪੁਨਰਗਠਨ ਐਕਟ-1966 ਤਹਿਤ, 1961 ਦੀ ਗਣਨਾ (ਬੋਲੀ) ਦੇ ਆਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਕਾਣੀ ਵੰਡ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਗਿਆ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ; ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੱਟ-ਵੱਢ ਹੀ ਆਈ। ਪੂਰਬੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੇ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹੇ ਕੱਟ ਕੇ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ। ਪਹਾੜੀ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਕੱਢ ਕੇ ਹਿਮਾਚਲ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਾ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਇਉਂ ਕਾਲਕਾ, ਪੰਚਕੂਲਾ, ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਅੰਬਾਲਾ ਆਦਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੋਲੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਕਈ ਖੇਤਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕੱਢ ਦਿੱਤੇ। ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਦਾ ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਵੱਡਾ ਨਾਸੂਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਰਾਜਧਾਨੀ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਅਲੱਗ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸ਼ਾਸਿਤ ਰਾਜ (ਯੂਟੀ) ਨੋਟੀਫਾਈ ਕਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੇ ਹਰਿਆਣਾ, ਦੋਨਾਂ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਰਾਜਧਾਨੀ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਹਾਈ ਕੋਰਟ, ਸਕੱਤਰੇਤ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਬਹੁਮੁੱਲੀਆਂ ਜਾਇਦਾਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹਰਿਆਣੇ ਨੂੰ ਭਾਗੀਦਾਰ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਦਰਿਆਈ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ, ਬੀਬੀਐੱਮਬੀ ਦੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਕੰਟਰੋਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨਾਲ ਅਨਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਉਦਾਹਰਨਾਂ ਹਨ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਪੁਨਰਗਠਿਤ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਯੂਪੀ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਉਤਰਾਖੰਡ, ਬਿਹਾਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਝਾਰਖੰਡ, ਮੱਧ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਛੱਤੀਸਗੜ੍ਹ, ਆਂਧਰਾ ਪ੍ਰਦੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਤਿਲੰਗਾਨਾ ਆਦਿ ਹੋਰ ਕਈ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਵੰਡਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਕੋਈ ਅੰਤਰ-ਰਾਜੀ ਰੇੜਕੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਛੱਡੇ ਗਏ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਵਾਇ ਕੋਈ ਹੋਰ ਸੂਬਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਾਂਝੀ ਰਾਜਧਾਨੀ ਹੋਵੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਨਿਆਵਾਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਪੰਜਾਬੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਸੰਘਰਸ਼ ਕੀਤੇ। 1970, 1975 ਵਿਚ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਕਈ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਪਰ ਪਰਨਾਲਾ ਉੱਥੇ ਦਾ ਉੱਥੇ। ਰਾਜੀਵ-ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਸਮਝੌਤਾ ਇਸੇ ਦੀ ਹੀ ਕੜੀ ਸੀ ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੋਈ ਸਿੱਟਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਿਕਲਿਆ ਸਗੋਂ ਸੰਤ ਹਰਚੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਲੌਂਗੋਵਾਲ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਨ ਤੋਂ ਹੱਥ ਧੋਣੇ ਪਏ।

ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਘੋਲ ਵਿੱਢੇ। ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਮਹੱਤਵਪੂਰਨ 1982 ਦਾ ਧਰਮ ਯੁੱਧ ਮੌਰਚਾ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦਰਸ਼ਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਫੇਰੂਮਾਨ ਦੀ ਮਰਨ ਵਰਤ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੁਰਬਾਨੀ ਅਜਾਈ ਗਈ। ਉਂਝ, ਧਰਮ ਯੁੱਧ ਆਗੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਹੱਥੋਂ ਨਿਕਲ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਮਾਰੂ ਤੇ ਹਿੰਸਕ ਰੂਪ ਨੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਗਹਿਰੇ ਸੰਕਟ ਵੱਲ ਧੱਕ ਦਿੱਤਾ। 1983 ਤੋਂ 1994 ਤੱਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਬੇਕਸੂਰ ਨਾਗਰਿਕ, ਪੁਲੀਸ ਅਫਸਰ, ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਆਗੂ ਅਤੇ ਵਪਾਰੀ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ। ਕੇਂਦਰ ਨੇ ਅਕਾਲ ਤਖ਼ਤ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਗੁਰਧਾਮਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਫੌਜ ਭੇਜੀ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋਈ ਕੁਝਤਣ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਦਾ ਕਤਲ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਅਤੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ, ਕਾਨਪੁਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਕਈ ਸ਼ਹਿਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਿੱਖ ਮਾਰੇ ਗਏ ਪਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਸੂਬੇ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਪਨਪੇ ਮਸਲੇ ਅਜੇ ਵੀ ਲਟਕ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਸਿਆਸੀ ਦਲ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਮਸਲੇ ਤੇ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਸਿਰਫ ਚੋਣਾਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਹੀ ਉਛਾਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕੋਰਟ ਕਚਹਿਰੀਆਂ, ਜਲ ਕਮਿਸ਼ਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੀ ਵਿਚੋਲਗੀ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਪਾਣੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇ ਮਸਲੇ ਜਿਉਂ ਦੇ ਤਿਉਂ ਹਨ।

ਸਮੇਂ-ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਬਜਟ ਵਿਚ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਅੱਖੋਂ ਓਹਲੇ ਕਰਨ ਅਤੇ ਟੈਕਸਾਂ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਵਿੱਤੀ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਨਾ ਦੇਣ ਦੇ ਦੋਸ਼ ਲਾਉਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਹੁਣ ਵਿਤਕਰੇ ਨੇ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰ ਲਏ ਹਨ। ਕਣਕ ਦੀ ਖਰੀਦ, ਬਿਜਲੀ ਦੀ ਪੈਦਾਵਾਰ ਤੇ ਪਾਣੀ 'ਤੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਨੂੰ ਖੇਤੀ ਮਾਰੂ ਅਤੇ ਕਾਰਪੋਰੇਟ ਘਰਾਣਿਆਂ ਪੱਖੀ ਗਰਦਾਨਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇੰਝ ਲਗਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਆਰਥਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਵਿਕਾਸ 'ਤੇ ਬਰੇਕਾਂ ਲਾਉਣਾ ਚਾਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਿਤਕਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਰੁੱਧ ਆਵਾਜ਼ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਹੁਣ ਇਥੋਂ ਤੱਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਗਈ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਸਾਨ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ਨਵੇਂ ਮੁੱਖ ਮਾਰਗ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਲਵੇ ਲਾਈਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਤਰਕ ਵਿਚ ਵਜ਼ਨ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਦਿੱਲੀ-ਕਟੜਾ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ-ਜਾਮਨਗਰ ਵਰਗੇ ਮੁੱਖ ਮਾਰਗਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ। ਕਟੜਾ ਸੜਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਗਰੀਬ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਦੀ 6000 ਏਕੜ ਉਪਜਾਊ ਭੋਇੰ ਨਿਗਲ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਟੱਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਛੋਟੇ-ਛੋਟੇ ਟੁਕੜੇ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਪਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਮੋਟਰ ਇਕ ਪਾਸੇ ਅਤੇ ਬਾਕੀ ਟੁਕੜਾ ਦੂਸਰੇ ਪਾਸੇ। ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਉੱਚੀ ਸੜਕ। ਖਾਲੇ, ਲਾਂਘੇ ਖਤਮ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਬਰਬਾਦੀ ਦੇ ਰਾਹ ਵੱਲ ਧੱਕਾ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਢੋਆ-ਢੁਆਈ ਲਈ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਰੇਲਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਜਾਲ ਹੈ। ਦਿੱਲੀ ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੇ ਦਿੱਲੀ ਫਾਜ਼ਿਲਕਾ ਜਰਨੈਲੀ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਤੇ ਰੇਲਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਜੁੜੇ ਹਨ। ਕਟੜਾ ਵਰਗੀਆਂ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਕਾਰਪੋਰੇਟਾਂ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਫੁੱਲਤਾ ਲਈ ਹਨ। ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਲਈ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਮਾਰਗ ਅਤੇ ਲਿੰਕ ਸੜਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੁਣਵੱਤਾ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਵੱਲ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੁਝ ਹਲਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਪੁਰਾ ਵਿਚ ਉਦਯੋਗਕ ਹੱਥ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨਾ, ਰਾਜਪੁਰਾ-ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਰੇਲ ਲਿੰਕ ਆਦਿ ਯੋਜਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੋਧ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਘੁਸਰ-ਮੁਸਰ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ। ਵਜ਼ਨੀ ਦਲੀਲ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਕਿੱਲੋ ਉਪਜਾਊ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ, ਮਕਾਨ ਕਿਸਾਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਲੁੱਟੇ ਜਾਣਗੇ। ਉਦਯੋਗਕ ਹੱਥ ਵਿਚ ਮੋਟੇ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇਦਾਰ ਆ ਬੈਠਣਗੇ। ਰਾਜਪੁਰਾ-ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਲਿੰਕ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਥੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਖੁੱਲ੍ਹੀ ਸੜਕ ਹੈ। ਹਾਂ, ਇਥੇ ਮੋਟੇ ਸਟੀਲ ਪਲਾਟਾਂ, ਸੀਮਿੰਟ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਖਾਨੇਦਾਰ, ਵੱਡੀਆਂ ਸਿਵਲ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕੰਪਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਠੋਕੇ, ਬਿਜਲੀ ਦੇ ਸਮਾਨ, ਬਾਹਰਲੇ ਰਾਜਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੇਬਰ ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਗੱਫੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਮਿਲਣਗੇ। ਲੋਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਅਤੇ ਰੇਲ ਰਾਜ ਮੰਤਰੀ ਰਵਨੀਤ ਬਿੱਟੂ ਨੂੰ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਪ੍ਰਾਜੈਕਟ ਰੋਕਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

ਅਜਿਹੇ ਵਿਤਕਰਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਬੰਧਿਤ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਰ ਨੁਕਤੇ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੁੱਧ ਬੀਜਾਂ, ਕੀਟਨਾਸ਼ਕਾਂ, ਖਾਦਾਂ ਆਦਿ ਦੀ ਸਪਲਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੈ। ਕਣਕ ਅਤੇ ਆਲੂਆਂ ਦੀ ਬਿਜਾਈ ਲਈ ਅਤਿ ਲੋੜੀਂਦੀ ਡੀਏਪੀ ਖਾਦ ਦੀ ਕਮੀ ਦੇ ਤੌਖਲੇ ਪੈਦਾ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਝੋਨਾ ਮੰਡੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੈ ਪਰ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਭੰਡਾਰਾਂ ਵਿੱਚੋਂ ਚੁਕਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ। ਆੜ੍ਹਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਕਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਲਟਕਾ ਕੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੜਤਾਲ ਵੱਲ ਧੱਕਿਆ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਲੋੜ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜੋ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦਾ ਅੰਨਦਾਤਾ ਹੈ, ਦੀਆਂ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ ਜਾਇਜ਼ ਮੰਗਾਂ ਦਾ ਨਿਬੇੜਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਫਿਰ ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਰੰਗਲਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ ਜਾਵੇ।

## ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ: ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ

ਡਾ: ਗੁਰਮੇਲ ਸਿੰਘ\*

### ਵਿਸ਼ਾ-ਪ੍ਰਵੇਸ਼:

ਤੀਜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਮੰਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮੀਖਿਆ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਾਤਮਕ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਦੁਆਲੇ ਕੇਂਦਰਤ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਆਮ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ 'ਪ੍ਰਥਾ (ਮੰਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ), ਰੀਤ (ਮੰਜੀ ਰੀਤ), ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ (ਮੰਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ), ਪਰੰਪਰਾ (ਮੰਜੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ)' ਆਦਿ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਸਿੱਖੀ 'ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ' ਲਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਕ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹਿਆਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਣੀਆਂ ਇਹ ਧਾਰਨਾਵਾਂ ਦਰੁਸਤ ਵੀ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਹੁੰਚ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ 'ਪ੍ਰਥਾ/ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ' ਦਾ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਵੀ ਦਰੁਸਤ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਥੇ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਮੰਜੀ ਡੂੰਘੇਰੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਤੇ ਰੂਪਕੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲ 'ਸੰਸਥਾ' ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਅਤੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਬਹੁਤ ਵਿਆਪਕ ਹੈ। 'ਸੰਸਥਾ' (Institution) ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ਤਾ ਇਹ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਦਲਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਸਿਰਜਣਸ਼ੀਲ (creative) ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ 'ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ' ਸਿੱਖੀ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੈ, ਇਹ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ 'ਪੰਜ' ਹੀ ਰਹਿਣਗੇ, 'ਚਾਰ' ਜਾਂ 'ਛੇ' ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ; ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹਮੇਸ਼ਾ ਜੀਵੰਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਰਜਣਸ਼ੀਲ ਰਹੇਗੀ। ਸਿੱਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ; ਕਦੋਂ ਵੀ 'ਪੰਜ' ਇਕੱਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਬਣ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਉਂ ਮੰਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਸੇ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਖਾ-ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ/ਪੀੜ੍ਹਾ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਬੀਤੇ (ਇਤਿਹਾਸ) ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਮਾਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਸ ਪਰਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ-ਅਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਡੂੰਘਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਜਾਣਨ ਦੀ ਮੁਢਲੀ ਜਿਹੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ। ਹਥਲੀ ਪਹੁੰਚ (approach) ਉਕਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਹੈ। ਪਰਚੇ ਦੇ ਅੰਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਅੰਤਿਕਾ (ਉ ਜੋੜੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਹੈ।

ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਦ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਟੀ ਤੋਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਭਰੋਸੇਯੋਗ ਪਹਿਲਾ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਹਵਾਲਾ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੀਆਂ ਵਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਗਿਆਰਵੀਂ ਵਾਰ ਦੀ 16ਵੀਂ

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ਪਉੜੀ ਵਿਚ ਆਏ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਦੇ ਮੌਖਿਕ ਬਚਨਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰਿਤ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਗਤਮਾਲਾ (1734) ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਬਾਵਾ ਸਰੂਪਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ (1776), ਬਾਵਾ ਕਿਰਪਾਲ ਦਾਸ ਦਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਵਾਰਤਕ (1773), ਬਾਵਾ ਤੋਲਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਗੁਰ ਰਚਨਾਵਲੀ (1776) ਅਤੇ ਬਾਬਾ ਬਿਸਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਰਚਨਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦੇਵ (1825) ਬੜਾ ਮਹਤਾਪੂਰਨ ਹੈ। ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਹਵੇਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚ ਲਗੇ ਸੁਨਹਿਰੀ ਪੱਤਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਸਰੋਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਬਾਬਾ ਗਣੇਸ਼ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੁਆਰਾ 19ਵੀਂ ਸਦੀ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਬੰਸ ਬਿਨੋਦ (ਚਸਮਾ-ਏ-ਨੂਰ, ਲਾਹੌਰ 1884)ਵੀ ਸੂਚਨਾ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਅਹਿਮ ਸਰੋਤ ਹੈ। ਮਹਾਂਕਵੀ ਭਾਈ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਸੂਰਜ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ (1843) ਵਿਚ ਕੁਝ-ਕ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਖੇਤਰ ਅਤੇ ਸ਼ਖਸੀਅਤ ਮੂਲਕ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਤਥਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਉਂ ਹੋਰ ਸਰੋਤ ਵੀ ਹਨ। ਭਾਈ ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ (ਭੂਤ-ਪੂਰਵ ਅਤੇ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਵਾਈਸ ਚਾਂਸਲਰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ) ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਕਾਫੀ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕਈ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਬਣੇ, ਵੇਰਵੇ ਤਥਾ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਿਤੀ ਹੈ।<sup>1</sup> ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਡਾ. ਤਾਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਵੀ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ।<sup>2</sup> ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸ਼ਖਸੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਜੋ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਤਥਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਦਿਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਆਪਣੇ ਆਪ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>3</sup> ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹਥਲੇ ਪਰਚੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਥੇ ਦੁਹਰਾਉਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਮਝੀ ਗਈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਜਗਿਆਸੂ ਪਾਠਕ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਜਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਖੋਜ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਕਾਰਜ ਮੂਲ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਵੇਖ-ਵਾਚ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਚੋਣਵੇਂ ਵੇਰਵਿਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਕੇਂਦਰਤ ਰਹਾਂਗੇ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਦੇ ਰੂਪਕੀ ਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਰਥ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਪਰਿਪੇਖ ਦੀ ਸੀਮਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਨਾਲ ਰਖਦੇ ਹੋਏ, ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੋ ਸਕਣ।

### ਉ

‘ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ’ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ, ਸੰਕਲਪ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਿਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਨਹੀਂ, ਅਸੀਂ ਇਹ ਇਸਾਈ ਮਿਸ਼ਨਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ। ਇਸਾਈ ‘ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕਾਂ’ ਨੇ ਜੋ ਭਾਰਤ/ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿਚ ‘ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ’ ਕੀਤਾ, ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਸਾਡੇ ਉਤੇ ਐਨਾ ਪ੍ਰਬਲ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ‘ਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਮਾਡਲ’ ਤਕ ਅਪਣਾ ਲਿਆ। ਇਸ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਦੋ ਰਾਵਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਇਸਾਈਆਂ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੁਲਕ ਵਿਚ ਆ ਕੇ ਕਈ ਪਧਰਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਆਰੰਭੇ ਤੇ ਕਈ ਪਖਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਉਤੇ ਯੋਗ/ਅਯੋਗ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਵੀ ਪਾਏ ਅਤੇ ਲੋੜੀਂਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਵੀ ਪਾਇਆ।<sup>4</sup> ਬਿਲਾ-ਸ਼ਕ ਇਸ ਮਾਡਲ ਨਾਲ ਕੁਝ ਗਿਣਾਤਮਕ ਤੇ ਗੁਣਾਤਮਕ ਕਾਰਜ ਵੀ ਹੋਏ, ਪਰ ਇਸ ਨਾਲ ਸਾਡੀ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ ਭਟਕ ਗਈ। ਮੰਜੀ, ਸਾਡਾ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ‘ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ’ ਮਾਡਲ ਸੀ/ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਸੋਧ ਲੈਂਦੇ (ਜਾਂ ਅੱਜ ਵੀ ਲੈ ਲਈਏ) ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਟੇ ਬੇਹਤਰੀਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਕਾਰਤਮਕ ਹੋਣਗੇ।

ਮੰਜੀ, ਜਿਸ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਤੀਜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਜੋਂ ਕੀਤੀ



ਸੀ, ਧਰਮ-ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਤੇ ਰੂਪਕੀ- ਦੋਵਾਂ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਾਰਨੀ ਹੈ। ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਕੇਂਦਰੀਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਹੈ; ਰੂਪਕੀ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਧਰਾਤਲ ਪੱਧਰ ਉਤੇ ਜੁੜੇ ਹੋਏ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਨੁਮਾ ਜੀਵਨ-ਅਮਲ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੈ। ਜੇਕਰ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰੀਏ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਕੇਂਦਰ/ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦਾ ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਬਣਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ, ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਮੀਨੀ ਹਾਲਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਸਨ, (ਹੁਣ ਵਾਂਗ) ਸਿਰਫ 'ਸਟੇਜੀ ਲੈਕਚਰਬਾਜੀ' ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੰਜੀ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਂ/ਪਰਿਵਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਡਾਹੀ/ਵਰਤੀ ਜਾਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਪਲੰਘ ਨੁਮਾ ਚਾਰਪਾਈ ਵਸਤੂ ਹੈ; ਇਉਂ ਇਹ ਦਸਦੀ ਹੈ/ਸੀ ਕਿ ਦੂਰ-ਦੁਰਾਡੇ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਸਮਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਕੇ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਡਾਹ ਕੇ', ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਧਰ ਉਤੇ ਆ ਕੇ ਦੁਖਾਂ-ਸੁਖਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈਵਾਲ ਹੋ ਕੇ, ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਸਹੀ ਜੀਵਨ ਜਾਚ ਦ੍ਰਿੜ੍ਹ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੀ ਹੈ/ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ 'ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਕਪੜੇ ਪਹਿਨ ਕੇ' (ਭਾਵ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਰਗਾ ਹੋ ਕੇ/ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਹਿਰਾਵੇ/ਬੋਲੀ ਧਾਰ ਕੇ) ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜੂਰ ਨੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਭੇਖ ਨਿਵਾਰ/ਉਤਾਰ ਕੇ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਬੈਠ ਕੀਆ ਅਵਤਾਰਾ' (1/38)। ਇਥੇ 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਪਦ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਪਧਰ ਤਕ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੈ; 'ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਕਪੜੇ' ਵਾਕੰਸ਼ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਵਿਥ ਬਣਾ ਨੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਤੁਰੇ। ਇਹ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਮੁਢ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ।<sup>5</sup>

ਇਹ ਤੱਥ ਠੀਕ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਹਰ ਸਾਧਨਾ, ਸੰਸਥਾ, ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਮੁਢ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕਰ ਦਿਤਾ ਗਿਆ, ਇਉਂ ਜੋ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ, ਉਹੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਅਧਾਰ ਬਣੀਆਂ। ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਜਨਮਸਾਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਦੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾਵਾਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੂਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਮਿਲਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਸੇਖ ਸਜਣ (ਸੱਜਣ ਠੱਗ) ਵਾਲੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਦੇ ਆਖਰ ਵਿਚ ਦਸਿਆ ਹੈ<sup>6</sup> "ਨਾਉ ਧਰੀਕ ਸਿਖ ਹੋਇਆ। ਪਹਿਲੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਓਥੇ ਬਧੀ"; ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਥਾਂ ਧਰਮਸਾਲ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਹੈ "ਏਕ ਮੰਜੀ ਆਸਾ ਦੇਸਿ ਵਿਚਿ ਹੈ"<sup>7</sup>। ਗੁਰਬਿਲਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ 6 ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਵੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਆਰੰਭ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਹੀ ਕੀਤਾ; ਕਰਤਾ ਮੰਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰਕ-ਸਥਾਨ ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>8</sup> ਇਸ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਿੰਸੀਪਲ ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਸੰਸਥਾਪਕ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਅਤੇ ਝੰਡਾ ਬਾਢੀ, ਸਾਲਸ ਰਾਏ (ਪਟਨਾ), ਸਿਵਨਾਭ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਲੰਕਾ) ਆਦਿ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ।<sup>9</sup> ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤੌਰ ਉਤੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਵਾਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਮੁਸ਼ਕਿਲ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੌਰ ਉਤੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਤੀਜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਹੀ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਹੋਈ। ਇਉਂ ਇਸ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਸੰਸਥਾਈ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਨੂੰ ਤੀਜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਕ ਵਿਵਸਥਿਤ ਰੂਪ ਦੇ ਕੇ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ' ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਰਖੀ ਨੀਂਹ ਉਤੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ ਕੀਤਾ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਹੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ 'ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ/ੜ੍ਹੇ' ਵੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਨੇੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹੈ।<sup>10</sup> ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਤਾਂ ਚੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਲਾਗੇ ਡਾਹੀਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਲਤੀਫ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਸਿਖ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸਿਧੇ ਰਾਬਤੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਨ।<sup>11</sup> ਭਾਵ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ, ਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ ਚਾਨਣ ਨੂੰ ਅਗਿਆਨ ਨਾਲ ਭਰੀ, ਪਰੰਪਰਕਮਤਾਂ-ਮਤਾਂਤਰੀ '84' ਦੇ ਗੋੜ ਵਿਚ ਫਸੀ, ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਐਨ ਪੁਰ ਵਿਚਕਾਰ ਤਕ ਲਿਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਇਕ

ਵਿਧੀਵਤ ਤਰੀਕਾ ਸੀ ਅਤੇ ਇਹ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਭਾਇਆ ਵੀ ਗਿਆ।

ਸਾਡੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ/ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ ਜਾਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਮੰਨ ਕੇ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕਾਰਜਸ਼ੀਲਤਾ ਜਾਣਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ-ਮਿਣਤੀ ਕਰਨ, ਨਾਂ-ਥਾਂ ਲਭਣ ਜਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਖੋਜਣਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੇਂਦਰਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਭਾਵੇਂ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਮਸਲਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਵੀ ਨਜਿਠਿਆ ਜਾਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਵੀ ਹੋਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ ਬਾਰੇ ਐਨਾ-ਕੁਝ ਲਭ ਹੀ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਤਸਵੀਰ ਕਾਫੀ ਸਾਫ ਹੋ ਗਈ ਹੈ; ਹੁਣ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਧਰਮ-ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀਆਂ (theologians) ਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੀਆਂ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ, ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਧਰਮ-ਵਿਗਿਆਨਿਕ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਬਹੁਤ ਘਟ ਹੋਈ ਹੈ।<sup>12</sup> ਇਉਂ ਧਰਮ ਸ਼ਾਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਜੁੰਮੇਵਾਰੀ ਹੈ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਹੋ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਜੋਵਿਵਰਨ ਜਾਂ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੈ, ਉਹ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਕੀਤੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਹੈ, ਹਾਲਾਂਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਧਰਮ ਅਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਅਲਗ ਹੋਂਦ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕਚੂਕ ਹੋ ਜਾਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੁਦਰਤੀ/ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਧ ਹੁੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ ਇਕ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਡਾ. ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿਲ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਪੀਐਚ.ਡੀ ਥੀਸਿਸ ਵਿਚ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਥਾ' ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਉਤੇ ਸ਼ਕ ਕੀਤਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸੋਚਦੇ ਸਨ ਕਿ ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਇਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਦੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਦਰਸਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਲੂਆਂ ਨੇ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਕੇਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਮਿਥ ਲਈ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਕਈ ਆਯੋਗ ਕਲਮਾਂ ਨੇ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਸਵਾਂਗ ਵੀ ਰਚਾਇਆ<sup>13</sup>, ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਅਗਾਂਹ ਵੀ ਇਹ ਕਵਾਇਦ ਜਾਰੀ ਰਹਿ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਇਸ ਤੱਥ ਦਾ ਸਮਾਧਾਨ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ। ਇਥੇ ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਡਾ. ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿਲ ਇਕ ਸ਼ਰਧਾਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਸੂਝ ਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਦਵਾਨ ਸਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੇ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਪੀਐਚ.ਡੀ (1967-68) ਥੀਸਿਸ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ਨੇ 1975 ਵਿਚ ਅਮਰ ਕਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਸਿਰਲੇਖ ਹੇਠ ਛਾਪਿਆ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਦਿਲ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ੰਕਾ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਉਤੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਬਲਕਿ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਉਹ ਇਕ 'ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ' ਵਜੋਂ ਮੰਨਣ ਲਈ ਸੰਕੋਚ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਸ਼ੰਕਾ ਸੀ ਕਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਹਵਾਲਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਤਾਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਪੂਰਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦਾ, ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ 13 ਨਾਂ ਹੀ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਹਨ। ਡਾ. ਦਿਲ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਥਾਵਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ; ਉਹ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਕਈ ਸਥਾਨ ਇਕ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਹਨ, ਆਦਿ ਆਦਿ। ਇਸ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਕੁਝ ਸੰਕੇਤਕ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਇਥੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੋ ਚੁੱਕੀ ਹੈ। ਡਾ. ਦਿਲ ਦੇ 'ਤਰਕਾਂ' ਦਾ ਕਾਫੀ ਤਰਕ ਭਰਪੂਰ ਜਵਾਬ/ਖੰਡਨ ਡਾ. ਰਾਏ ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਇਕ ਪਰਚੇ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ<sup>14</sup>, ਅਸੀਂ ਇਥੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਦੁਹਰਾਉਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੇ। ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲ ਦੱਸਣੀ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਡਾ. ਦਿਲ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਖੋਜ ਨੂੰ ਪੀਐਚ.ਡੀ. ਬਾਅਦ ਵੀ ਜਾਰੀ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਸਿਰਫ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਹੀ ਸਵੀਕਾਰੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਨਵੀਂ ਖੋਜ ਵੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਲਿਆਂਦੀ, ਖਾਸਕਰ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ

ਦੇ ਕਾਰਜ ਖੇਤਰਾਂ ਤੇ ਕੰਮਾਂ ਦੀ। ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਕੇਵਲ 22 ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਸਗੋਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਦਰਜਨ ਦੇ ਕਰੀਬ ਸਨ।<sup>15</sup>

ਦੂਜੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਜਾਣ ਲੈਣਾ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸਰੋਤ ਸਮਸਿਆ, ਅਕਸਰ 'ਆਧੁਨਿਕ' ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਸਮਸਿਆ ਹੈ; ਧਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਹੀ ਕਾਫੀ ਹੈ; ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵ ਤੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ, ਤੱਥ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਪਹਿਲੇ ਦਰਜੇ ਉਤੇ ਹੁੰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਮੰਜੀ, ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਹੀ; ਧਰਮ ਦਾ ਵਿਸ਼ਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ੀਕਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦਾ; ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ-ਕਾਲ ਦੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਫੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਬੇਵਫਾਈਆਂ ਕਾਰਨ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਗਰਭ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਆਚ ਗਈਆਂ ਹਨ, ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ ਹੁਣ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਜੀ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਭਾਂਡਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਭੋਜਨ ਛਕਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ, ਪਰ ਜਰਾ ਅੰਦਾਜ਼ਾ ਲਾਈਏ ਕਿ ਜੇ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਨਿਪਟ ਭਾਂਡਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਕੀ ਕਰਦੇ? ਸ਼ਾਇਦ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਵਿਚ ਅਸੀਂ ਹੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਕਿਸਮਤ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੋਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਮੂਲ ਆਪਣੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਜਪੁ ਜੀ (ਭਾਵ ਸਾਰੀ ਬਾਣੀ) ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਅਸਲ ਸਾਂਭਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਤਤ-ਵਸਤੂ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੇ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਇਤਰਾਜ਼, ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਮਨਫੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ; ਜਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਅਰਥ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਤੀਜੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਘਟਨਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਤੱਥ/ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਆਦਿ ਨਾ ਮਿਲਣ ਦਾ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਅਣਹੋਂਦ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਜੀਵਨ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਹਜ਼ਾਰਾਂ ਘਟਨਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਕੋਈ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਬਚੀਆਂ, ਪਰ ਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਬਿੰਦੂ ਉਤੇ ਉਹ ਹੋਈਆਂ ਜਰੂਰ। ਲੋਕਧਾਰਾ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਸਿਮਰਤੀ। 'ਸਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ' ਨਹੀਂ॥ ਦੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਂਭ ਕੇ ਰਖਦੀ ਹੈ। ਚੌਥੀ ਗੱਲ ਜੋ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਨਿਹਾਇਤ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ, ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਉਚ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣਾ-ਆਪ ਜਤਾ ਕੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਅਜਕਲ ਵਾਂਗ 'ਵਰਕਲੋਡ' ਦੀ ਦੁਹਾਈ ਨਹੀਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਇਸ਼ਤਿਹਾਰਬਾਜੀ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਾਸ ਰਖਦੇ ਹਨ।<sup>16</sup> ਜਿਵੇਂ ਫੁਲ, ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਵੰਡਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਤਾਉਂਦਾ ਜਾਂ ਰੋਲਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਾਉਂਦਾ। ਇਉਂ ਇਹ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਮਹਿਕਦੇ ਫੁਲ ਸਨ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਕ ਵੰਡਦੇ/ਖਿਲਾਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜ਼ੀਕਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਦੈਵੀ ਉਦੇਸ਼ ਅਤੇ 'ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਪੰਥ' ਦੇ ਵਿਗਾਸ-ਕਾਰਨਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਥਾਂ-ਪੁਰ ਥਾਂ ਇਸ਼ਾਰੇ ਕੀਤੇ ਹਨ।<sup>17</sup>

ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੁਝ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ 'ਮੰਜੀ' (ਅਤੇ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀ) ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦੇ ਮੂਲ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਲ ਜੋੜ ਕੇ, ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਮਾਤਰ ਬੈਠਣ ਵਾਲੀ ਵਸਤੂ ਸਮਝ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ।<sup>18</sup> ਜਿਵੇਂ ਹਥਲੇ ਪਰਚੇ ਦੇ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਦਾ ਚਲ ਰਿਹਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਨਿਰੋਲ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਾ ਮੌਲਿਕ ਪਦ ਅਤੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਹੈ; ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਨਾਲ (ਚਾਹੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਈ ਪਧਰ ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਸਹੀ) ਜੋੜਨਾ ਨਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਗੁੰਮਰਾਹਕੁਨ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਬਲਕਿ ਹਾਸੇਹੀਣਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਸਿਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਤੇ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਚਲਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਇਹ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ 'ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰ' ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਨ, ਜੋ ਮੁਖ ਕੇਂਦਰ (ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ) ਨਾਲ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਜੋੜਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਪਰਚੇ ਹੇਠ ਪਨਪੀਆਂ ਰੂੜ੍ਹ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਭਰਮ ਜਾਲ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤ ਕਰਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਲੋਕ ਭਲਾਈ ਲਈ ਦਸਵੰਧ ਇਕਠਾ ਆਦਿ ਕਰਨਾ, ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸਚੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੀਆਂ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਕੰਮ ਸੀ, ਨਾ ਕਿ

ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ *mañchakâ* ਤੋਂ<sup>19</sup>, ਜਿਸ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ 'ਵਿਹਲੜਾਂ' ਦੇ ਬੈਠਣ ਵਾਲਾ 'ਸੋਫਾ' ਹੈ। ਆਵਾਜਾਈ ਦੇ ਸਾਧਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਸੰਚਾਰ ਸਾਧਨ ਵੀ ਪੈਦਲ, ਘੋੜੇ, ਉਠ, ਬੈਲ ਗਡੀਆਂ ਆਦਿ ਹੀ ਸਨ। ਇਉਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਜ੍ਹਾ ਕਾਰਨ ਮੁਖ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦਾ ਸਥਾਈ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਦੂਰ-ਦੂਰ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਤਕ ਹੋ ਸਕਣਾ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ।

ਮੰਜੀ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਬਦਿਕ ਅਰਥ ਤਾਂ ਚਾਰਪਾਈ ਜਾਂ ਬੈਠਣ/ਪੈਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਮੰਜਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸਦੇ ਅਰਥ, ਰੂਪਕੀ ਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰ-ਮੁਖ ਹਨ। ਇਹ ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਉਸ ਵਸਤ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ 'ਅਧਿਕਾਰ' ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਵੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧ ਬੈਠਦਾ/ਵਰਤਦਾ ਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਕਹੋ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਹੀ ਇਹ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ। ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ, ਇਕ ਵਸਤ 'ਚਾਰਪਾਈ' ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਜੇ ਨਹੀਂ ਵੀ ਤਾਂ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ-ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਜਰੂਰ ਸੀ; ਇਸ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਾਡੇ ਕਾਫੀ ਸਾਰੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ, ਜਦੋਂ ਚਾਰਪਾਈ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ ਤੇ ਨਾ-ਮਿਲਣ ਦੀ ਹਾਲਤ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਤੋਂ ਹੀ ਮੁਨਕਰ ਹੋਣ ਤਕ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ ਤਾਂ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਆਪਣੀ ਬੋਧ-ਸੀਮਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ-ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਤਕ ਕਰ ਲੈਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਿਰਫ ਚੋਟ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਜਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਾਰਨ (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੀ) ਬੁੱਢੀ ਉਮਰ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਤਲਾਸ਼ਣੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਦੀ ਸਿਧਾਂਤ-ਸੀਮਾ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਹੀ, ਸੂਝ ਦੀ ਤਰਸ-ਸਥਿਤੀ ਵੀ ਹੈ।<sup>20</sup> ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਜਿਥੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਜਾਂ ਬੈਠਦੇ ਸਨ, ਉਥੇ 'ਥੜ੍ਹਾ' ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀਆਂ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਯਾਦਗਾਰਾਂ, ਮੰਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਥੜ੍ਹੇ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਹੇਠ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਥੜ੍ਹਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਖਡੂਰ ਸਾਹਿਬ। ਇਉਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਪਹਿਲ, ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੁੜਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਤਥਾ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਸੀ, ਜਿਥੇ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ; ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਉਹ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਸ ਸੁਣਨ/ਕਰ ਸਕਣ ਤੇ ਸਿਮਰਨ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ; ਆਪਣੇ ਦੁਖ-ਸੁਖ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਕਰ ਸਕਣ; ਬਾਅਦ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਸਥਾਨ ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਰੂਪ ਧਾਰਨ ਕਰ ਗਏ।<sup>21</sup>

ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਵਿਚ ਯੋਗ ਵਿਅਕਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਬਖਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੀ 'ਸੇਵਾ' ਨੂੰ ਮੁਖ ਰੱਖਿਆ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ। ਵੈਸਾਖੀ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਮੁਖ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਕੋਲ ਪਹੁੰਚਦੇ ਸਨ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਅਗਲੇ ਦਿਸ਼ਾ-ਨਿਰਦੇਸ਼ ਲਏ ਜਾ ਸਕਣ।<sup>22</sup> ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਤੌਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਜਿਥੇ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ ਉਪ-ਕੇਂਦਰ ਸਨ, ਨਾ ਕਿ 'seats of spiritual authority'<sup>23</sup> ਜਾਂ 'ਪਰਗਣੇਦੀ ਗੱਦੀ'<sup>24</sup> ਜਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਸਾਡੇ ਕੁਝ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ ਨੇ ਕਲਪ ਲਿਆ ਹੈ; ਅਤੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਸੇ 'ਬਿਸ਼ਪ' ਦੀ ਅਧੀਨਗੀ ਵਾਲੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਸੀ, ਜਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਬ੍ਰਿਟੇਨਿਕਾ ਨੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਲਈ diocese ਪਦ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੈ।<sup>25</sup> spiritual authoirty di seat 'ਗੁਰਿਆਈ' ਹੈ, ਮੰਜੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਉਂ ਹੀ ਪਰਗਣੇ ਜਾਂ diocese ਦੀ ਗੱਦੀ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ ਸਰਕਾਰੀ ਟੈਕਸ ਉਗਰਾਹਣ ਖਾਤਰ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>26</sup> ਇਥੇ ਧਿਆਨ ਦੁਆਉਣਾ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ "ਸਿੱਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਸ਼ਬਦ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਭਾਸ਼ਿਕ ਮਹੱਤਵ ਹੈ",<sup>27</sup> ਮੰਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਰੂਹਾਨੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਵੰਡਣ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਵਿਧੀਵਤ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ

ਸੀ<sup>28</sup>, ਜਿਹੜਾ ਉਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੂਰ ਦੂਰ ਤਕ ਫੈਲ ਜਾਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਤੇਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਹੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਨੂੰ spiritual domain ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ।<sup>29</sup>

ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੈਠ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖ-ਸੁਖ ਸੁਣਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਬਚਨਾਂ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਬਖੇਰਦਾ ਸੀ।<sup>30</sup> ਇਸ ਗੁਹਜ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਅੰਕਿਤ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ: “ਜੇਹੜੇ ਅਜਮਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਖਜਾਨੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਅੰਗਦ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੇ ਤੇ ਬੜੇ ਗੁਹਜ ਰਖੇ ਹੋਏ ਸੇ ਓਹ ਕਰਾਮਾਤਾਂ ਏਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਂ ਨੇ 22 ਅਸਥਾਨਾਂ ਪਰ 22 ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਅਰਥਾਤ ਗਾਂਦੀਆਂ ਕਾਇਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਮਨੋ ਕਾਮਨਾ ਪੂਰਨ ਕਰਨ ਲਈ ਓਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਆਂ ਦੇ 22 ਸਦਾ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਲਗਾ ਦਿਤੇ ਸੇ ਕਿ ਜਿਥੇ ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਲੋੜ ਪਵੇ ਓਥੇ ਹੀ ਪੂਰਨ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇ।”<sup>31</sup>

ਇਥੇ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਤੱਥ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਕਰਨਾ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ, ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦਾ ਇਕ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ ਖੁਦ ਮੁਖਤਿਆਰ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਉਭਾਰ ਸੀ। ਜਿਹੜੀ ਗੱਲ ਸਾਡੇ ਸਰੋਤ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ<sup>32</sup> ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ 22 ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ, ਅਕਬਰ/ਮੁਗਲ ਸਟੇਟ ਦੀ 22 ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਾਸਨ ਸੀ, ਉਹ ਸਿਧਾਂਤਕ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਠੀਕ ਸੀ, ਭਾਵੇਂ ਤੱਥਾਤਮਕ ਤੌਰ ਉਤੇ ਨਾ ਵੀ ਠੀਕ ਹੋਵੇ। ਤੱਥ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਉਤੇ ਅਕਬਰ ਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ 15 ਜਾਂ 16 ਸੀ, ਜਹਾਂਗੀਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਇਹ ਗਿਣਤੀ 19 ਤੇ ਔਰੰਗਜ਼ੇਬ ਵੇਲੇ ਬੀਜਾਪੁਰ ਅਤੇ ਗੋਲਕੁੰਡਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਰਿਆਸਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ 21 ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ।<sup>33</sup> ਅਕਬਰ ਦੇ ਰਾਜ ਦੇ ਮੁਢਲੇ ਸਮੇਂ 1580 ਤਕ ਕੇਵਲ 12 ਸੂਬੇ ਸਨ।<sup>34</sup> ਮੈਕਲੋਡ ਜਿਹੇ ‘ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰਾਂ’ ਲਈ ਇਹ ‘ਗੁੰਝਲ’ ‘ਅਸਲ ਗੁਹਜ’ ਸਮਝਣੀ ਨਾ-ਕੇਵਲ ਗਾਵਾਰਾ ਹੀ ਹੈ, ਬਲਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸਮਰਥਾ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਇਹ ‘geographical authority’ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾਪਦੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਾ ਹੀ ਅਕਬਰ ਦੇ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਨਾਲ ਕੋਈ ਤਾਲਮੇਲ ਬੈਠਦਾ ਜਾਪਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>36</sup> ਇਥੇ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਨਾ ਵੀ ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਮਾਨਸਿਕ ‘ਗੁੰਝਲ’ ਦਾ ਸ਼ਿਕਾਰ ਡਾ. ਜੇ. ਐਸ. ਗਰੇਵਾਲ ਕੈਂਬਰਿਜ ਵਲੋਂ ਲਿਖਾਏ ਸਿਖ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਵਿਚ ‘ਮੰਜੀ’ ਦਾ ਜਿਕਰ ਤਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ; ਸਮੇਤ ਆਕਸਫੋਰਡ<sup>37</sup> ਸੀਰੀਜ਼ ਦੇ। ਸਿਖ ਸਰੋਤ ਅਤੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ‘ਬਾਣੀ’ ਸੂਬਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਨੂੰ ਬਾਣੀ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਪੇਸ਼ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਨਜ਼ਰ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਇਹ ਸੂਬੇ ਹੀ ਹਨ, ਜਿਥੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦਾ ਰਾਜ ਚਲਦਾ ਹੈ; ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਮੁਗਲ ਰਾਜਸਤਾ ਦੇ ਬਰਾਬਰ, ਜਿਸ ਦੇ ਸਮੁੰਦਰਾਂ ਤਕ ਜ਼ਖੀਰੇ ਸਨ। ਇਥੇ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਦੀ ਵਰਣਾਸ਼ਰਮ ਰੂੜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਅਲੰਬਦਾਰ ਪਹਾੜੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ ‘ਬਾਣੀਧਾਰਾਂ’<sup>38</sup> ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਧੁਨੀ ਵੀ ਗੁੰਜਦੀ ਸੁਣਾਈ ਦਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਮੁਗਲ ਸਟੇਟ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਵਧ ਕੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਚ ਦੇ ਵਿਰੁਧ ਭੁਗਤੀ ਸੀ। ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ (ਬਿਸਨ ਸਿੰਘ) ਦਾ ਅਲੰਕਾਰਕ ਕਥਨ ਇਸ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਧਿਆਨ ਯੋਗ ਹੈ:

“ਆਗੈ ਸਾਖੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਮਰ ਗੁਰ ਦੀਵਾਨ ਲਾਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੇ। ਤਬੁ ਏਹੁ ਬਚਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ। ਜੇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਕਿਸ ਭਾਂਤ ਦਿਵਾਨਲਾਇ ਬੈਠਤੇ ਹੈਂ। ਕਿਤਨੇ ਮੁਸਾਹਬੁ ਅੰਬੀਰ ਹੋਤੇ ਹੈਂ। ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤ ਨੇ ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੀ। ਹੇ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੁ ਜੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੂਬੇ ਬਵੰਜਾ ਬਾਵਨੀਆ। ਸਤਰ ਖਾਨ ਬਹਤਰ ਉਮਰਾਵੁ ਹੋਤੇ ਹੈਂ। ਪਾਤਸਾਹ ਹਜੂਰ ਵਜੀਰ ਹੋਤਾ ਹੈ।”<sup>39</sup>

ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ, ਜੋ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਚ 52 ਮੰਨੇ ਗਏ, ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ ਦੇ ਉਕਤ ਕਥਨ 'ਬਵੰਜਾ ਬਾਵਨੀਆ' ਦੀ ਤੁਲਨਾ ਵਿਚ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਵਾਚਣ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਕੁਇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਗੁਰਬਿਲਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ 10(1751 ਈ.) ਵਿਚ ਇਕ ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਪ੍ਰਸੰਗ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਦਮਦਮਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਦਸਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਈ ਡਲਾ ਜੀ ਵਾਰਤਾਲਾਪ ਕਰ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਉਸ ਉਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਹੋ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਕੁਝ ਮੰਗਣ ਲਈ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ; ਭਾਈ ਡਲਾ ਆਪਣੀ ਸੂਝ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਕਈ ਚੀਜ਼ਾਂ-ਵਸਤਾਂ (ਮੀਂਹ, ਦੁਧ, ਫਸਲਾਂ...) ਦੀ ਮੰਗ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਲੰਮੀ ਵਿਚਾਰ/ਫਰਿਹਸਤ ਉਪਰੰਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਤੂੰ ਭਾਈ, ਰਾਜ ਭਾਗ ਹੀ ਕਿਉਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਮੰਗ ਲੈਂਦਾ!, ਅਸੀਂ ਤੈਨੂੰ 'ਬਾਵਨੀ' ਹੀ ਸੌਂਪ ਦਿੰਦੇ!;<sup>40</sup> ਪਹਾੜੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਤਾਂ, ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਕਚੇ ਹੋਣ ਕਾਰਨ ਰਾਜ ਭਾਗ ਸਾਂਭਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ; ਰਾਜ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਗਤਿ ਵੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੁੰਦੀ!<sup>41</sup> ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਜੋ ਵੰਡ ਪਰਗਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਕੀਤੀ ਗਈ ਸੀ; 52 ਪਰਗਣਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਸਮੂਹ ਨੂੰ 'ਬਾਵਨੀ' ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਸੀ, ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਨਗਰ ਸਰਹਿੰਦ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਸਮੇਂ 52 ਪਰਗਣਿਆਂ ਦਾ ਮੁਖ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਹੋਣ ਕਰਕੇ 'ਸਰਹਿੰਦ ਬਾਵਨੀ' (52) ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਸੀ।<sup>42</sup> ਦਿਲਚਸਪ ਹੈ ਕਿ 1832 ਈ. ਦੀ ਇਕ ਹਥ-ਲਿਖਤ ਗੁਰਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦਾ ਅਗਿਆਤ ਲੇਖਕਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ 'ਰਾਜ' ਨੂੰ ਵੀ 'ਬਾਈ ਬਰਖ' ਹੀ ਦਸਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>43</sup>

ਉਕਤ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਕਿ ਸਿਖੀ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਿਰਾਪੁਰਾ ਧਾਰਮਿਕ ਉਭਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ, ਸਗੋਂ ਸਮਾਜਕ, ਰਾਜਸੀ ਤੇ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਇਨਕਲਾਬ ਵੀ ਸੀ। ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬਾਨ ਨੇ ਜਿਥੇ ਬੁਲੀ ਦੀ ਉਸਾਰੀ ਕਰਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਨੂੰ ਵਹਿਮਾਂ-ਭਰਮਾਂ, ਜਾਤਾਂ-ਜਮਾਤਾਂ ਤੇ ਉਚ-ਨੀਚ ਦੀ '84 ਚੌਂ ਕਢ ਲਿਆ ਸੀ, ਤਿਉਂ 22 ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਮੇਂ, ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਬਾਦਸ਼ਾਹਤ ਦੀ ਅਧੀਨਗੀ, ਪ੍ਰਧਾਨਗੀ (hegemony) ਤਥਾ ਗੁਲਾਮੀ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦੁਆਈ ਸੀ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ, ਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਅਤੇ ਘਰੇਲੂ ਝਗੜੇ-ਮਸਲੇ ਵੀ ਸੁਲਝਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਉਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਮੁਗਲ ਹਕੂਮਤ ਦੇ ਅਹਿਲਕਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੁਕਾਬਲੇ ਸਿਖਾਂ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਨੀਤਿਕ ਨੇਤਾ ਵੀ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਸਿਖ ਲੀਡਰਸ਼ਿਪ ਦੀ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਸੁਚੇਤ ਤੇ ਵਿਧੀਵਤ ਵਿਉਂਤ ਸੀ।<sup>44</sup> ਇਉਂ "ਮੰਜੀ ਸਿਸਟਮ ਸਥਾਪਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ... ਮਕਸਦ ਸਿਖ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਰਾਸ਼ਟਰ ਦੇ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਸੰਗਠਤ ਕਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੀ... ਸਿਟੇ ਵਜੋਂ ਸਿਖ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਇਕ ਨਿਵੇਕਲੀ ਸ਼ਕਲ ਅਖਤਿਆਰ ਕਰ ਗਿਆ।"<sup>45</sup> ਇਉਂ ਮੰਜੀ ਦਾ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਪਸਾਰ ਖੁਦਮੁਖਤਿਆਰੀ (sovereignty) ਦੇ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਵਜੋਂ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਡਾ. ਸੀਤਲ ਠੀਕ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ "ਮੰਜੀ ਸੱਚੇ ਤਖਤ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਕ ਹੈ।"<sup>46</sup>

ਸਿਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਬਾਈ ਸੀ। ਬਾਈ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਜਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ-ਸੂਚੀ ਜਾਣਨ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਇਹ ਜਾਣ ਲੈਣਾ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ:

ਸਾਰੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਪਵਿਤਰ ਉਚ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਆਪਣਾ-ਆਪ ਜਤਾ ਕੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਇਸੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਹ ਅਜਕਲ ਵਾਂਗ 'ਵਰਕਲੋਡ' ਦਾ ਰਿਕਾਰਡ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਖਦੇ ਸਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਫੁਲ, ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਵੰਡਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਤਾਉਂਦਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਇਉਂ ਇਹ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਬਾਗ ਦੇ ਮਹਿਕਦੇ ਫੁਲ ਸਨ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਮਹਿਕ ਵੰਡਦੇ/ਖਿਲਾਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਦਸਤਾਵੇਜੀ ਕਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ

ਬਾਰੇ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਦਿਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਤਥਾ ਬਿਰਤਾਂਤ ਵੇਖੇ ਜਾ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ।<sup>47</sup>

ਦੂਜੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਡੱਲੇ ਨੇੜੇ ਦੇ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਹੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਸਨ, ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਦੋ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ, ਆਦਿ ਇਹ ਸਿਧ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਯੋਗਤਾ ਦਾ ਪੈਮਾਨਾ- ਸੇਵਾ, ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਧਤਾ, ਲੋੜ ਅਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਸੀ, ਸਥਾਨ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਣਤੀ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ।

ਤੀਜਾ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੋ ਨਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵਖਵਖ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੱਦੀ ਪਿੰਡਾਂ/ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਸ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਦੇ ਘਟ, ਜਿਥੇ ਉਹ ਸੇਵਾ ਨਿਭਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਸ ਤੋਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਿਧ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਸ ਲਈ ਨਿਰਧਾਰਿਤ ਕੀਤੇ ਸਥਾਨ-ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੋਵੇ।

ਚੌਥੀ ਗੱਲ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਨਾ ਇਕਦਮ, ਇਕੋ ਦਿਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋਈ। ਬੁਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ ਨਿਰਮਾਣ (1558) ਉਪਰੰਤ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਗਠਨ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ, ਜੋ ਕਾਫੀ ਬਾਅਦ ਤਕ ਚਲਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ।

ਪੰਜਵੀਂ ਗੱਲ ਕਿ ਸਮੇਂ ਸਮੇਂ ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਥਾਂ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਵੀ ਰਹੇ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਪ੍ਰਿੰ. ਸਤਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਕਥਨ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਜਲੰਧਰ ਲਾਉਣੇ ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ ਵਿਖੇ ਭਾਈ ਮਾਲਕ ਚੰਦ ਜੀਵੜੇ ਨੂੰ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਅਗਲੇ 16 ਸਾਲਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਸ ਮੰਜੀ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਬਦਲਦੇ ਰਹੇ।<sup>48</sup>

ਅਗਲੀ ਗੱਲ ਜੋ ਜਾਣਨੀ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਜੋ ਨਾਂ-ਥਾਂ ਸਾਨੂੰ ਵਖਵਖ ਸਰੋਤਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮਿਲਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਭਿੰਨਤਾ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ-ਪਹਿਲਾ ਇਹ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਵਿਅਕਤੀ ਦੇ ਇਕ ਤੋਂ ਵਧ ਨਾਂ ਹੋਣਾ ਸਾਡੀ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਪ੍ਰਵਿਰਤੀ ਹੈ, ਦੂਜਾ ਬਹੁਤ ਸਾਰੀਆਂ 'ਅੱਲਾਂ' ਪੈ ਜਾਣੀਆਂ ਸੁਭਾਵਿਕ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਇਕ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਨਾਂ 'ਫਿਰਾ/ਫਿਰਿਆ (ਕਟਾਰਾ)' ਪ੍ਰਾਪਤ ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਉਸਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਜੁੜਿਆ 'ਕਟਾਰਾ' ਉਸ ਦੀ 'ਅੱਲ' (ਉਰਫ) ਜਾਪਦੀ ਹੈ। ਜੋ ਸਰੋਤ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੇ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਉਹ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਇਕੋ ਸਮੇਂ/ ਤਤਕਾਲ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹੋਣ, ਮਹੀਨੇ-ਸਾਲ ਅਗੇ-ਪਿਛੇ ਵੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਈ ਨਾਂ, ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਤਥਾ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਵੀ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਜਾਪਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਡਾ. ਹਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਤਾ<sup>49</sup> ਨੇ, ਕਨ੍ਹਈਆ ਲਾਲ ਦੀ (ਤਾਰੀਖ-ਏ-ਪੰਜਾਬ) ਸੂਚਨਾ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਪੰਜ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਇਲਾਕੇ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਤ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕੀਤੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ: ਰੋਪੜ ਵਿਚ ਖਰੜ ਦਾ ਪਿੰਡ ਵਾਜੂਨ (wajun), ਮਲ੍ਹੀ ਦਾਸ ਵੈਰਾਗੀ (ਮਾਲਵਾ), ਊਨਾ ਦਾ ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਪਿੰਡ, ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਤੇ ਪਟਿਆਲੇ (ਮਾਈ ਸੇਵਾਂ) ਗਰਦਨੇਹ (gardnah), ਸਿੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲੂ ਆਦਿ। ਇਹ ਸਥਾਨਕ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰਕ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਤੋਂ ਪ੍ਰਭਾਵਿਤ ਹਨ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਮਾਣਕ ਚੰਦ 'ਜੀਵੜਾ'। 'ਜੀਵੜਾ' ਪਦ/ਅੱਲ ਭਾਈ ਮਾਣਕ ਚੰਦ ਦੀ ਸਮਰਪਣ ਭਾਵਨਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੇਵਾ ਲਈ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਬਧਤਾ ਦੀ ਲੋਕਧਾਰਾਈ ਗਵਾਹੀ ਹੈ।<sup>50</sup>

ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਮਹਾਰਾਜ ਸਚੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਹਜ਼ੂਰ ਦੀ ਮਹਾਨ ਅਗਵਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ



ਦਾ ਚਾਨਣ ਬਖੇਰਨ ਦੀ ਬਖਸਿਸ਼ ਵਿਚ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਵਣ ਮਲ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਹਰੀਪੁਰ ਗੁਲੇਰ ਰਿਆਸਤ ਵਲ ਸੀ; ਭਾਈ ਸਚਨਸਚ ਲਾਹੌਰ ਵਿਚ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਪਾਰੋ ਜੁਲਕਾ ਡੱਲੇ ਵਿਖੇ ਸਨ; ਭਾਈ ਲਾਲੂ, ਸਧਾਰਨ ਲੋਹਾਰ, ਖਾਨ ਛੁਰਾ, ਕੇਦਾਰਾ ਲੁੰਬਾ, ਮਹੇਸਾ ਪੀਰ, ਭਟ ਭਿਖਾ, ਸਾਵਨ ਚੰਦ (ਵੈਰੋਵਾਲ), ਗੰਗੂ ਸਾਹ (ਗੜਸੰਕਰ), ਮਥੇ ਮੁਰਾਰੀ (ਲਾਹੌਰ), ਬੇਣੀ, ਫਿਰਾ ਕਟਾਰਾ, ਪ੍ਰੇਮਾ (ਤਲਵੰਡੀ, ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ), ਮਾਈਦਾਸ (ਨਰਾਈ, ਲਾਹੌਰ), ਅਲਾਯਾਰ (ਲਾਹੌਰ), ਮਾਈ ਭਾਗੋ (ਕਾਬਲ), ਸੁਖਣ (ਰਾਵਲਪਿੰਡੀ), ਦੁਰਗੋ (ਮਿਹੜਾ), ਖੇਡਾ ਸੋਇਰੀ (ਖੇਮਕਰਨ), ਰਾਮਾ ਸੂਹੜੀ ਆਦਿਮੁਖ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਸਨ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਵਖ-ਵਖ ਜਾਤਾਂ: ਖੜੀ, ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ, ਸੁਨਿਆਰ, ਲੋਹਾਰ, ਭਟ, ਆਦਿ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਮੁਸਲਿਮ ਪਿਛੋਕੜ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਆਏ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਅਤੇ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਨਾਂ ਦਸਦੇ ਹਨ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਆਮ ਲੋਕ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਸਮਕਾਲੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ 'ਛੁਹ' ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਭਿਟ ਜਾਂਦੀ ਸੀ, ਗੁਰੂ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਹ ਸਿਖ ਆਪਣੀ 'ਛੁਹ' ਨਾਲ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੂ ਬਖੇਰਦੇ ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਪਰੰਪਰਾਵਾਂ ਦਾ ਤਿਆਗ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਸਨ। ਅਸਲ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਕਿਸੇ ਵੀ ਜਾਤ/ਲਿੰਗ ਦਾ ਸੀ, ਸਾਰੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇ ਸਿਖ ਸਨ।

ਇਹ ਸਾਰੇ ਹੀ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਗੱਲ ਕਰ ਆਏ ਹਾਂ, ਜਿਥੇ ਵੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਕਰਦੇ ਸਨ, ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਵਿਚਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਰਾਹੀਂ ਸਚ ਦੇ ਮਾਰਗ ਉਤੇ ਤੋਰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਕ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਇਹ ਤੁਰਦੀਆਂ-ਫਿਰਦੀਆਂ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਟਕਸਾਲਾਂ ਸਨ, ਜਿਥੇ ਸਬਦੁ(ਬਾਣੀ) ਦੁਆਰਾ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਘੜੇ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਸਪਸ਼ਟ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਹ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਕੰਠ ਵੀ ਕਰਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਵੀ ਸਿਖਾਉਂਦੇ ਸਨ। ਦਸਵੰਧ ਇਕਠਾ ਕਰਕੇ ਕੇਂਦਰ (ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ) ਵਿਖੇ ਭੇਜਣਾ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਕਿਰਤ ਦਾ ਭਾਗ ਸੀ, ਤਾਂ ਕਿ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਵਿਚ ਸਹਾਇਤਾ ਮਿਲੇ। ਜਿਹੜੀਆਂ ਲੋਕ ਸਮਸਿਆਵਾਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਾਰਨ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਲਝਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ, ਉਹ ਵੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਾਈਆਂ ਜਾਂਦੀਆਂ, ਇਉਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੀ ਆਪਸੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਵੀ ਸਿਖ ਜਥੇਬੰਦਕ ਢਾਂਚੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਜਬੂਤ ਕਰਦੀ ਸੀ। ਸੋ ਕੁਲ ਮਿਲਾ ਕੇ ਤੀਜੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੀ ਸਥਾਪਤੀ, ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਜਥੇਬੰਦਕ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧਕੀ ਤੇ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਕਾਰਜ ਸੀ।

ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕੀਤੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਮੁਤਾਬਿਕ ਪੀੜ੍ਹਾ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ, ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦਾ ਵਿਗਸਿਆ ਸਹਾਇਕ ਰੂਪ ਸੀ। ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕਾਰ ਹਰੀ ਰਾਮ ਗੁਪਤਾ ਤਾਂ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ 22 ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀਆਂ 52 ਸ਼ਾਖਾਂਵਾਂ (branches) ਹੀ ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>51</sup> ਪਰ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੰਜੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ। ਪੰਜਵੇਂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਮਸੰਦ 'ਪ੍ਰਥਾ' ਨੂੰ ਵੀ ਮੰਜੀ ਦੇ ਵਿਸਤਾਰ ਤੇ ਲਗਾਤਾਰ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਣਾ ਚਾਹੀਦਾ ਹੈ।<sup>52</sup> ਸੋ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਰੋਗੀ ਮਤਾਂਤਰਾਂ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿਲ੍ਹਣ ਵਿਚ ਫਸੇ ਸਮਾਜ ਨੂੰ ਨਰੋਏ ਵਾਤਾਵਰਨ ਵਿਚ ਲਿਆਉਣ ਲਈ ਗੁਰੂ ਘਰ ਵਲੋਂ ਚੁਕੇ ਗਏ ਦੂਰਦਰਸ਼ੀ ਅਤੇ ਦਲੇਰਾਨਾ ਕਦਮਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ ਸਥਾਪਤੀ ਵੀ ਅਹਿਮ ਕਦਮ ਸੀ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰਕੇ ਔਰਤਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਹਿਲ ਦਿਤੀ ਗਈ। ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ/ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਚੁੱਲ੍ਹੇ ਤਕ ਪਹੁੰਚਣ ਦਾ ਗੁਹਜ ਭਾਵ ਹੈ, ਸੋ ਇਹ ਕਾਰਜ ਵੀ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਹੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਕਰ ਸਕਦੀਆਂ ਸਨ। ਬੀਬੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਲ ਲਾਉਣਾ, ਕੀਰਤਨ ਸਿਖਾਉਣਾ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਚੀੜ੍ਹੇ ਅਸਮਾਜਿਕ ਗੈਰ-ਕੁਦਰਤੀ



ਤਾਣੇ-ਬਾਣੇ ਅਤੇ ਵਹਿਮਾਂ ਭਰਮਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਮੁਕਤੀ ਦਿਵਾਉਣੀ ਇਹ ਸਭ ਕਾਰਜ ਨਰੋਏ ਸਮਾਜ ਦੀ ਸਿਰਜਣਾ ਲਈ ਜਰੂਰੀ ਸਨ। ਪੀੜ੍ਹੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਬੀਬੀ ਭਾਨੀ, ਦਾਨੀ, ਪਾਲ, ਸੇਵਾ ਆਦਿ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਪ੍ਰਸਿਧ ਹਨ। ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗਿਆਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨਾਵਾਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਜਾਂ ਵੇਰਵੇ ਦਿਤੇ ਹਨ, ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਈ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ/ਔਰਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹਨ।<sup>53</sup> ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਹੋ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇਦਾਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਇਕ ਨਿਸ਼ਚਿਤ ਥਾਂ ਲਈ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ, ਬਲਕਿ ਇਕ ਥਾਂ ਤੋਂ ਦੂਜੀ ਥਾਂ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਇਹ ਵੀ ਇਕ ਕਾਰਨ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਖ ਵਖ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਕੋ ਨਾਂ ਦੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਲਭ ਪੈਂਦੇ ਹਨ।

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਭਾਈ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਅਮਲ-ਅਭਿਆਸ ਦਾ ਸਾਰਾ ਸੁਹਜ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਸ਼ਾਨਦਾਰ ਰਾਹਨੁਮਾਈ ਹੇਠ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਵਿਗਸਿਆ। ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਸਮੇਂ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਭਾਵ ਸਿਖ ਵਿਦਵਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਧਨਾ ਦਾ ਕੇਂਦਰ (ਟਕਸਾਲ) ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਵਿਚ ਹੋ ਰਹੇ ਇਸ ਕਾਰਜ-ਕ੍ਰਮ ਨੂੰ ਅਜਿਹਾ 'ਅਚਰਜੁ ਖੇਲੁ' ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਜਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਲਖਿਆ/ਜਾਣਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ- ਅਚਰਜੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਨ ਲਖਿਆ ਜਾਈ (1/57); ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਬਹੁਤ ਹੀ ਭਾਵਪੂਰਤ ਅਤੇ ਖੂਬਸੂਰਤ ਤਰੀਕੇ ਨਾਲ ਇਸ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਚਲੀਆਂ ਗਿਆਨ ਤੇ ਸਾਧਨਾਮਈ ਗਤੀਵਿਧੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਵਰਣਨ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ<sup>54</sup>, ਪਰ ਅਸੀਂ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਇਸ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਨਾਲ ਸਹਿਮਤ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਕਿ "No Gurdaisan School; Only Experiments"<sup>55</sup> ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵਿਖੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਦੀ ਇਕ ਮਹਾਨ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਤੁਰੀ ਅਤੇ ਟਕਸਾਲ ਬਣੀ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਤੋਂ ਬਾਅਦ ਇਸ ਪਧਤੀ ਦੀ ਪ੍ਰਤੀਨਿਧਤਾ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਹੀਦ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਹਨ। ਭਾਈ ਗੁਰਦਾਸ (1551-1636) ਅਤੇ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਕਾਲ (1644-1734) ਵਿਚ ਭਾਵੇਂ ਕੋਈ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਅੰਤਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਪਰ ਲਾਜਮੀ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚਾਲੇ ਹੋਰ ਅਨਿਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖ ਵੀ ਹੋਏ ਹੋਣਗੇ, ਜੋ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ, ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਆਦਿ ਦਾ ਇਹ ਸਕੂਲ ਚਲਾਉਂਦੇ ਰਹੇ। ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰੀ ਟਕਸਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਸਨ ਅਤੇ ਐਨ ਸੰਭਵ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਹੁਤੇ ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ ਵੀ ਹੋਣਗੇ। ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਕਹੋ ਅਨੁਸਾਰ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਅਰਥ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ (Sikh school of meaning) ਦੇ ਅਗਲੇ ਮੁਖ ਵਾਰਿਸ ਭਾਈ ਮਨੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਤਤ-ਰੂਪ ਬੀਜ, ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਮਹਾਂਕਵੀ ਭਾਈ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸਿੰਘ ਹਨ, ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ 'ਨਿਰਮਲ' ਅੰਸ਼ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਾਮਿਲ ਹੋ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਅਗਾਂਹ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਲਹਿਰ ਇਸ ਸਕੂਲ ਦੀ ਵਾਰਿਸ ਬਣਦੀ ਹੈ, ਜਿਹੜੀ ਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ ਸੁਧ, ਮੌਲਿਕ ਅਸਲ ਸਰੂਪ ਨੂੰ 'ਪਹਿਲ ਤਾਜਗੀ' ਵਿਚ ਲੈ ਕੇ ਜਾਣ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਲਹਿਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਹੇ-ਰਵਾਂ ਤੇ ਅਰਥ ਦੇ ਸਿਖ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਬਣਦਾ ਯੋਗਦਾਨ ਭਾਈ ਜੋਧ ਸਿੰਘ, ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਪਾਉਂਦੇ ਹਨ। ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਕਈ ਟੀਕੇ, ਸਿਧਾਂਤਿਕ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਜਾਂ ਭਾਸ਼ ਹਨ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਕੂਲ ਨੂੰ ਵਧਦਾ, ਮੌਲਦਾ, ਵਿਗਸਦਾ, ਰੂਪ ਬਦਲਦਾ ਵੇਖਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਭਵਿਖ ਵਿਚ ਵੀ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਪ੍ਰਣਾਲੀ ਦੇ ਹੋਰ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਅਤੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਵਿਗਸਣ ਦੀਆਂ ਸੰਭਾਵਨਾਵਾਂ ਹਨ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਮਨੁਖ ਨੂੰ 'ਸਟੇਜੀ ਲੈਕਚਰਬਾਜ਼ੀ; ਯੂ-ਟਿਊਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਣ; ਨਿੰਦਕ- ਸਮੀਖਿਆ' ਜਾਂ ਨਿਰੋਲ 'ਅਕਾਦਮਿਕ-ਕਵਾਇਦ' ਦੀ ਨਹੀਂ,

ਬਲਕਿ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤੋਂ ਸਿਰਜੇ ਗਈ ਮੰਜੀ ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ ਦੀ 'ਸਿਰਜਣਾਤਮਕਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਜੀਵਨ-ਅਮਲ-ਅਭਿਆਸ' ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

## ਸਾਰ

ਉਪਰੋਕਤ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉਤੇ ਫਿਰ ਦੁਹਰਾਇਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ:

੧. ਮੰਜੀ ਇਕ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਹੈ ਅਤੇ ਸਾਡਾ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ 'ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰ' ਮਾਡਲ ਹੈ।
੨. 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਅਧਿਕਾਰੀ 'ਖਿਲੂਤ' ਵੀ ਹੈ; ਭਾਵ ਇਹ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਦਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਲੋਂ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਰੂਪ ਸੌਂਪਿਆ ਤੁਹਫਾ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਜਿਵੇਂ ਕਿ ਅਸੀਂ ਜਾਣਦੇ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੌਂਪਿਆ, ਹੁਣ ਇਹ ਅਧਿਕਾਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਹੈ; 'ਥੜੇ' (ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਉਤੇ ਰੱਖੀ 'ਮੰਜੀ' (ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਉਤੇ ਹੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ (ਸੁਖਾਸਨ) ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ; ਸੰਗਤ ਤਾਬਿਆ ਸਜਦੀ ਹੈ।
੩. ਮੰਜੀ, ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਜੁੜਨ ਦੀ ਥਾਂ ਵੀ ਹੈ; ਚਾਰਪਾਈ ਵੀ ਅਤੇ ਵਿਹਾਰਕ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਤਕ ਜਾਣ ਦਾ ਅਭਿਆਸ ਵੀ। ਇਹ ਸਿਖ ਸੁਤੰਤਰਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸਤਾ ਦਾ ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਵੀ ਹੈ। ਇਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਜੇ ਕਿਤੇ ਚਾਰਪਾਈ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮੰਜੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਦੇ ਰੂਪ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਲਦੀ ਵੀ ਹੈ, ਤਾਂ ਵੀ ੨੨ ਚਾਰਪਾਈਆਂ/ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਤਲਾਸ਼ ਦੀ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਜਰੂਰਤ ਨਹੀਂ। ਭਾਵ ਮੰਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ, ਰੂਪਕ (metaphor) ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕਰਨ ਦੀ ਜਰੂਰਤ ਹੈ, ਵਖ ਵਖ ਇਲਾਕਿਆਂ ਵਿਚੋਂ 'ਚਾਰਪਾਈਆਂ' ਲਭਣ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਨਹੀਂ।
੪. ਮੰਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ ਇਕੋ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਦੇ ਦੋ ਰੂਪ ਹਨ; ਇਉਂ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਮੰਜੀ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਰੂਪ ਪੀੜ੍ਹੇ ਹੈ।
੫. ਇਹ ਦੋਨੋਂ ਹਰੇਕ ਪਖ ਤੋਂ ਆਮ ਲੋਕਾਈ ਦੇ ਪਧਰ ਉਤੇ ਜਾ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਦੁਖ-ਸੁਖ ਦਾ ਹਿਸਾ ਬਣਨ; ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪਰੰਪਰਕ ਗੁਲਾਮ ਜ਼ਿਲਣ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਕਢਣ ਤੇ ਗੁਰਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਖੁਸ਼ਬੋਈ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਰਨ ਦਾ ਸੰਕੇਤ ਹਨ।
੬. ਮੰਜੀ ਬੀਤੇ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦੀ ਯਾਦਗਾਰ ਨਹੀਂ, ਸਾਡਾ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਤੇ ਭਵਿਖ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂਕਿ ਇਸੇ ਜੁਗਤ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾ ਕੇ ਹੀ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ ਜੀਵਨ ਸੁਆਰਿਆ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ; ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਟੇਜੀ ਜਾਂ ਯੂ-ਟਿਊਬੀ 'ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ' ਨੇ ਸੁਆਰਿਆ ਤਾਂ ਸ਼ਾਇਦਾ ਬਹੁਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ, ਵਿਗਾੜਾਂ ਦੀ ਫਰਿਹਸਤ ਲੰਮੀ ਹੈ।

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## ਅੰਤਿਕਾ ਓ

ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਬਾਰੇ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਨ ਲਈ ਕੁਝ ਕਾਰਜਾਂ ਦਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ

੧. ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼ ('ਬਾਈ ਮੰਜੀਆਂ', ੨੦੧੯ ਐਡੀਸ਼ਨ, ਪੰਨੇ ੮੪੬-੪੭)
੨. Bhia Jodh Singh, 'Sri Guru Amar Das Ji', *The Panjab Past and Present*, ed. Ganda Singh, vol. XIII-II, serial no. 26, October 1979, pp. 251-99.

੩. ਤਾਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ, 'ਜੀਵਨ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ', ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ : ਜੀਵਨ, ਰਚਨਾ ਤੇ ਸਿਖਿਆ, (ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ੧੯੮੦, ਪੰਨੇ ੦੧-੪੫).
  ੪. ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਸ਼ਟ ਗੁਰ ਚਮਤਕਾਰ, (ਭਾਗ ੧ ਤੇ ੨, ਭਾਈ ਵੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਸਦਨ, ਨਵੀਂ ਦਿੱਲੀ, ੨੦੧੪, ਚੌਦਵੀਂ ਵਾਰ, ੧੯੫੨ ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ, ਪੰਨੇ ੧੩੮-੯੯).
  ੫. ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਸਾਹਿਬ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜੀਵਨ ਬ੍ਰਿਤਾਂਤ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ (ਸਿੰਘ ਬ੍ਰਦਰਜ਼ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੧੯੭੭, ਚੌਥੀ ਵਾਰ, ਪੰਨੇ ੩੩-੪੦)
  ੬. ਡਾ. ਫੌਜਾ ਸਿੰਘ, Guru Amardas : Life and Teachings, (Starling Publications, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 116-29) ।
  ੭. ਡਾ. ਬਲਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿਲ, ਤੀਜੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਫਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ, ੧੯੮੭, ਪੰਨੇ ੧੬੧-੨੧੧)
  ੮. ਗਿ. ਮਖਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਮ੍ਰਿਗਿੰਦ, ਅਮਰ ਚਾਨਣ (ਫੈਡਰੇਸ਼ਨ ਆਫ ਸਿਖ ਆਰਗੇਨਾਈਜ਼ੇਸ਼ਨ, ਯੂਕੇ, ੧੯੭੯) ਦਾ ਦਸਵਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਗਿਆਰਵਾਂ ਅਧਿਆਇ 'ਨਾਨਕ ਰਾਜ ਚਲਾਇਆ (ਪੰਨੇ ੩੬-੪੭)'
  ੯. ਡਾ. ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਮੰਜੀ ਤੇ ਮਸੰਦ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ (ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਮਿਸ਼ਨ ਸੀਰੀਜ਼ ੪੧੯, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ੧੯੯੨)
  ੧੦. ਡਾ. ਰਾਏ ਜਸਬੀਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ' (ਪ੍ਰਮੁਖ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਸੰਪਾ. ਡਾ. ਨਰਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਭਾਟੀਆ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੨੦੦੫ ਪੰਨੇ ੧੪੯-੬੨)।
  ੧੧. ਡਾ. ਮਦਨਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ' (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ : ਜੀਵਨ ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਨ, ਸੰਪਾ. ਕ੍ਰਿਸ਼ਣ ਲਾਲ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ 'ਸੂਦਨ', ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, ੧੯੮੬, ਪੰਨੇ ੧੫੨-੭੭) 'ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਇਤਿਹਾਸਕ ਸਰਵੇਖਣ', (The Panjab Past and Presented. Ganda Singh, Vol. XIII-II, Serial No. 26, October 1979, pp. 482-94).
  ੧੨. ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦਿਆਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਾ 'ਮੰਜੀ ਅਤੇ ਮਸੰਦ ਸਿਸਟਮ' (ਖਾਲਸਾ-ਪ੍ਰਭੂਸਤਾ - ਸਿਧਾਂਤ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ ੧੯੮੪, ਪੰਨੇ ੮੬-੯੯)
  ੧੩. ਡਾ. ਮੇਜਰ ਸਿੰਘ, 'ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਥਾਪਣਾ ਅਤੇ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ', (ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਤੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਬੀਬੀਆਂ, ਵਿਰਸਾ ਸੰਭਾਲ ਪਬਲੀਕੇਸ਼ਨਜ਼, ਲੁਧਿਆਣਾ, ੨੦੦੬, ਪੰਨੇ ੧੧੩-੧੬).
- ਨੋਟ: ਲੋਕ ਸੰਪਰਕ ਵਿਭਾਗ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸਰਕਾਰ ਵਲੋਂ, ਜੋ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਚਿੜ੍ਹਾਵਲੀ (ਮਈ ੧੯੭੯) ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਿਤ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਦਰਸਾਏ ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਚਿਤਰ, ਸਿਖੀ ਦੀ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਟਕਸਾਲ ਦਾ ਇਸ਼ਾਰਾ ਮਾਤਰ ਭਾਨ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਹਨ; ਡਾ. ਮਹਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਧਾਵਾ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸੰਪਾਦਿਤ ਪੰਜਾਬ (ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ੧੯੬੦) ਵਿਚ ਦਿਤੀਆਂ ਕੁਝ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਤਸਵੀਰਾਂ ਵੀ ਇਸ ਮਹਾਨ ਧਰਤੀ ਦੀ ਪੁਰਾਤਨ ਛੋਹ ਦਾ ਥੋੜ੍ਹਾ-ਕ ਅਹਿਸਾਸ ਕਰਵਾ ਦਿੰਦੀਆਂ ਹਨ। ਐਨਾ ਕੁਝ ਹੋਣ ਦੇ ਬਾਵਜੂਦ ਵੀ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ ਬਾਰੇ ਕੋਈ ਸੁਤੰਤਰ, ਭਰਵੀਂ ਖੋਜ ਪੁਸਤਕ ਦੀ ਹਾਲੇ



called manji..." Teja Singh, *Sikhism: Its Ideals and Institutions*, Longmans, New York, 1938, pp. 41-42.

ਧਿਆਨਯੋਗ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਪੀੜ੍ਹਾ, ਪੁਰਾਣੇ ਤਾਂਤ੍ਰਿਕ ਮਤਾਂ (ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਬੁਧ ਧਰਮ ਤੋਂ ਸਾਰੀ 'ਸ਼ਕਤੀ' ਲਈ) ਦੇ 'ਪੀਠ' ਪਦ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਆਵਾਚੀ ਵੀ ਹੈ; ਸ਼ਾਕਤ/ ਤਾਂਤ੍ਰਿਕ ਮਤਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਇਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਕਤੀ ਪੀਠ (SaktiPhia, seat of Shakti) ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਥੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਅਰਥ ਖਾਸ ਕਿਸਮ ਦਾ ਆਸਣ ਹੈ; ਤੰਤ੍ਰਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਆਸਣਾਂ ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਹੈ (ਵੇਖੋ: Vanamali Shakti: Realm of the Divine Mother, Inner Traditions Bear, 2008)। ਬੁਧ ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਬੁਧ/ ਪਾਲੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਕੇਂਦਰਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਹਾਰ ਜਾਂ ਪੀਠ ਕਿਹਾ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਇਸੇ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਅਤੇ ਮਾਡਲ ਦੇ ਅਧਾਰ ਉੱਤੇ ਸੰਸਕ੍ਰਿਤ ਨੇ ਪੀਠ ਪਦ ਨੂੰ ਅਪਣਾਇਆ ਅਤੇ ਹਿੰਦੂਆਂ ਦੇ ਸੰਕਰ ਆਦਿ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਨੇ ਬੋਧੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਦੇਖਾ ਦੇਖੀ ਕਈ 'ਪੀਠ' ਸਥਾਪਿਤ ਕੀਤੀਆਂ; ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦਾ ਪੁਰਾਣਾ ਵੇਰਵਾ ਤਾਂ ਕਾਫੀ ਵੱਖ ਵੱਖ ਹੈ, ਪਰ 51 ਪੀਠ ਬਹੁਤ ਪ੍ਰਸਿੱਧ ਹਨ। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਪੀਠ, ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਛਮ/ਯੂਰਪ ਦੇ ਛੂਆਂ ਸੰਕਲਪ ਦਾ ਪਰਿਆਵਾਚੀ ਮੰਨ ਲਿਆ ਗਿਆ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਥਾਪਿਤ (ਮੰਜੀ) 'ਪੀੜ੍ਹਾ' ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ; ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਦਿਆ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਦੇ ਅਰਥਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਿਆ ਜਾਂ ਗ੍ਰਹਿਣ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ? ਅਤੇ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣੀ '51' ਪੀਠ ਦਾ ਬਦਲ ਵੀ? ਇਸ ਬਾਰੇ ਭਰਵੀਂ ਵਿਚਾਰ/ ਖੋਜ ਦੀ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ।

Syad Muhammad Latif, *History of the Panjāb: From the Remotest Antiquity to The Present Time*, Calcutta, 1891, p. 252.

ਡਾ. ਤਾਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਜਨਮਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੁਝ ਪਖਾਂ/ਸਾਖੀਆਂ ਦੀ ਅਜਿਹੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਾਫੀ ਸਫਲਤਾ ਨਾਲ ਕਰੀ ਹੈ, ਵੇਖੋ: ਸਿਖ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਰਹਸ ਤੇ ਰਮਜ, ਨਿਊ ਬੁਕ ਕੰਪਨੀ, ਜਲੰਧਰ, ੧੯੯੧ 'ਭਾਗ ਦੂਜਾ' ਪੰਨੇ ੮੫-੧੭੪.

ਉਦਾਹਰਨ ਲਈ ਵੇਖੋ: "... ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਕੋਈ 22 ਮੰਜੀਆਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਸਨ ਥਾਪੀਆਂ.", ਡਾ. ਹਰਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦਿਲਗੀਰ, ਨਵਾਂ ਸੰਪੂਰਨ ਮਹਾਨ ਕੋਸ਼, ਜਿਲਦ ਚੌਥੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ ਪ੍ਰੈੱਸ, ਬਰਮਿੰਘਮ, 2022, ਪੰਨਾ 2409, 'ਮੰਜੀ'।

'ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ', ਪ੍ਰਮੁੱਖ ਸਿਖ ਸੰਸਥਾਵਾਂ, ਸੰਪਾ. ਡਾ. ਨਰਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ ਭਾਟੀਆ, ਗੁਰੂ ਨਾਨਕ ਦੇਵ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ, 2005, ਪੰਨੇ 149-62.

ਤੀਜੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ (ਦੈਵੀ ਜੀਵਨ-ਦੈਵੀ ਸੰਦੇਸ਼), ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਫਾਊਂਡੇਸ਼ਨ, ਫਿਰੋਜ਼ਪੁਰ, 1987, ਪੰਨੇ 161-211.

ਸਿਖੀ ਦੇ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਟੇਜੀ 'ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ' ਵਿਚ ਇਸਤਿਹਾਰਬਾਜ਼ੀ ਨੂੰ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਥਾਂ ਦਿਤੀ ਜਾ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਜੋ ਆਤਮਿਕ ਤੇ ਕੌਮੀਘਾਤ ਜਿਹਾ ਕਾਰਜ ਹੈ।

ਮਹਿਮਾ (ਕ), ਭਾਗੀ - ਸਾਖੀ/ਬੰਦ/ਪੰਨਾ: ੩/੮੨/148; ੩/੮੪/157; ੩/੮੬/165; ੩/੧੧੩/273 ਆਦਿ.

*The Encyclopaedia of the Sikhism*, ed. Harbans Singh, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2011 (third edition), Vol.III,

- pp.42-43 "Manji". ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ 42.
20. "Being an old man, he was unable to move to numerous places outside his headquarters to guide his followers. He may well have appointed a pious devotee with the authority to sit on a cot or manja to preach the teachings of the Guru." Dalbir Singh Dhillon, *Sikhism: Origin and Development*, Atlantic Publishers & Distri, Delhi, 1988, pp. 207-08.
  21. Dr. Fauja Singh, 'Guru Amar Das: Life and Thought', *The Punjab Past and Present*, vol. viii-ii, serial no. 26, October 1979, pp. 318-19.
  22. ਬਾਬਾ ਸਰੂਪ ਦਾਸ, ਮਹਿਮਾ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ 1776, ਭਾਗ 2, ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ 1971, ਪੰਨੇ 108-09.
  23. Gopal Singh, *A History of Sikh People*, World Sikh University, Press, New Delhi 1979, p. 162.
  24. ਗੋਕਲ ਚੰਦ ਨਾਰੰਗ, ਸਿੱਖ ਮਤਦਾ ਪਰਿਵਰਤਨ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ 2009, (1924 ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ), ਪੰਨਾ 22, ਫੁ. ਨੋ.
  25. ...the Sikhs had spread throughout the Punjab, he [Guru Amardas ji] established manjis (dioceses) to help spread the faith and better organize its adherents...<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Guru-Amar-Das>
  26. ਅਰਵਿੰਦ-ਪਾਲ ਮੰਡੇਰ ਨੇ ਮੰਜੀ ਲਈ Cot ਪਦ ਹੀ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਹੈ, ਪਰ ਨਾਲ ਹੀ ਜਦੋਂ ਉਹ 'Cots' ਨੂੰ 'seats of authoirty' ਕਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੈ ਤਾਂ ਕਿਤੇ ਵੀ ਇਸ 'authority' ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰਦਾ; ਉੱਥੇ ਉਹ ਮੰਜੀ 'ਪ੍ਰਬੰਧ' ਲਈ 'institution' (of manjis) ਠੀਕ ਪਦ ਵਰਤਦਾ ਹੈ, ਵੇਖੋ: Arvind-Pal Singh (2023) 'Guru Amar Das (1479–1574)', *The Sikh World*, ed. Pashaura Singh, Routledge Worlds. Taylor & Franics, 2023.
  27. ਡਾ. ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੱਗੀ, ਸਿੱਖ ਪੰਥ ਵਿਸ਼ਵਕੋਸ਼, ਭਾਗ ਦੂਜਾ, ਗੁਰ ਰਤਨ ਪਬਲਿਸ਼ਰਜ਼, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, 2005, ਪੰਨਾ 1427, 'ਮੰਜੀਆਂ'.
  28. organised... system... spiritual domain", but not "bishopric", *History of the Sikhs & Their Religion: The Guru Period*, Vol I, eds. Kirpal Singh & Kharak Singh, SGPC, Sri Amritsar, feb. 2004, p.127.
  29. *A Short History of The Sikhs (Vol one)*, Punjabi University. Patiala, edition 2006, p. 23.
  30. ਸੋਖੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕਹੀਏ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਘੰਟੇ-ਦੋ ਘੰਟੇ ਲਈ 'ਸਟੇਜੀ ਲੈਕਚਰਬਾਜੀ' ਕਰਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਜਾਂਦਾ ਅਤੇ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਕੇਵਲ monologue ਕਰਦਾ ਸੀ।
  31. ਤਵਾਰੀਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ, ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ,

- 1970 (ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ), ਪੰਨਾ 339.
32. ਅੰਗਦ ਤੋਂ ਗੁਰ ਭਯੋ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ। ਕੀਯੋ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਾਵਾ ਜਾਸ।... ਬਾਈ ਸੂਬੇ ਜਿਮਬਾਯੋ ਮੰਜੀ ਬਨਾਈ।... ਰਤਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਭੰਗੂ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਪੰਥ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ 1841, ਸਾਖੀ ੧੨/ ਪੰਨਾ ੨੨.
  33. Dr. Fauja Singh, Guru Amardas : Life and Teachings, Sterling Publishers, New Delhi, 1979, pp. 17-29.
  34. R.P. Tripathi, Rise and Fall of Mughal Empire, Allahabad, 1963, p.259.
  35. W. H. McLeod and Louis E.Fenech, Historical Dictionary of Sikhism (Historical Dictionaries of Religions, Philosophies, and Movements Series), Rowman & Littlefield, (reprint), 2014, 'MANJI'.
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  37. 'An Exclusive Path for the Kaliyuga: Guru Amar Das', Four Centuries of Sikh Tradition: History, Literature, and Identity, Oxford University Press, New Delhi, 2011, pp.48-68.
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  40. "ਏਕ ਦਿਵਸ ਬੈਠੇ ਤਿਹ ਥਾਨਾ... ਬਾਵਨੀ ਪਟ ਮੈ ਯਾਹਿ ਲਗਾਵਤ। ਪਰ ਤੁਮ ਕੋ ਐਸੇ ਹੀ ਭਾਵਤ॥" ਕੁਇਰਸਿੰਘ, ਗੁਰਬਿਲਾਸਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ੧੦ (੧੭੫੧ਈ.), ਸੰਪਾ. ਸ਼ਮਸ਼ੇਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਸ਼ੋਕ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, ੧੯੯੯ (ਪਹਿਲੀ ਵਾਰ ੧੯੬੮), ਅਧਿ. 18/ ਬੰਦ 49-52, ਪੰਨਾ 214.
  41. "ਬਚਨ ਭਯੋ ਪਹਾਰੀਏ ਕਾਚੇ। ਰਾਜ ਹੀਨ ਗਤਿ ਧਰਮ ਨਾ ਸਾਚੇ॥" ਉਹੀ, ਅਧਿ. 18/ ਬੰਦ 52, ਪੰਨਾ 214.
  42. ਉਹੀ, ਪੰਨਾ ੨੮੧ ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਦੀ ਟਿਪਣੀ। ਨੋਟ: ਸਿਖ ਸਰੋਤ ਸਾਹਿਤ ਅਤੇ ਸਿਖ ਯਾਦ ਵਿਚ ਗੁਰੂ ਰਾਮਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ ਵਸਾਏ '52' ਕਿੱਤਿਆਂ ਦੇ ਕਾਰੀਗਰ; ਗੁਰੂ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਦੇ '52' ਕਲੀਆਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਚੋਲਾ; ਦਸਮੇਸ਼ ਦਰਬਾਰ ਦੇ '52' ਕਵੀ... ਸਿਖ ਪਰੰਪਰਾ ਦੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਗੁਹਜ ਭਾਵੀਸੰਕੇਤ ਹਨ, ਜੋ ਚਲ ਰਹੀ ਉਕਤ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਵਿਚ ਸਮਝਣੇ ਜ਼ਰੂਰੀ ਹਨ।
  43. "ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਤ੍ਰਿਤੀਏ ਮਹਲ... ਬਾਈ ਬਰਖ ਅਰ ਮਾਸ ਪਾਚ... ਕੀਯੋ ਰਾਜ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅਮਰ ਗੁਰ...", ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ (ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਦਾਸ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਅੰਕ), ਮਈ-ਜੂਨ, 1979.
  44. Balwant Singh Dhillon, "The Future of Religious Leadership:

The Sikh Perspective', The Future of Religious Leadership: World Religions in Conversation (Interreligious Reflections), ed. Alon Goshen-Gottstein, Lexington Books, New York, 2016, pp.103-28.

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 "...Manji is a raised bed or cot where the sovereign sits. Manji in the Sikh system of Raj already existed as the Sikh administrative unit. Guru Amardas Sahib started Manjis to parallel the Mughal empire.", Harinder Singh, 'From Pothi to Guru Granth Sahib: The Perfect-Genius of Guru Arjan Sahib', <https://sikhri.org/articles/from-pothi-to-guru-granth-sahib>
46. ਡਾ. ਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਸੀਤਲ, ਤੇਰੀ ਉਪਮਾ ਤੋਹਿ ਬਨਿ ਆਵੈ, ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰ ਬੰਸ ਜਥਾ ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ, ਜਲੰਧਰ, ੧੯੮੦, ਪੰਨਾ ੧੧੭.
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49. Hari Ram Gupta, History of Sikh Gurus, Kapur & sons, New Delhi, 1973, p. 85 also pp. 277-79.
50. ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਗੰਭੀਰ ਅਧਿਐਨ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾਈ/ਵਸਤੂ-ਵਾਚਕ 'ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ' ਕਿਸੇ ਭਾਈਚਾਰੇ ਦੇ ਰਾਜਸੀ ਜਾਂ ਸਮਾਜੀ ਇਤਿਹਾਸ ਦਾ ਸਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਬਿਆਨ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲਾ 'ਤਥ' ਹੁੰਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਵੇਂ ਇਥੇ 'ਜੀਵੜਾ' ਮਾਤਰ ਕੇਵਲ ਨਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ, ਚਿੰਨ੍ਹ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਪ੍ਰਥਾਏ ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪੂਰਨ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਨਜਰ ਵਿਚ ਇਹ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦਾ 'ਜਾਗਣਾ' (ਲੋਕ ਅਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਜਾਗ/ਜਿਉਣਾ) ਹੈ:  
 "The Caravans of the Sikhs Coming from different climes, and different directions and belonging to different castes are on their way to the 'Pond of Immortality' where they shall bath in the sunshine of the Guru.", The Spirit Born People, Punjab University, Patiala, 1976, p.7.
51. "Their ... 22 having under them 52 branches or pirhis", History of the Sikhs Vol. I. The Sikh Gurus, 1469-1708, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd. New Delhi, 2008, p. 121.
52. ਡਾ. ਗੰਡਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ 'ਮਸੰਦ' ਨੂੰ 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਨਾਲ ਸੰਬੰਧਿਤ ਕਰਕੇਹੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦਾ



- ਉਪਰਾਲਾ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੈ: Nanak Panthis (Dabistan-i-Mazahib)', Panjab Past and Present, April 1967, p. 67 (f.no. 27).
53. ਤਵਾਰੀਖ ਗੁਰੂ ਖਾਲਸਾ, ਹਿੱਸਾ ਪਹਿਲਾ, ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਵਿਭਾਗ, ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ, 1970 (ਦੂਜੀ ਵਾਰ), ਪੰਨੇ 323-35.
  54. Bhai Gurdas : Makers of Indian Literature, Sahitya Academy, New Delhi 1992, pp. 19-24.
  55. Ibid., p. 59
  56. ਪ੍ਰੋ. ਪਿਆਰਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਪਦਮ, 'ਗੋਇੰਦਵਾਲ ਦਾ ਵਿਰਸਾ', ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਮਰਦਾਸ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਬਾਣੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਯੂਨੀਵਰਸਿਟੀ, ਪਟਿਆਲਾ 1979, ਪੰਨੇ 20-27.
  57. ਨੋਟ: ਧਿਆਨ ਰਹੇ ਕਿ 'ਥੜ੍ਹੇ' ਉਤੇ ਸਜੀ 'ਮੰਜੀ' ਉਤੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼, ਕੇਵਲ ਸਚੀ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਹੈ; ਜੋਤਿ ਦਾ ਸੰਬੰਧ 'ਗੁਰੂ' (ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ) ਨਾਲ ਹੈ। ਮੰਜੀ ਸੰਸਥਾ ਕੇਵਲ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹੀ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਹੈ, 'seats of spiritual authority' ਨਹੀਂ (ਵੇਖੋ: ਪਦ ਟਿਪਣੀ: 18)। ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮੇਂ ਕਈ ਰੰਗ ਦੀਆਂ 'ਗੱਦੀਆਂ' spiritualhox ਦਾ ਦਾਅਵਾ ਵੀ ਕਰਨ ਲਗ ਪਈਆਂ ਹਨ; spiritual ਕੇਵਲ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਦੀ 'ਗੁਰਿਆਈ' ਹੀ ਹੈ।

## ON THE ISC FRONT

COL JAGTAR SINGH MULTANI\*

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(16<sup>th</sup> June 2024 to 15<sup>th</sup> September 2024)

During the quarter from June to September 2024, ISC had mixed luck in performance and day-to-day working. In spite of best of efforts we could not make a visit to War Memorial Museum at Belgium, planned for 10<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Our distinguished member, S. Sukhdev Singh Laaj left us for heavenly abode on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024, an unrecoverable loss to ISC Management. Another member Mrs Kiran Preet Kaur Dhama lost her father on the same day. All in “GURU KA HUKAM”.

On the establishment of Sikh Vidyak Board with unanimous decision, the responsibility of First Chairman was assigned to Col Jagtar Singh Multani, the Secretary General, ISC. Another meeting of educational experts from Sikh Sangat was held on 08<sup>th</sup> August 2024 at Ludhiana, and decisions for future were arrived at. S. Sukhinder Singh one of the founder members of ISC (Membership No. 86) has offered his physical services in day to day working.

In spite of the nationwide attention fixed on the existing event of National Elections. ISC managed to work on its mission in uplifting the rural education through Free Homework Tuition Centre's, holding weekly meetings, visits by the office bearers to various schools & educational institutions continued. New affiliations with Global Sikh Council for taking over their Homework Tuition Centre's in Distt. TaranTarn, Amritsar & Ferozpur were in progress under project named PEHEL (Punjab Education, Health, Employment Lehar).

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**PANJAB PROJECT: -*****FREE HOMEWORK TUITION CENTRE'S: -***

During this Quarter ISC has successfully launched new Free Homework Tuition Centers at Village GOPALPUR on 26<sup>th</sup> June 2024, at Village MARDAPUR on 06<sup>th</sup> July 2024, at Village DULLADI on 23<sup>th</sup> July 2024, at Village SANAUUR on 03<sup>th</sup> August 2024. These four centers were opened in the presence of Secretary General Col JS Multani, S Sher Jagjit Singh, Sardarni Sarbjit Kaur and office staff Ms. Sukirti Taneja, Ms. Bhavana, Mrs Meenu, newly appointed teachers, students and their parents & sarpanch. With this we have added more than 150 underprivileged/poor students to impart Free Homework Tuition every day in project PEHEL i.e Punjab Education, Health, Employment Lehar.

***THE HYDERABAD AREA SIKLIGAR WELFARE SCHEME: -***

Our Kindergarten School opened in 2017 at Hyderabad “Happy Learning Play School” is now progressing rapidly. In the course of seven years, it has become financially self-supporting with 80 Sikligar students. Students are made computer friendly from class II<sup>nd</sup> onward. Computer Centre established at Hyderabad and Nanded Sahib for basic training have facilitated many Sikligar students of Industrial Area to get Computer Training. These computer centers are financed by Capt. Satinder Pal Singh Chadda from United Kingdom (UK).

The most encouraging outcome appeared from Hyderabad. Our Puran Gursikh Sikligar boy S. Baldev Singh S/o S. Haridev Singh after doing his B. Tech in Engineering qualified to do his master's at University of CINCINATI, USA in August 2024. Kudos for ISC, Secretary General under whose guidance from class 8<sup>th</sup> to date, have culminated into his success story. He was given an outstanding sendoff while he visited ISC Head Quarters on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2024 before leaving for USA. His success story is given below:

S. Baldev Singh, son of Haridev Singh Puran Gursikh Sikligar, hailing from Hyderabad, Telangana. Currently, was employed as a data analyst at KGN Management Services, with prior experience of 1.5 years at Mu Sigma, a renowned data science company in Bangalore.

He graduated with a Bachelor's degree in Engineering in 2022 from Gokaraju Rangaraju Institute of Engineering and Technology, Hyderabad, achieving a commendable CGPA of 9.12. Throughout his academic journey, he had consistently excelled, securing 9.8 CGPA in 10th grade and 97.7% in his Intermediate studies. He was fortunate to receive a 35k minority scholarship from the government and a 33k scholarship for two years from Nishkam Sikh Welfare Council. He attributes his success to the guidance of Col Jagtar Singh Multani, Secretary General of International Sikh Confederation and Inderjeet Singh of Raipur. His father, Haridev Singh, is a Self-Employed individual with an annual income of approximately 4L per annum, deeply dedicated to social welfare activities of Sikligar Community.

Driven by a strong passion for analytics, he had completed the IELTS with a score of 6.5 and GRE with 315/340 marks. He had applied to three universities for a Master's in Business Analytics and has been accepted by all. Considering his financial circumstances, he had chosen to pursue his Master's at the University of Cincinnati, USA, where the tuition fees amount to 32,070 dollars, exclusive of additional expenses. He had joined at Cincinnati in August 24 and have raised Bank loan for payment of his course fee.

He belongs to the Sikligar Sikh community, historically known for their craftsmanship in weapon-making and metal-related works. Despite their inherent talents, the community faces educational challenges due to limited knowledge and support. Education is pivotal in uplifting the Sikligar Sikh community and integrating them into the mainstream Sikh community.

In conclusion, he and International Sikh Confederation seek financial assistance from Sikh organizations to support his academic endeavors. Your generous support will not only help him in his educational pursuits but also contribute towards the empowerment and upliftment of the Sikligar Sikh community.

### **PROJECT PEHAL**

Punjab education health & employment Leher Project is to open Free Homework Tuition centers, to uplift the Standard of Education

in general providing tuition to underprivileged students of Rural area and also promote Punjabi, Sikhi, Sikh History & Gurbani Vichar. This idea was conceived by International Sikh Confederation in the year 2016 and Pilot project was launched in the villages ALAMPUR, THUAHA & NEPRA. By now, ISC is running such HWTC in 22 villages in various districts of Punjab. In November 2023, S Gulbarg Singh Bassi visited our Head Quarter and proposed to run this project together as Global Sikh Council is also imparting Homework Tutions in the villages. ISC agreed to join together and named the project as **'PEHEL'**. However, financial aspect was not merged and was to maintain separately. Now every Friday all teachers which are called Centre Manager join the weekly zoom meeting to update the progress and Instructions. However, every day update of each center is received through WhatsApp message and evaluated centrally by one of the Centre Manager in the WhatsApp group. On every Sunday, zoom meeting is organized to clear Gurbani Vichar/ Sikh History by experts to train the Centre Manager for correct meanings of Gurshabad.

### **VISITS**

On 4<sup>th</sup> September 2024, Col Jagtar Singh Multani, Sardarni Sarbjit Kaur, Mr. Apoorava Singh, Ms. Sukirti Taneja and Ms. Bhavna visited Baba Aya Singh School & College, Riarki in Tugalwala, Distt. Gurdaspur. The college is so amazing. The students from 6<sup>th</sup> class & above are only girls and upto 5<sup>th</sup> class are co-ed. They were sitting well disciplined and extended us warm welcome while they were celebrating Guru Granth Sahib "Gurgadi Diwas".

We also attended the "Antim Ardas" congregation of Dr. Paramjit Singh Kahlon at Gurudwara Baba Raja Ramjee Harchowal, the father of Mrs Kiran Preet Kaur Dhami our Executive Member.

The team then moved to village Begowal to meet the students and teacher Anita Rani during the tuition hours 04.30pm - 6.00pm. It was great time to see the enthusiasm of the rural students to prove their worth in future. Team shared the light refreshment with students & teacher.

During this quarter, the ISC has given financial assistance to deserving students as follows:-

Financial Assistance through International Sikh Confederation

Akwinder Kaur – Gyanam Institute Chandigarh Computer & SSA Training Rs 5,000/-

Inderpreet Kaur – Govt College, Phase 6, Mohali Admission Fee for BCA Rs. 21,700/-

Homework Tuition Centre (HWTC), Salary to Teacher for the month of June, July and August 2024 Rs 59,500/-

**Grand Total**

**86,200/-**

Financial Assistance through Jugraj Singh Gill Charitable Trust

Gian Pargas Trust, Ludhiana, For education of students Rs 21,000/-

Sachin student of Guru Gobind Singh College, Sector 26, Chandigarh For Admission Fee Rs 12,500/-

Rekha Yadav Medical Assistance for Cancer Treatment of Sunny Rs 20,000/-

**Grand Total**

**53,500/-**

## MARJIWARA JASWANT SINGH KHALRA (PUNJABI)

A REVIEW BY PRINCIPAL PRABHJOT KAUR\*

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*Author: Gurmeet Kaur*

*Paintings: Amandeep Singh*

*Price: Rs 525; Edition 2023.*

Gurmeet Kaur, a strong proponent of mother tongue Punjabi, is known for writing bilingual fascinating folk tales of Punjab as board books for children. With the book under review, she has ventured into an entirely different genre in writing in chaste Punjabi, the biography of martyr Jaswant Singh Khalra, a well-known human rights activist especially known for sacrificing his life while identifying the unknown and untraced dead in Punjab, who had lost their lives during the troubled days when killing the innocent by the authorities had become the order of the day.

The book printed on art paper illustrated with beautiful artwork by Amandeep Singh as well as relevant photographs and news items from the newspapers makes the book a sort of history of the time. All this makes the book a beautiful presentation of the dedicated life of Jaswant Singh. The book opens with an African proverb, saying that unless the lion learns to write his own history, his history will always be written from the perspective of the hunter. Hence this book by Gurmeet Kaur. The next page carries a very appropriate quotation from Gurbani which portrays the suffering in the life of Jaswant Singh Khalra. All this makes him a lamp which lit the way to justice, with so many people carrying on the work started by him even after his physical death. The line from Gurbani has been translated by the author herself

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like this: The One Naam is my lamp, my suffering its oil, the oil burnt into light dispelling the darkness of death.

The book has 31 chapters apart from the foreword and afterword both of which carry folktales symbolizing the struggle of a warrior.

The foreword entitled 'jot jagi' (ਜੋਤ ਜਗੀ) talks of a popular story recounting how a small lamp challenged the mighty sun saying that it will give the world whatever little light it had once the sun sets. The book ends with again a folk tale talking of a sparrow busy in extinguishing the fire with a drop of water from its beak. Unsuccessful in fighting the fire it may prove to be, but it must continue with this effort, so that so that it may be counted among the people who made a positive contribution. Goes without saying that both the stories are symbolic of the life of Jaswant Singh Khalra.

Born on 2<sup>nd</sup> November, 1952, in the village Khalra, (then District Amritsar, now in Taran Tarn) located on this side of the border of India and Pakistan, Jaswant Singh had to face the brunt of partition and Indo-Pak wars. Right from his childhood Jaswant, lovingly called 'Jas' by his family members was fond of listening to the stories of great men and women belonging to his area, of whom his grandfather Harnam Singh, who fought for the freedom of his country along with Ghadri Babas, was one. One of his ancestors Sur Singh fought against Mughals in the army of Banda Singh Bahadur and had died in 1726 while fighting the forces of Zakaria Khan in the village 'Van'. Both his maternal and paternal grandfathers met in Shangai and decided on the matrimonial alliance of their children. Thus, from both maternal and paternal sides, Jaswant belonged to the families of freedom fighters and the spark kept alive in him so as to enable him to fight for justice whether it was for the rights of the poor in his own village, or as a member of Naujwan Bharat Sabha, while in college.

Mai Bhago of Jhabal who fought on the side of Guru Gobind Singh ji in the battle of Mukatsar, and Bhai Taru Singh of Poohla who was scalped alive were from his neighbouring villages and were his other role models with whom he felt aligned and always thought he would do something valiant like them.



As A child Jaswant had experienced war from close quarters in 1965 and 1971 and had felt the pain of the common innocent people during the wars. Punjab was reorganized on the basis of language in 1966, and he had seen the Punjabis struggle to get their rightful due. All these events left a deep mark on the psyche of young Jaswant Singh and he deeply felt the pain and suffering of common man in the process of getting justice and wanted to ameliorate the pain thus caused to the common man. So he decided to join the socialist movement which was wedded to the idea of getting justice for the down trodden. He organized a ten thousand strong protest in Moga to get a case registered against a murder accused though he had to face arrest for doing so..

His parents like all parents tried to dissuade him from this difficult path but to no avail. However, acting on his father's advice to earn his livelihood himself, he got a job as Panchayat Secretary, where he became the general secretary of the workers' organization and fought against corrupt practices. He also thought of joining some political party to be able to fight the corruption prevailing in the society, but none of the political parties could prove equal to the standards of honesty set by him free of corruption. So, he continued with his job as Panchayat secretary while his wife Paramjit Kaur Khalra to whom he got married in 1981 was a librarian in Guru Nanak Dev University. She was equally wedded to the ideas dear to Jaswant. And they made an ideal couple.

The book is a sort of history starting from the partition through Punjab's struggle for Punjabi Suba, two wars with Pakistan, further division of Punjab into four parts namely; Punjab, Haryana, Himachal Pardesh and Union Territory Chandigarh, water dispute after reorganization of Punjab, struggle for federal structure as enunciated in the Anandpur Resolution, Operation Bluestar, violence against Sikhs in the aftermath of the assassination of Prime minister Indira Gandhi, Operation Blackthunder I and II, Rajiv Gandhi-Longowal pact and its non-implementation and the effect of these events on the tender and youthful mind of Jaswant Singh Khalra.

What brought Jaswant Singh Khalra into action was increasing number of human rights violation cases, in the aftermath of non-implementation of the Rajiv-Longowal pact, and subsequent frustration of the youth some of whom were misguided. He wanted justice for all without any exception. All this resulted in unreasonably strong action on the part of the authorities. The young men were killed in fake encounters after picking them up from their homes. Sometimes even the dead bodies were not handed over to the families. All this was too painful to Jaswant. He formed a Front Against Oppression and with the help of some like-minded young men set himself to the task of identifying the disappeared men whose whereabouts were not known to the family. He resigned from the job of Panchayat Secretary in order to devote his whole time to the job he had set before himself. As he moved ahead with his mission he started getting threats for his life.

Once under the pressure from his family and friends he left for England to get asylum there. There too he did not forget the mission of his life and staged protests in front of Indian Embassy. But his inner voice did not let him rest peacefully and he came back unannounced to follow the dictates of his conscience. He could not lead a life of ease in England when his brethren at home were facing extreme kind of terror and injustice. He had come back with a more determined mind to do something for the society that he belonged to. After all he had the examples of his forefathers before him who had sacrificed their lives for a just cause. He became a member of the human rights wing of Akali Dal and joined them in locating the disappeared young men and women of Punjab. For two years he went in search of the disappeared. During this time only some of his close associates too suffered the same fate which disturbed him all the more.

When he came to know that the dead bodies were being cremated after declaring them to be unclaimed, he started going to the cremation grounds so that he could find out the number of the unclaimed bodies that were cremated there. With his efforts, Jaswant could locate the names and addresses of dead who had been cremated in different cremation grounds. His requests to the families to register complaints

of disappearances could bring fruit only in a few cases. Most of the people refused to do so out of fear of the police.

Jaswant fully understood what was in store for him in doing so but still being afraid was not in his nature and he held a press conference in Chandigarh exposing the misdeeds of the Government. In reply to this press conference KPS Gill held a press conference in Amritsar, wherein he stated that all the disappeared persons had left for foreign countries and that there were no human rights violations in Punjab. Khalra again held a press conference in Amritsar challenging KPS Gill to come out with the truth and that he had documents to prove his point of view. Sadly, shortly after that Jaswant was picked up from his home while washing his car and was ultimately eliminated in police custody after extreme kind of torture being meted out to him.

The chapters of the book are appropriately titled. Khalra's disappearance has been appropriately called 25001<sup>st</sup> disappearance, as he was responsible for identifying 25000 disappeared. Shortly before his own disappearance when his father was apprehensive of Jaswant's ultimate fate, he told his father of his resolve of getting martyred instead of dying by illness or by accident. His father who was earlier worried about him felt proud of his son. After all the blood of martyrs was running in his veins.

The chapter talking of his death has been entitled 'Diva bujhaia jana'- extinguishing the lamp. The chapter ends with a quote from Gurbani which has been translated by the author like this: 'Death would not be called bad, O People, if one knew how to truly die' Jaswant knew how to die.

The chapter talking of his wife Paramjit Kaur Khalra taking up her husband's work has been entitled 'Mashalchi', the torch bearer. She not only fought hard to get justice for her husband, she also formed Khalra Mission Organization to get monetary help for the families of about 2000 disappeared, though thousands are still waiting for justice. An organization by the name 'Ensaaf' from America is still engaged in collecting information about the people who were illegally killed in Punjab. Ram Narayan Kumar, an Andhraite and a fellow of Reuters

Foundation in Oxford University, a human rights Activist, spent a major part of his life in Punjab to study human rights violation. He contributed in the report under the heading 'Reduced to Essays'. This work led to the registration of six hundred cases of human rights violations in Punjab. Apart from that, getting inspiration from the example of Jaswant Singh Khalra, a couple from England Satnam Singh Bains and his wife are doing the job of locating the disappearances in Punjab under the Documentation Advocacy Project. The lamp truly lighted many more lamps.

The book ends with a quote from Khalra's speech saying that "Khalsa was created to protect the human rights of the whole world. If you are unable to protect even your own rights, you won't be able to tell the world what Khalsa is." Khalra truly told the world what Khalsa is.

## TAKHT SRI HARIMANDIR JI PATNA SAHIB ATE BANGLADESH DE GURDHAM

A REVIEW BY DR JASWINDER KAUR\*

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*Author: Dr. Paramvir Singh*

*Publisher: Gracious Books, Patiala*

*Price: Rs 450/-; Edition: 2020; Pages: 279*

“Takht Sri Harimandir Ji Patna Sahib Ate Bangladesh de Gurdham” is a valid contribution to the Sikh studies. This book has been divided into three parts. First part covers Takht Sri Harmandar Ji Patna Sahib (Page no. 1 to 125) , Part two covers Bangladesh de Gurudham (Page no. 126 to 183) and the part three gives the glimpses of Hukamname, Gurmata ate sanman (Page no. 184 to 262).

In 1469, a divine light manifested in human form at Talwandi Rai Bhoi, beamed far and wide, illumining universe and manifested again in 1666 at Patna when the last living Sikh Guru Gobind Singh was born to Mata Gujri. Blessed are those who can have a glimpse of that place which is now known as Takht Sri Harmandar Ji Patna Sahib various aspects of which have been recorded in the book written in Punjabi under review.

The book is by Dr. Paramvir Singh of Department of Sikh Encyclopedia, Punjabi University, Patiala. He is a scholar of Sikh history and Sikh traditions. This work is the outcome of his visit to these shrines and personal observations, research, and interaction with various persons well-versed in history, tradition and management of Takht Patna Sahib and other Sikh Gurdwaras in Bangladesh.

Before providing the reader with the glimpses of Takht Sahib, he has reminded the reader about Patna being the latest version of ancient city of Patliputra and setting up of Dharamsal/Mats/Deras by

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UdasiMahants in different parts of Bihar during Guru period.

The Takht building at Patna is now an imposing five storey structure (Photograph on cover of the book). In order to enlighten the readers about history of the sacred shrine, the author proceeds step by step since the setting up of a Dharamsal by Salis Rai Johri in his Haveli during the visit of Guru Nanak, its subsequent damage in a fire, building of a new Haveli on the same site by Raja Fateh Chand Maini in deference to Hukamnama of Guru TeghBahadur for a suitable accommodation of the Guru's family, birth of Guru Gobind Singh in this building and a new construction on that very site by Maharaja Ranjit Singh in 1896 BK (1833 AD), its devastation in 1934 earthquake, its renovation with donations from prominent individuals, institutions, then ultimately laying down of the foundation stone of present building on 10.11.1954 and completion of Karseva in 1957. The whole narrative is quite informative for the readers.

Those who have not visited the Takht, will get to know about the daily religious routine (*Mardaya*) at this shrine which is at variance with the codified standard Sikh practice performed at Harmandir Sahib, and all the Sikh Gurdwaras in Punjab, Haryana, Delhi and some other States.

Photographs of the relics preserved at the Takht at Patna Sahib such as wooden footwear of Guru Tegh Bahadur, ivory footwear, cradle, chola, weapons of Guru Gobind Singh, and well of Mata Gujri are glimpsed by the visitors with reverence. The relics are displayed as a part of daily Maryada.

Human mind wants to be aware of the management of an institution which it holds in high esteem. The author has provided sufficient information to the reader about it. The Patna Sahib Takht is governed as per the Religions Endowment Act (Act No. 26) 1863 under which the district Judge is competent to appoint Mahant/*Sarbarah* of the religious endowment. The author has provided a list of Mahants who have been appointed from time to time upto the last Mahant appointed in 1930 who died in 1954. Thereafter a Managing Committee came into operation in 1955 and Head Granthi/Jathedar was appointed by the Committee. The reader of the book will want to know about the current management and may skip the portion of earlier Mahants, although it is a source for research and information for historians. The

present management is under the 15 member Management Committee, the composition of which was finalized by the District Judge after prolonged deliberations after arriving at consensus among Sikh individuals and Sikh associations of Patna and other parts of Bihar. In exercise of powers, vested under the above mentioned Act and regulation “The Constitution and Bylaws of Sri Akal Takht Harmandar Ji Patna Sahib” govern the functioning of the Committee which is truly a representative body of Pan-India Sikhs. The Committee looks after the Takht and other historical Gurdwaras in and around Patna Sahib and other parts of Bihar, are fairly described in the book for the benefit of readers.

Observance of 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur, and 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the birth of Guru Gobind Singh have been given extensive coverage in the book along with the author’s personal observations and his interview with Giani Iqbal Singh Jathedar of the Patna Sahib Shrine. The author has words of praise for Chief Minister of Bihar, Nitish Kumar for his patronage of Sikh centenary celebrations and greater appreciation of the then Shrines’ Jathedar, Giani Iqbal Singh. However, all this information is already in the public domain.

Turning to Gurdwaras in Bangladesh, we are referred to a 1932 report showing 15 Gurdwaras with monetary value of property of each shrine. Currently, a list of 10 Gurdwaras has been given by the author out of which only five are functioning and visitors from India are taken around for paying obeisance to these Gurdwaras. Photographs of Gurdwara Nanak Shahi Raman Dhaka, Gurdwara Sangat Tola Dhaka, Gurdwara Sikh Temple Estate Chittangong, Wooden footwear of Guru Tegh Bahadur preserved in Gurdwara Nanak Shahi Raman give it an archival touch. The detailed history and other particulars of these shrines are of historical importance and call for a thorough research. The author, being a researcher and an academician at the University level, is expected to provide more than descriptive information of these shrines. A comprehensive information about the circumstances and timing of the establishment of these shrines and their history should have been provided. It would have made his work more significant than a tourist guide. The presence of these Sikh Shrines in Bihar, other eastern states like Bengal and Assam and Bangladesh bear a testimony to the existence of a vast network Sikh missions/

sangats / Manjis in these states during the Sikh Guru period. The clusters of Sikh populations around these shrines and in big cities of East India also point to the massive propagation of Sikhism by the Sikh Gurus from Guru Nanak to Guru Tegh Bahadur. Similarly, the various Hukamnamas cited by the author also point out to the close rapport between the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh sangats. That the Sikh Guru's missionary work was also financed by their devout followers and urban Sikh sangats also become evident from the contents of the Hukamnamas. Each of these Sikh shrines has a history of its own. It is because of the historical importance of these shrines that they draw visitors from across the globe. The book is silent on this crucial aspect of these shrines. To cite a single instance, Gurdwara Dhubri Sahib in the Assam, Bengal border stands as a memorial to the historical compromise struck between Ohom kings of Assam and forces of Raja Ram Singh, an agent of Mughal Empire with the intervention of Guru TeghBahadur. Similarly, Gurdwara at Rajgir near Patna in Bihar has a rich history of association with Sikh Gurus.

Apart from the detailed information about the Sikh shrines in Bihar and Bangladesh, a Chapter under the title "Hukamnama Gurmatta and Honour" and main features of Hukamnamas under Sikh tradition have been dealt with. Research works of different scholars have been referred to pertaining to Hukamnamas concerning Takht Patna Sahib. The Hukamnamas of Mata Sundri and Mata Sahib Devan surely provide a reliable information about the Sikh history of that period. Hukamnamas by Mahant in 1815, 1862 show the prevalence of practices of those times. Honour Letters issued between 11.08.2007 to 29.11.2018 by GianiIqbal Singh have been reproduced unnecessarily.

Dr. Paramvir Singh has done a good service by providing detailed information about Takht Sri Harmandar Ji Patna Sahib and other Gurdwaras in Bihar and Bangladesh since the time of Guru Nanak's visit till date. The book, being in simple readable Punjabi and dealing with revered historical Sikh Shrines, can reach all Punjabi knowing homes in India and abroad and is likely to find fairly good circulation.



## NEWS & VIEWS

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### **AIR MARSHAL AMAR PREET SINGH APPOINTED AS NEXT CHIEF OF AIR FORCE**

NEW DELHI: Air Marshal Amar Preet Singh will take over as the next chief of the IAF from Air Chief Marshal V R Chaudhari, who retires on Sept 30, the govt announced on Saturday.

The government has gone by the seniority principle in appointing Air Marshal Singh, a fighter pilot who was commissioned in Dec 1984, as the next IAF chief. Air Marshal Singh held important command and staff appointments before he was appointed the vice-chief in Feb last year.

Before that he was the air officer commanding-in-chief of the Central Air Command at Prayagraj.

He is a qualified flying instructor and an experimental test pilot, with over 5,000 hours of flying on a variety of aircraft and helicopters. During his career, he has commanded an operational fighter squadron and a frontline air base. As a test pilot, he led the MiG-29 fighter upgrade project management team at Moscow and was also project director (flight test) of the indigenous Tejas light combat aircraft.

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DAILY SPOKESMAN FOUNDER JOGINDER SINGH PASSES AWAY

Chandigarh, August 4, 2024 - Joginder Singh, founder of Daily Spokesman, has passed away. He breathed his last today at the age of

83 after a brief illness..

Ludhiana MP Amrinder Singh Raja Warring, Minister of State Ravneet Singh Bittu, and Vidhan Sabha Speaker Kultar Singh Sandhwan among the other prominent leaders were also present during the cremation ceremony in Chandigarh.

Earlier, Punjab Chief Minister Bhagwant Mann had taken to X and expressed condolences to the departed soul. “I received the sad news of Joginder Singh Ji’s passing away... My heartfelt condolences to the family in this hour of sorrow... I pray to God... May Guru Sahib bless his departed soul and give strength to the family,” said Punjab CM Bhagwant Mann in a tweet (in Punjabi).

Likewise, Former Chief Minister of Punjab, Capt Amarinder Singh said, “Sad to hear about the passing of S. Joginder Singh Ji, founder of Rozana Spokesman. Heartfelt condolences to his wife Jagjit Kaur, daughter Nimrat & the entire family. May Waheguru Ji’s blessings bring you strength & comfort during this difficult time. I pray for eternal peace to the departed soul.”

Born on February 20, 1941, Joginder Singh was a lawyer by profession but he gave up a promising career to found and establish an independent media outlet that stood for and raised the voice of the people in Punjab. His fierce writing style targeted the state machinery, bringing light to entrenched misgovernance, corruption, and personalized bureaucracies. (*from Internet*)

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