

ABSTRACTS OF SIKH STUDIES

(Vol VII, Issue 3)

July-September 2005 / 537 NS

EDITORIAL

THE ILL-FATED DOSSIER ... 1

ARTICLES

- LATEST TRACKING ON W H McLEOD ... Baldev Singh 6
– DISCREDITING THE EVIDENCE THAT
GURU NANAK VISITED BAGHDAD ... 21
– QUESTIONING THE AUTHENTICITY OF
KARTARPURI BIR (ADI GRANTH) ... 24
– CASTE IN THE SIKH PANTH ... 27
– ATTEMPTS TO MALIGN THE INSTITUTE
OF SIKH STUDIES ... 37
POST-PARTITION SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION
OF THE SIKH PEOPLE ... Gurdip Singh 77
HARDHAN SANCHIAYE BHAI ... Bhagwant Singh 87
SEVA & SIKH RELIGION ... Ramesh Seth 94
TERRORISM, A CREATION OF THE RULERS ... Raghbir Singh 99
ROLE OF SIKH RELIGION IN SOCIETY ... Rimplejeet Kaur 103
OBITUARIES : ... Jaswant Singh
– SANT SINGH MASKEEN ... 105
– JUSTICE RANJIT SINGH NARULA ... 106
– GENERAL JAGJIT SINGH AURORA - FINAL SALUTE ... 107
SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION
– CHEEMA SHOWS THE WAY ... Gurbakhsh Singh 109
LORD AURORA OF BANGLADESH ... Manohar Singh 112

REVIEWS

- NASHIAN DI DALDAL (DR RAJINDER SINGH) ... Gurbakhsh Singh 115
MANVTA DA PRANAM ... Gurdev Singh 117
– SARBANSDANI DE NAAM (S KULBIR SINGH SIDHU)

NEWS & VIEWS

... 120

ABSTRACTS OF SIKH STUDIES
July - September 2005 / 537 NS
(Vol VII, Issue 3)

RNI Regd No : 69639 / 98

Editor

Dr Kharak Singh

Associate Editor

Maj Gen (Dr) Jaswant Singh, AVSM (retd)

Editorial Advisory Board

Dr Kirpal Singh	Brig Hardit Singh
Dr Gurcharan Singh	Prof Prabhjot Kaur
S Gurpreet Singh	Col Amrik Singh

Views expressed in the articles published herein do not
necessarily reflect the opinion or policy of the
Institute of Sikh Studies

Rs. 25/-

Subscription Rates

(Indian Rupees)

	<i>India</i>	<i>Abroad</i>
Annual	100.00	500.00
05 years	450.00	2,250.00
10 years	900.00	4,500.00
Life	1,350.00	6,250.00

Bulk supplies (a parcel of 28 copies) to overseas destinations can be made
by surface mail @ Rs. 700/- plus postage charges (approx. Rs. 300/-)

Published by

Institute of Sikh Studies
Gurdwara Singh Sabha, Kanthala, Indl Area Phase II
Chandigarh -160 002 (India).

Printed at

Sidharth Media Printers, 24/9, Industrial Area Phase II, Chandigarh

EDITORIAL

THE ILL-FATED DOSSIER

As we all know the SGPC submitted through the Govt of India, a dossier, prepared at a cost of Rs 40 lakhs, to the UNESCO, Paris, seeking inclusion of the Golden Temple, Amritsar (Sri Darbar Sahib), in the list of World Heritage Sites. It was hoped that this would lead to added awareness of the sacred shrine and promote the lofty ideals of Sikhism and the message of universal brotherhood and love preached by the Gurus.

The move was widely welcomed, since sites on the list enjoy some advantages not available otherwise. Some of these were listed by Dr Gurmit Singh, an authority on Constitution and International Law, in an article published in the *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, January-March 2005. He says :

Apparently, one great benefit will be to preserve and conserve this site in perpetuity. Protecting the endangered World Heritage Site is the responsibility of the International Community, and if there is a threat to its existence, as at the time of Operation Blue Star, the World Heritage Committee, which works under UNESCO, a wing of the UNO, can be alerted – by individuals, non-government organizations (NGOs) or other groups – about possible dangers to the property. If the threat is justified, and the problem is serious enough, the property will be placed on the List of World Heritage Sites in Danger. This list is designed to call the World's attention to natural or human-made conditions which threaten the characteristics for which the property was originally inscribed on the World Heritage List. Endangered properties on this list are entitled to particular attention of the international community, and in case of emergency or in urgent cases such as

outbreak of war, the committee will make the listing itself without receiving intimation or request from anyone else. In such a situation like war, the UNO can send international armed forces under its command to save the site.

Apart from the fact that inclusion in the list assures the availability of technical assistance from the world body at the highest level in the maintenance of beauty of the structure and the unique artistic work, besides limited financial assistance, he listed a number of incidental advantages. For example :

- a) Sikh youth will get another opening for professional training and employment in international sphere.
- b) SGPC will get opportunity to participate in deliberations at international level. Article 10 clause 2 of the convent reads :
“The Committee may at any time invite public or private organizations or individuals to participate in its meetings for consultation on particular problems.”
- c) The grant of World Heritage Status will promote tourism in the State of Punjab and a large number of foreign tourists will start visiting Amritsar. This will boost the economy of the State. The information campaign by the UNESCO about Golden Temple and Sikh traditions and Sikh people will help remove the bias against the Sikhs which was witnessed in U.S.A. after the Nine-Eleven occurrence. The international Community will get better informed about Sikhs and their separate identity.
- d) It will help creation of a safety zone in the border areas of Punjab, so that heavy industry can be established in this zone. Till date, Punjab has been denied heavy industry in Public Sector by Government of India on the ground that Punjab is a border State, not safe for heavy industrial investment.
- e) Protection of the cultural and Natural Heritage being the duty of the international community as well, under Article 4 of the convent, the United Nations Organization can take joint armed action to safeguard the site and preserve it for eternity for the future generations by acting under Article 11(4) of convent. A move can be started at a later stage, to make Punjab a nuclear free zone.
- f) It will help in preparing a well-documented history of the Golden

Temple under Article 11(2) of the convent which will be published by the UNESCO.

Accordingly, a dossier prepared for the purpose was submitted for approval of the UNESCO. The forwarding letter signed by the President (Prof Kirpal Singh Badungar) eloquently stresses the importance, greatness and the grandeur of the Golden Temple, and welcomes the move for nomination as a world heritage site. The concluding part of the letter is reproduced below :

“Sri Harimandir Sahib is a unique example of Sikhs architecture also which fascinates the tourists and devotees from all corners of the world. The craftsmanship on the marble, wood or the gold is incommunicable in words.

“It is a very welcome decision of the Govt of India to nominate Sri Harimandir Sahib to UNESCO for declaring it as World Heritage Site. I owe many thanks to the Govt of Punjab, district administration and above all the people of INTACH who worked round the clock to accomplish this grand task with a special mention to Bibi Kiranjot Kaur, former General Secretary of SGPC. I hope the authorities at UNESCO would find the site at the top of priority for the declaration. With the declaration of this shrine as World Heritage Site we are committed to preserve the integrity of Sri Harimandir Sahib and further improve facilities, upgrade infrastructure and take necessary steps to ensure the site can meet the challenges of the future.”

Respecting sentiments of the Sikh Community, the Government of India as well as the Punjab Government, formally nominated the site and forwarded the dossier to the UNESCO. By doing so, the Government, implicitly accepted full responsibility for security and pollution-free environment of the Golden Temple, which SGPC alone cannot ensure.

Sri Darbar Sahib is a great heritage of the Sikhs. Its greatness lies in the fact that it was blessed with the sacred touch of the feet of the Gurus and a large part of the glorious Sikh history was made here. Its eminence is not affected by inclusion in any UN list, or otherwise. However, if the non-Sikh communities of the world wants to recognise it and share our pride in this great heritage, there can be no objection to it. We do not lose anything. Therefore, by and large, the move was

hailed in Sikh circles.

Surprisingly, however, before any decision could be taken in the UNESCO, the Executive Committee of the SGPC decided to withdraw the application. Apparently, the SGPC (or its new management) reversed the decision under pressure from some quarters who opposed the move largely on the following grounds :

1. Apprehension was expressed that if the nomination materialised, the control of the Golden Temple Complex will pass on to UN / GOI. This apprehension is imaginary and without basis. For, the UNESCO already has more than 700 sites on the list which include shrines of Christians, Muslims, Jews as well as Hindus in dozens. All these continue to be controlled by their respective managements without any interference from the UN or local government. Rather, the UN guarantees the continued control of the existing authority, and commits itself to safeguard its security and environment. Had this recognition been obtained earlier, the government would not have dared to invade the Golden Temple, in 1984.
2. The second reason which prompted the withdrawal, is reported to be that in the dossier Sikh religion has not been shown in correct light as an independent religion, and that some Sikh doctrines have been twisted with ulterior motives. This charge, if true, is very serious indeed. But the remedy in that case is amendment or replacement of objectionable parts. Withdrawal of the proposal appears to be a bit too drastic a measure. It is like throwing the baby along with the dirty bath tub water.

Another aspect of the present situation also demands attention. A premier institution of the Sikhs, which claims to be Parliament of Sikhs, unanimously seeks, one day, nomination of the Golden Temple to the UN list of World Heritage Sites, and soon thereafter, begins to condemn the decision, and unceremoniously reverses it. Does this kind of behaviour not expose us to ridicule ? Why was the nomination sought in the first instance ? Why was any objectionable matter included in the dossier ? Why was it not adequately scrutinized? Why could the dossier not be amended rather than withdrawn? Why later were the objections not properly examined, before withdrawing the case ? Who is responsible for the mess and the financial outlay involved ? The

questions demand answer. For, any thoughtless and irresponsible conduct affects the dignity and credibility of the Panth.

The two decisions are mutually contradictory, but one thing is common. Neither seems to have received enough serious thought. It is also clear that the dossier was not examined by any responsible and knowledgeable person. Unfortunately, the Panth was not taken into confidence. The decisions reflect conflicting leanings of individuals.

There is a strong case for reconsideration of the proposal at the highest level in the Panth. Although the opponents/critics of the have managed to get the decision reversed, the merit of the proposal cannot be ignored. All world religions have several sites each on the World Heritage List. Sikh religion is conspicuous by its absence – Do we want to boycott it for all time to come ? We suggest a conclave of eminent Sikh scholars representing all major Sikh organisations be convened immediately to consider this issue.

We are in the midst of a rising number of controversies which are tearing the Panth apart. We need to create a standing organisation with global representation, assisted by advisory committees manned by technical men of the highest calibre, to settle such issues and to provide direction on religious, educational and economic matters for the community as a whole. The IOSS, in consultation with a number of other Sikh organisations, has mooted a concrete proposal to set up International Sikh Confederation for the purpose. The response is very encouraging. Let us make this a reality to implement the doctrine of Guru Granth – Guru Panth bequeathed to us by Guru Gobind Singh.

□

*If one thinks before-hand
And takes heed of the future,
One may avoid trouble.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 417

ਅਗੋਂ ਦੇ ਜੇ ਚੇਤੀਐ, ਤਾਂ ਕਾਇਤੁ ਮਿਲੈ ਸਜਾਇ ?

LATEST TRACKING ON W H MCLEOD
“DISCOVERING THE SIKHS: AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF A
HISTORIAN”

BALDEV SINGH*

Go to any major library and you will find shelved Dr McLeod’s books on Sikhs and Sikhism. In all likelihood the new readers on Sikh religion are influenced by these writings. To many educated Sikhs, he is an enigma, and they are baffled all the more when he is portrayed to the world as an authority on the Sikh religion.

To date, McLeod has published extensively on Sikhism and his major works are referenced unhesitatingly.¹ He has influenced a handful of Sikh scholars with his views. Nevertheless, a significant number of Sikh scholars have cast serious doubts on McLeod’s scholarship, particularly on the questions he has raised and the radical conclusions he has drawn, which alter the established Sikh traditions.²

Last year, McLeod published his latest masterpiece titled, “*Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian.*”³

This book has opened the door for me to take another close look at him; his history; how he came to be regarded as “Sikh scholar,” and above all to critically examine his credentials.

We know that research in any field is the determination of facts. Obtaining facts and their further analysis to drive home the truth through careful investigation is no easy skill to acquire. The integrity of a scholar is fundamental to objective research. Research done with a bias or motive leads to erroneous and unsustainable results. In other words, a research scholar is the disseminator of truth, and not a propagandist. The words of Guru Nanak are timely:

* 316 R Glad Way, Collegeville, PA 19426, USA, e-mail <BALDEV6@aol.com>

*O Priest (pandey)! Do not tell lies, speak the truth; cure your self-conceit by imbibing the Word.*⁴

*One loses credibility by one's own actions and no one trusts him/her again.*⁵
*Nanak, ultimately falsehood is defeated and truth triumphs.*⁶

To understand the nature of this ongoing controversy, let me take you to a recent Internet discussion on McLeod's "*Sikhs of Khalsa*" on "Sikh Diaspora Discussion Group". When someone upset Prof. Cole by quoting the works of Trilochan Singh and Gurdev Singh, he remarked on June 9, 2003 "I wouldn't recommend the books by Trilochan Singh or Gurdev Singh. They are vitriolic rather than academic. But the main point I wish to make is read McLeod for yourself. Don't accept the judgement of others – such is the proper approach." And earlier on June 8 Prof. Barrier cautioned them to wait until "Hew McLeod deals very specifically with these and other allegations in his autobiography, *Discovering the Sikhs*. South Asia Books will have the non-India distribution to the book – an orderly review of facts, misinformation, specific networks of Sikhs who published conference proceedings and individual papers, primarily in the 1980s and early 1990s. I will circulate information on the volume when it appears in September. Those who want to follow the charges, and more than adequate rebuttals by McLeod, probably should wait until a definitive and systematic work is out and then compare the various items referred on the Sikh Diaspora Yahoo Forum that allegedly undermine his research and question his motives." Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal, editor-in-chief of *Understanding Sikhism Research Journal* disseminated this same advice to the wider Sikh audience.^{7, 8}

Now that I have read the book, may I say that those who have taken Prof. Cole and Prof. Barrier's advice seriously would be greatly disappointed because *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, like all of McLeod's earlier works, is no exception! This book is misleading as well as confusing. It consists of two parts: Part 1 is biographical and, part 2 is on Sikhism: explanation of his methodology of historical research, discussion of controversial issues, responses to critics, regrets, and accomplishments. Recently, Ishwinder Singh pointed out poignantly that McLeod has retracted or modified most of his earlier controversial views, though reluctantly, and is still holding on to others without providing new evidence or sound reasoning.⁹

As I read the book, I couldn't help but notice that the most interesting feature is his disclosure of how he got his Ph.D. degree and got himself declared as "being among the foremost scholars of Sikh studies in the world". This information seems to be crucial in understanding the genesis of his perspectives on Sikhism. Before proceeding further, let me mention some insight as to what transpires inside the academic world where I was awarded a Ph.D. in medicinal chemistry. My research supervisor had a research program in the area of my thesis topic before I joined his group, and he was teaching a graduate course in that field. One of my thesis examiners was a leading authority in medicinal chemistry, and he was responsible for evaluating the biological aspects of my work. The other individual was from the chemistry department, an organic chemist who appraised the chemistry aspects of my thesis. I defended my thesis before the thesis committee and the entire department – both faculty and graduate students. The thesis was transferred to the public domain as soon as the university accepted it.

Given that background, let's take a closer appraisal of McLeod's Ph.D. thesis: *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* at the University of London. Prof. A.L. Basham, his supervisor, knew hardly anything about Guru Nanak and very little about the Punjabi language. Apparently, and as expected, he made only three minor changes to the thesis; one of which was his insistence on the use of the plural form "appendices" instead of "appendixes."¹⁰ McLeod couldn't have expressed the situation better:

Once a month I was required to appear before him and report progress and difficulties. I would outline the difficulties and at each of them he would nod his head wisely and make some such comment as "Yes, that is a problem", or "That is a difficulty we all have." After the interview was over I would ask myself what have I gained from it and the answer would be that I had derived nothing. Professor Basham was, however, an experienced supervisor and even if I received no direct guidance concerning my thesis topic I did at least get the understanding noises which at that time I needed.¹⁰

Amazingly, McLeod had very little interaction with the two examiners who did not even read the complete thesis before approving

it.¹¹ Again in the words of McLeod:

When I presented myself for the viva on July 13th Dr Allchin, one of the examiners whom I had not previously met, opened the questioning by frowning very severely at me. “Mr. McLeod,” he said, “We have a serious criticism to make of this thesis.” This, needless to say, is just what the nervous candidate does not want to hear. Dr Allchin paused and then went on: “You did not allow us sufficient time to read it.” It was a joke and he and the other examiner Professor Parrinder, together with Professor Basham, joined in the jolly laughter. It soon became clear, however, that neither examiner had in fact managed to read the complete thesis, and after a single question from each I was dismissed. Fortunately, they both agreed to sustain the thesis.¹¹

It should be no greater surprise to us that Prof. Parrinder knew nothing of Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion except what he learned from McLeod’s thesis.¹² In other words, McLeod himself was the supervisor as well as the examiner of his thesis. Then who determined the veracity of the contents of the thesis? And who ascertained its adequacy for the award of a Ph.D. degree? After all, the thesis was not about English literature; it was about Guru Nanak’s authentic teachings enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib (GGS) as pointed out by McLeod himself:

The *Adi Granth* contains a substantial number of works by Guru Nanak. These can all be accepted as authentic. It is clear that Guru Arjan compiled the *Adi Granth* with considerable care and the principal source, which he used, was a collection, which had been recorded at the instance of the third Guru, Amar Das, who was only ten years younger than Guru Nanak.¹³

One may ask McLeod why he didn’t choose a thesis supervisor or examiners with expertise in Sikhism. One may even question the University of London for falling short on the standards. Was Fauja Singh, “an honest and honorable historian of Punjab”¹⁴ or Ganda Singh, “certainly an eminent Sikh historian”¹⁵ or any other Indian scholar not good enough to be his thesis examiner? Besides, why were the contents of the thesis kept out of view until November 1968^{16,17} while the University of London conferred the degree after accepting the thesis in July 1965?¹⁸ Why were even his friends, Ganda Singh and Harbans

Singh, who had offered assistance in his work, kept in the dark until 1968 when “*Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*” was released – upon which McLeod was hailed as being “widely known as being among the foremost scholars of Sikh studies in the world?”¹⁷

Generally, scholars spend many years and sometimes their entire research career before being recognized as “being among the foremost scholars in their field” by their peers. But here McLeod was awarded this distinction by R.C. Zaehner (1913-74), Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford,^{17, 19} who reviewed *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1968.²⁰ In other words, McLeod became “one of the foremost scholars of Sikhism” simply through the publication of his Ph.D. thesis which bypassed all the rigors of academic reviews.²⁰ Did Zaehner who was an alcoholic¹⁹ know anything about Guru Nanak’s teachings? After the publication of Zaehner’s review, McLeod rightly expressed his jubilation: “Professor Zaehner could never have known what joy he created!”¹⁷ From thereon, our McLeod has never missed an opportunity to self-promote himself. Given this historical background, one wouldn’t be wrong to question his academic credentials – his Ph.D. degree. At the same time one would not be wide off the mark to understand why McLeod manipulated himself into position with the mantra: “one of the foremost scholars of Sikhism.” This in all probability led him to believe that whatever he would write about Sikhism would be considered unique and a profound form of scholarship. In the years that followed since 1968, many Sikh scholars have attacked his works and oddly enough, McLeod in response used a five-pronged strategy to defend himself and deflect the criticism.

First: He insists that his critics are traditionalists or conservative or fundamentalists who do not appreciate and understand his methodology of historical research.

Second: He neglects to respond to criticism of his work as far and as long as possible, and when he does he uses surrogates to attack his critics.²¹

Third: He singles out non-academic critics for vehement attack, while keeping silent about academic critics.

Fourth: He points out that it is not only him, but even the Sikh scholars of repute have been harrassed and vilified.

Fifth: He claims that younger Sikhs especially those living in the Diaspora understand and appreciate his works. Here are two quotes of his:

The pattern that I have devised was never to represent the teachings of Guru Nanak in the form in which they had been delivered in the early decades of the sixteenth century. It was, however, a pattern that could be understandable to readers educated in the Western manner.²²

I am a Western historian, trained in the Western methods of historical research and adhering to Western notions of historiography. No attempt has ever been made to conceal this fact. I have always maintained that I am a Western historian and if that status deprives me of reasonable understanding of Sikhism then so be it. ... My primary objective has been to communicate an understanding of the Sikh people and their religion to educated *Western* readers and that consequently it is important that I speak to their mode of understanding. At least as far as the religion of Sikhs is concerned the object of my research has certainly not been to tell Sikhs what they should believe. It is to tell inquisitive Westerners what Sikhism apparently means in terms they can understand. This, it should be noted, does not apply to this book, which is primarily for Sikhs. My previous works have, however, been directed at Westerners or at others who have been educated by Western methods and who think in a Western mode.²³

Does the Western education system or Western methodology of historical research permit the teaching of a distorted version of Sikhism to “inquisitive educated *Western* readers?” The objective of research in any field is to find the truth for the benefit of all! Only commercial, political and biased writings are targeted to a particular segment of the population. Moreover, where did McLeod learn the rigors required for implementing “Western methodology of historical research”, for his training was in the field of Christian theology as a Christian missionary – a profession riddled with blind faith, which carries barely a hint of “Western methodology of historical research.” McLeod makes it clear that *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian* is primarily for the Sikhs:

This means that the book is primarily for the Sikhs. To them can

be added the small number of Western scholars who regard Sikh history and religion their chief concern. ...It should be remembered, however, that basically this book is a work in which I seek to explain my method to the Sikhs. I endeavor to spell it out clearly and to define for them what features lie behind the various books and articles I have published.²⁴

This is in contrast to his earlier claims that his writings are for “the inquisitive *Western* readers” or others who have been “educated by Western methods and who think in a Western mode”.²³ What amazes me is that all along he expected Sikhs to support him financially to propagate his version of Sikhism. Some examples should suffice: (1) He complained that in September 1969 an invitation by the Punjabi University for the international seminar in honor of Guru Nanak’s five hundredth birthday celebration did not include travel expenses, which made it impossible for him to attend. Besides, he was very much disappointed to find out that the book display section at the seminar included a wide selection of manuscripts and seemingly every book published on Guru Nanak except for *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* and Archer’s *The Sikhs*, and for two days there was absolutely no reference made to his work.²⁵

He did not reflect for a moment why his book was missing in the book display and why was there no reference to it at the symposium? He was fully aware that his friends Prof. Ganda Singh and Prof. Harbans Singh arranged the seminar and it was about academic appraisal of Guru Nanak. It does not cross his mind that his book is unacademic, as its main agenda is to undermine the originality and uniqueness of *Gurmat* philosophy. Another person would have taken a hint and tried to find out the flaws of his work, but not McLeod, he kept producing more absurd publications on Sikhism based on spurious literature.

(2) He also complained about the cancellation of his lecture at the University of Hull to mark the 500th anniversary of Guru Nanak’s birthday because Sikh sources refused to donate the funds.²⁶ (3) He talks bitterly about the withdrawal of financial support by the Sikhs for his teaching position at the University of Toronto:

“Pressured by a small but vocal minority the local Sikhs had ceased to give money for a Sikh Studies position, leaving me without an

invitation to return after 1992.”²⁷

“The ambiguous attitude of some members of the University’s administration coupled with the determination of certain Sikhs wrecked the program.”²⁸

(4) Moreover, he laments that the universities in Punjab have never invited him to give lectures or that he was not invited to participate in festschrifts (collection of essays in honor of someone) especially the one *Sikhism and Secularism*, a volume of essays issued in honor of Professor Harbans Singh.²⁹ (5) He is also disappointed that Sikhs do not read his works as their minds are poisoned by the vigorous propaganda against his work.³⁰ He blames the conservatives, who he thinks emerged as defenders of Sikhism after the tragic events of 1984 for attacks on his work.³¹ This line of defense is exemplified by the comments of Prof. Barrier who wrote the foreword to *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*.

“The themes that were to appear again and again in Sikh reviews of Hew’s work—missionary bias, cultural insensitivity, political motives, and the like—became commonplace as academics and politicians characterized his research as a threat to the community and Sikh understanding of tradition and practice.”³²

To impress this point further to the readers he goes on to say:

Sikh scholars themselves experienced even more serious attacks that threatened their teaching positions and sometimes lives—good men and good scholars such as Fauja Singh and J.S. Grewal, among others, and in a later generation Piar Singh and those associated with Hew, such as Harjot Oberoi and Pashaura Singh. But Hew remained the designated lightning rod for attack.³³

Prof. Barrier seems to be giving us the impression that the Sikhs treated Fauja Singh, Grewal, and Piar Singh similar to what the Christian Church did to Bruno and Galileo, the famous astronomers. To set the record straight, let me say that Fauja Singh retired as Head of the History department from Punjabi University Patiala; Grewal retired as Vice-Chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University; and Piar Singh retired as Head of Sikh Studies at Guru Nanak Dev University. Moreover, I believe Barrier couldn’t understand the very nature of scholarship in the making: critical appraisal of someone’s research work is by no means to be equated with personal attacks or persecution

or life threats. Research work often generates controversies, more so in the humanities than in the hard sciences. Scholars generally do not regard criticism of their work as personal attack or persecution; rather, they regard it as an honor when someone pays attention to their work! It was the fraudulent research of Harjot Oberoi and Pashaura Singh on Sikhism that was criticized, not their personal characters, as both of them are teaching in Western universities.

Continuing with his campaign of misinformation against the Sikhs, Barrier says:

Just as American politics, metaphor, and public discourse were altered by attacks on September 11, 2001, so the growing militancy and turmoil that culminated in the attack on Golden Temple and the Delhi riots in 1984 reshaped the relationship between religion and politics among Sikhs. Academic research and authors quickly became enmeshed in the ensuing debate over controversial elements in Sikh public life. No individual, Sikh or Westerner has been more pivotal in the resulting wars over scholarship and Sikhism than Professor W.H. ('Hew') McLeod.³⁴

It is difficult to understand why Barrier who is actively involved in Sikh studies, characterizes the government sponsored murder of thousands of innocent Sikhs all over India after the assassination of Indira Gandhi as "riots."³⁵ Perhaps *Politics of Genocide and Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab* escaped his notice!

McLeod carries Barrier's argument much further by claiming that he himself is the victim of the Khalistan movement.

One must remember that behind this personal experience lies the traumatic period in the history of the Sikhs. This is marked, above all, by the campaign waged by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and by Operation Blue Star, that wholly mistaken and disastrous attack launched by the Government of India on the Golden Temple in June 1984. Since that time many Sikhs have been involved in the bitter struggle for Khalistan. ... After 1984 these conferences and publications that accompany them became much larger and more frequent, particularly in North America.³⁶

It is ironic that McLeod expresses no opinion about the Khalistan movement, which he claims intensified the attacks on his scholarship.

Wouldn't a "skeptical historian" who has spent most of his life studying Sikhism, be curious about Khalistanis? Why didn't he investigate the "bitter struggle" for Khalistan, or advance any theory about it, since at the drop of a hat, he comes up with an opinion to explain every facet of Sikhism? Besides, he does not mention the name of any Khalistani who criticized his work! Why is he silent on the "bitter struggle" for Khalistan?³⁷ Today the leaders of the "bitter struggle" for Khalistan like Jagjit Singh Chauhan, Sohan Singh Boparai, and others are back in India living on a government pension. Boparai was given a special award for a job well done. This lends credence to Sangat Singh's assertion: RAW – the Indian intelligence agency – had a hand in the appointment of two vice chancellors at Guru Nanak Dev University.³⁸ One of the Vice Chancellors was J.S. Grewal, a man whom McLeod regards as an elder brother and has dedicated to him his *Exploring Sikhism* and *The B-40 Janam-sakhi*. Grewal was instrumental in getting the Punjabi translation of *Guru Nanak's Teachings*³⁹ and *The B-40 Janam-sakhi*⁴⁰ published by Guru Nanak Dev University. In 1994, McLeod spent his last sabbatical leave at the Indian Institute of Advanced Studies in Simla where Grewal was its director.⁴¹

It seems that *Sangat Singh's* statement touched a sensitive nerve and McLeod protested loudly: "I could point out that I certainly was not a tool of the Government of India."⁴² However, the dead silence of the "skeptical historian" raises many eyebrows. Here are a number of questions which are crying for answers from him: Why was Maharaja Dalip Singh, a ten year old boy, snatched from his mother, put in the custody of missionaries, and converted to Christianity? Why did the British authorities immediately after the annexation of Punjab take control of gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) whereas not a single Hindu temple or mosque was touched in the entire British Indian Empire? Why did the British rulers and Christian missionaries distort Sikhism? Why were the Sikhs declared Hindus in the Constitution of India and the Hindu Code Bill imposed on them? What was he speaking about when he traveled around India visiting universities on a grant from the Government of India in 1985⁴³ when Sikhs were facing one of the darkest periods in their modern history: The Punjab was turned into a "Gulag Archipelago" by the military, paramilitary, and police

forces. Sikhs were left with no venue of justice under black laws: National Security Act Ordinance, Terrorist Affected Areas Ordinance, and the draconian Terrorist and Disaffected Area Act (TADA). These “Black Laws” gave free hand to the police to exterminate Sikhs in the name of “law and order” and to deny them justice in the judicial system. Wouldn’t a scholar like McLeod who spent most of his life doing research on Sikhs and Sikhism, be curious or concerned about what was happening to the Sikhs?

Barrier, who never misses an opportunity to align himself with McLeod, blames the Sikhs for involving politics with religion in academic affairs and showing a lack of appreciation for scholarship and intolerance for scholars. He goes on to protect McLeod’s integrity:

Hew is very direct in terms of his presentation of facts, quick to give others the benefit of doubt, and careful in reaching broad conclusions. Underlying the narrative is concern with academic honesty combined with amazement at the degree of ferocity in many of the seminar papers, books and articles launched to protect Sikhism from its perceived mortal enemy. ... Reviews, essays in cyber chat-rooms or organized forums (i.e., Sikh Diaspora and Sikhe.com), and debate over identity, historical facts and interpretation, woman, ritual – any number of problems daily confronting Sikhs – all use Hew’s work either to support arguments or to serve as pawn which can be denounced and shown to be illegitimate (along with any who might side with his opinion)... More and more Sikhs have begun to read Hew’s articles and books, and, while disagreeing with points or theses, appreciate what he has done, and take his word, namely, that his method is a historical approach to tradition and that he respects Sikhism and would do nothing to injure the sensitivities of Sikhs or cause discomfort.⁴⁴

What Barrier refuses to understand is that there are serious ethical problems here. From McLeod’s autobiography it is clear that he had doubts about Christianity when he was a student. But he opted for not informing the Overseas Mission Committee of the Presbyterian Church at the time of his hiring of him being a non-believer?⁴⁵ At no time during his tenure with the mission did he tell the faculty colleagues or Sikh friends that he and his wife are non-believers?⁴⁶ Apparently, he started having doubts about Christianity when he was a student:

At the beginning of 1955 I began my theological course and at once doubts began to trouble me, threatening to create a situation of some difficulty. Two reasons held these doubt in check. One was the argument I silently had with myself that I could not and should not give up now that I had been admitted to the Theological Hall and had publicly committed to joining the ranks of the clergy. One other Hall student was clearly having similar doubts, but he was secure enough to let him express these openly, I certainly was not secure and so I preferred to keep quiet.⁴⁷

And he elaborates about his shaky faith in Christianity further :

But I must be honest. Even to Margaret [McLeod's wife] I did not completely disclose my doubts, which ever attended my three years in the Theological Hall. She certainly knew that I was not entirely happy with the way things were turning out, yet because I was less than honest in revealing myself she believed that my position was still basically firm.⁴⁸

McLeod likes to nourish his ego by blaming others, in this case the teachers, for not prodding him to bring his doubts into the open: "The staff should not have assumed, as they commonly did, that students would unaided bring their problems into the open where they could be discussed."⁴⁹

Let it not be supposed that the staff were uncaring or anything but good men. I can in retrospect appreciate that any attempt to bring my difficulties out into the open would almost certainly have provoked a decision to leave the Theological Hall before the three-year course was finished. Such are life's mysteries. Had this happened I might never have gone to India? And the Sikhs might never have heard the name of McLeod. Many Sikhs, it is true, might fervently wish that the hall staff had been more forthright, with the result that I could well have ended up as a schoolteacher in New Zealand. Other Sikhs, I should hope, are glad that that things turned as they did.⁵⁰

He disclosed the secret of being a non-believer to the public only when he felt irritated by the dated references to him as a missionary or Reverend by his critics :

I now realize that I may owe these Sikhs an apology, at least those Sikhs who until 1990 assumed that I should be properly

identified as a Christian missionary. My status may have been appreciated by those who knew me personally, but I have never made it known publicly until Inderjit Singh persuaded me to write an article "Where it all started" for the *Sikh Review*.⁵¹

May I ask: Does McLeod feel any regret or guilt for what he did? Of course not! He justifies everything he did:

Did we ever feel regret? Certainly there has been none. What about guilt? No one ever asked us whether we felt any guilt leaving the Christian faith, but it is a question, which has occasionally drifted past me. In a sense there has been absolutely no guilt. ... Should I not have repaid some thing of the cost of my training and employment? This I have been able to discard because we spent, after all, a total of eleven years in the Church's service. What, then, about the three years of concealment at Baring College? The answer, which has satisfied us, was that I was performing a job to which I had been appointed and that I was doing so without making our change in allegiance public except to a few close friends. Moreover, a sudden change of direction in 1966 would, we feared, have had an unsettling effect on the children.⁵²

McLeod's defense of his actions reminds me of a story of a woman who worked for some period as a prostitute before her marriage. When her husband found out about her past and confronted her, she asserted, "Haven't I performed all the duties of a housewife and given you two sons." "That is not the point my dear, had you told me about your past, I would not have married you," quipped her husband. This story is relevant to McLeod: Had McLeod told his interviewers that he is a non-believer, he would not have been hired, and if he had made his secret public while employed, he would have been fired. From his student days he never disclosed his doubts about Christianity because he didn't want to jeopardize his education (degree). He accepted a missionary position in India to escape parish life in New Zealand. In other words, he has no qualms when he pursues his agenda to achieve his goal, and the evidence shows McLeod kept hiding his secrets for a long time. Should we entertain the question: Could his declaration of being a non-believer be a ploy to deflect criticism against his work? For example, he defended the Biblical God by distorting the meaning

of *Katebi*.⁵³ Guru Nanak proclaimed:

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਤਾ ॥

Neither the Vedas nor the Semitic texts know the mystery of the Creator.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 1021.

ਪਾਤਾਲਾ ਪਾਤਾਲ ਲਖ ਆਗਾਸਾ ਆਗਾਸ ॥

ਓੜਕ ਓੜਕ ਭਾਲਿ ਥਕੇ ਵੇਦ ਕਹਨਿ ਇਕ ਵਾਤ ॥

ਸਹਸ ਅਠਾਰਹ ਕਹਨਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਅਸਲੁ ਇਕ ਧਾਤੁ ॥

ਲੇਖਾ ਹੋਇ ਤ ਲਿਖੀਐ ਲੇਖੈ ਹੋਇ ਵਿਣਾਸੁ ॥

After an immense and tiring search the authors of the Vedas concluded that there are hundreds of thousands of netherworlds under nether worlds and skies above skies. The Semitic texts say there are eighteen thousand worlds, but their creator is One. However, the universe is so vast that it is beyond the scope of counting – one would run out of numbers if one were to undertake the counting. Nanak salutes the Great One, Who alone knows the vastness of the universe.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 3.

Here Guru Nanak talks about the four Vedas and the four Semitic texts: *Torah*, *Zabur* (Psalms), *Inzīl* (Gospel) and *Quran*.

For a specific reference to Quran the word Quran is used in Guru Granth Sahib.

ਵੇਲ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਪੰਡਤੀ ਜਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

ਵਖਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਕਾਦੀਆ ਜਿ ਲਿਖਨਿ ਲੇਖੁ ਕੁਰਾਣੁ ॥

Commenting about the time of creation of the cosmos Guru Nanak says:

The Pandits did know the time, otherwise they would have recorded it in the Puranas. Neither did the Qaziz know it, otherwise they would have written in the Quran.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 4.

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਮਉਲਾ ਤੂਹੀ ਏਕੁ ॥ ਪੀਰ ਪੈਕਾਂਬਰ ਸੇਖ ॥

ਦਿਲੁ ਕਾ ਮਾਲਕੁ ਕਰੈ ਹਾਕੁ ॥ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਕਤੇਬ ਤੇ ਪਾਕੁ ॥

The Merciful One is the only Emancipator (maula), not the holy men (pir and Sheikh), or Prophets. The Master of every heart, Who delivers justice, is beyond the description of the Quran and other Semitic texts.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 5, p 897.

In spite of being an alleged non-believer in the Bible in 1955, he goes out of his way in 1968 to defend the Biblical God and the Bible

by saying that *Katebi* only means Quran. It must be noted that Guru Nanak used *Katebi* and *Kateba*, which are the plural of *Kateb*. This calls into question how much we can rely on McLeod's word: According to his autobiography (2004), he had doubts about Christianity in 1955 and then in 1968 *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* was published in which he distorted Guru Nanak's composition simply for the sake of defending the Biblical God! In other words, by intentionally changing the meaning of Guru Nanak's hymn, McLeod protected the Biblical God by plucking him out of the incisive insight of Guru Nanak. By this action alone one can cast doubt on whether McLeod was a non-believer as he now alleges.

It makes no difference to me whether he is a Christian or not, but could someone, who concealed this pivotal fact for so long while accepting a position as missionary, be trusted? This raises doubts about his credibility and integrity as a scholar. My extensive study of his works has persuaded me to raise serious doubts underlying his "methodology of historical research" and his academic ethics. His research is flawed because he ignores facts and strong evidence that goes against his thesis but accepts flimsy evidence and discredited sources to support his argument as demonstrated by the examples that you will read shortly. To help the reader in understanding this long complicated paper, I have organized the rest of this paper in the following four sections:

1. Discrediting the Evidence that Guru Nanak Visited Baghdad
2. Questioning the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir (*Adi Granth*)
3. Caste in the Sikh Panth
4. Attempts to Malign the Institute of Sikh Studies
 - a. Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint the Granth Sahib as Guru of Sikhs:
 - b. Jats changed the course of Sikh movement:
 - c. Gurus did not preach one religious doctrine:
 - d. Guru Nanak and the Sant Tradition:
 - e. Unwilling to Face the Truth
 - f. Manipulation and deception
 - g. Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion

I

**DISCREDITING THE EVIDENCE THAT GURU NANAK VISITED
BAGHDAD**

Two older *janam-sakhis* and Bhai Gurdas mention Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad. It is said that two inscriptions were found recording a visit of Guru Nanak to Baghdad.⁵⁴ In 1919 Swami Anand Acharya published a book of English poems entitled *Snow Birds*, and one of the poems is about Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad based on one of the inscriptions. This poem is the only information about this inscription.⁵⁵ In 1916 some Sikh soldiers, who were deployed in Iraq during the First World War, discovered the second inscription in a tomb, which it is claimed, makes explicit mention of Guru Nanak's visit.⁵⁶ The language of the inscription is Ottoman Turkish and efforts to translate have produced several different versions, but all of them have the words "Baba Nanak."⁵⁷ So to satisfy his "skeptical historian" curiosity, McLeod consulted Dr V.L. Menage, Reader in Turkish at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, who provided him the following information⁵⁸:

The part of line 2 which I cannot understand is the passage where earlier translators have read *Baba Nanak fakir* or, more grammatically, *Baba Nanak-i fakir* (either six or seven syllables); and in the photograph the first letter certainly appears to be *babananak* and the next word, though not clear, might indeed be *fakir*. But the metre indicates clearly that this section contains only five syllables and that they scan - ◡◡ - -. The word *baba* being Turkish, both its vowels are by nature short, but since it is legitimate in poetry to lengthen a short vowel if necessary, the word could be scanned *baba*. It would however, be a grave fault of prosody to shorten the long vowel of *Nanak* in order to satisfy the demands of metre. Hence *Baba Nanak fakir* does not fit the metre – and even if the reading is accepted the complete line does not make sense. I regret that I am unable to suggest the correct meaning, but *Baba Nanak* seems to be excluded.⁵⁹

With this information in hand McLeod concludes:

“The *janam-sakhi* traditions offer insufficient evidence and the

support hitherto claimed on the basis of the inscription must be withdrawn. Although, there remains a possibility that Guru Nanak visited Baghdad, we are now compelled to regard it as an unsubstantiated possibility.⁶⁰

This conclusion about Guru Nanak's visit to Baghdad drew the following response from Sangat Singh:

Dr V.L. Menage, Reader in Turkish at [the] School of Oriental and African Studies, London, who was commissioned by McLeod, admits his lack of knowledge of the Turkman language used in the inscription. Nonetheless he proceeds to translate the same. He concedes that [the] first six or seven syllables in the second line read Baba Nanak Fakir or Baba Nanak-i-Fakir but says that this does not fit into the meter and should be ignored. That suited very well McLeod's thesis that Guru Nanak did not travel outside his surroundings. To ignore the inscription because it does not fit into one's contrived thesis, amounts to intellectual dishonesty.⁶¹

Stung by Sangat Singh's valid criticism, McLeod defends himself by claiming that Ganda Singh who died many years ago, informed him in a private conversation that Sikh soldiers who discovered the inscription doctored it in order to make it clear that it referred to Baba Nanak.⁶²

First of all, Ganda Singh makes no mention of this information in the editorial cited (read the above reference) by McLeod, but McLeod has no compunction in making Ganda Singh a partner in his fraudulent enterprise. Since Ganda Singh didn't mention to anybody else what McLeod attributes to him, I believe McLeod concocted an alibi.

Second, could any reasonable person believe that semiliterate Sikh soldiers with no knowledge of Arabic or Turkish doctored an inscription in Ottoman Turkish, which Dr Menage, an expert in the Turkish language, could not decipher?

Third, during Guru Nanak's time Ottoman Turkish was the official language of Baghdad, but not the language of the populace, as Persian was the official language in the Punjab but not the language of the populace.

Fourth, Guru Nanak's travels to Baghdad were not an official visit. He traveled to the Arabian Peninsula to visit Muslim religious

centers and to meet religious leaders and common people. So the inscription in his memory must be in Arabic spoken by the people at that time. The Sikh soldiers who were in Baghdad (1916-1918) must have learned from local people about the inscription describing Guru Nanak's visit, otherwise how could the soldiers find the inscription on their own?

If Prof. Barrier has his way, we are told "Hew is very direct in terms of his presentation of fact, quick to give others the benefit of doubt, and careful in reaching broad conclusions."⁴⁴ The evidence suggests Barrier's depiction of McLeod is different from the real McLeod. When McLeod runs out of absurd ideas and lame arguments to defend himself, he uses his favorite trick: "So and so told me in a private conversation." He has no consideration for the reputation of others. In pursuit of his own agenda, he used his own student, Pashaura Singh, a brilliant but naïve and overly ambitious young man, as a sacrificial lamb. He did grave harm to his academic credibility.²¹

~ ~ ~

II

**QUESTIONING THE AUTHENTICITY OF KARTARPURI BIR
(ADI GRANTH)**

McLeod questioned the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir* (*Adi Granth* 1604 AD) and asserted that it is a copy of *Banno Bir* (1642 AD) without even looking at both of them, and without studying the related literature on the subject.⁶³ To reach this conclusion, he relied heavily on the writings of a discredited and unskilled researcher, G.B. Singh (Gurbakhash Singh, 1877-1950), who himself had not examined the *Kartarpuri Bir*,⁶⁴ but ignored the works of Bhai Jodh Singh who had meticulously examined both the manuscripts.⁶⁵ And that of Mahan Singh, Gurdit Singh, Harbhajan Singh, and Pritam Singh who had examined the *Banno Bir*.⁶⁶

Rightly so, Daljit Singh exposed not only McLeod's phony "research methodology" but also his academic ethics.⁶⁷ In 1984 McLeod prepared a textual source book on Sikh religion for the University of Manchester. It is unbelievable that he completely omitted standard or scholarly works of H.R. Gupta, A.C. Bannerji, Sher Singh, Avtar Singh, I.B. Bannerji, J.D. Cunningham, Duncan Greenlees, Dorothy Field, and Jagjit Singh. An objective and fair-minded person would have selected a wide range of texts including the texts commonly used in Sikh studies and accepted by the Sikhs. How could McLeod recommend such texts, as they do not support his absurd and odious interpretation of Sikhism?

He claims that Daljit Singh's criticism is unfair because he [McLeod] had already renounced explicitly his earlier opinion about *Kartarpuri Bir*,⁶⁸ and he accuses Daljit Singh of "selective reading".

"In 1968 I had come upon Jodh Singh's *Sri Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan* and this had led me to halt my earlier speculation. I concluded that the issue is still open, and later still I was persuaded by my student Pashaura Singh that my original theory was wrong."⁶⁹

In *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir* Daljit Singh quotes verbatim that portion of *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* in which I recount the mistaken views on the *Adi Granth* text I had

tentatively held until 1968. Daljit Singh then sets about condemning me vigorously for holding these views, although in the paragraph that follows (paragraph that Daljit Singh does not cite) I say explicitly that I had renounced them.⁷⁰

His assertion is patently false, as examination of the relevant pages: 75-79 of *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* as pointed out by Ishwinder Singh⁹ reveal that McLeod did not explicitly renounce his earlier mistaken views about *Kartarpuri Bir*.⁷¹

“The problem, which confronts us, arises from a comparison of the Kartarpur and Banno versions. We note, in the first place, that the claim to the originality made on behalf of the Kartarpur manuscript appears to be sound. Dr Jodh Singh has argued this in a manner, which seems to be entirely convincing.” Having said that he raises four questions regarding the extra material included in the Banno version, which is absent in the Kartarpur manuscript and proposes solutions to reconcile the difference between the two manuscripts. Then he goes on to say, “There was ample evidence that others had already formed the same suspicion concerning the Kartarpur manuscript and were seeking alternative explanations.” After this, he tries to explain why the extra material, which is present in the Banno manuscript, was deleted from the Kartarpur manuscript. Finally, he says Jodh Singh’s *Sri Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan* raises more problems and “hence the issue should still be regarded as open.”⁷²

The bottom line is: McLeod does not say anywhere on pages 75-79 of *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* that his earlier views about *Kartarpuri Bir* were mistaken, and that he had explicitly renounced them. Moreover, Daljit Singh did not condemn him, he simply responded in a scholarly manner to the questions McLeod raised about the *Kartarpuri Bir* and solutions he proposed to reconcile the difference between Kartarpur and Banno versions. McLeod keeps harping on the fact that being a Western historian he relies only on rigorous proof, but he questioned the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir* and asserted that it is a copy of *Banno Bir*, without even looking at both of them, on the basis of unreliable evidence: The writings of G.B. Singh⁶⁴ and Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti,⁷³ and a conversation he had with C.H. Loehlin.⁷³

“In fact every literate person would be ashamed of the manner,

in which G.B. Singh has abused the word research,” remarked Jodh Singh known for his cool and level-headedness.⁷⁴ Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti was a preacher of the heretic Namdhari sect. Namdharis never miss the opportunity to subvert Sikhism as they believe in a line of living physically fleshy Gurus after Guru Gobind Singh and do not believe that Guru Gobind Singh invested Guruship on *Guru Granth Sahib*. Moreover, according to Jodh Singh, Sant Inder Singh Chakarvarti had no firsthand knowledge of the *Kartarpuri Bir* and had nowhere stated that he saw or studied that manuscript.⁷⁵ C.H. Loehlin was an American missionary, who was Vice-Principal of Baring Union Christian College at Batala, Punjab. He had been trying to undermine the faith of Sikhs in *Guru Granth Sahib* by creating doubts about its authenticity through his writings: *The Sikhs and their book* (1946), *The Sikhs and their Scriptures* (1958) and *Granth of Guru Gobind Singh and the Khalsa Brotherhood* (1971).⁷⁶

~ ~ ~

III

CASTE IN THE SIKH PANTH

McLeod is a master of manufacturing controversial issues and then extracting mileage from the issues. Case in point is the “caste” identification of Sikh Gurus and their marriages.

The ten Gurus were all Khatri by caste. This is widely regarded as a great pity, even within Sikh society where the numerically preponderant Jats commonly bewail the fact that there was never a single Jat Guru. It is not, however the point and substance of the impertinent suggestion. The suggestion concerns the marriage practices observed by the Gurus. All, without exception, arranged the marriages of their children in strict accordance with traditional caste prescription. There is no instance of a Guru having contracted on behalf of his children marriages with boys or girls from lower castes (nor indeed from a higher rank, although in view of the elevated Khatri status this is less significant). All the Gurus, themselves Khatri, married Khatri wives and this, declare their critics, is the true measure of their sincerity. How can one respect a commandment when its promulgators ignore it?⁷⁷

Instead of retracting the above scurrilous and absurd statements he offers the following explanation for the caste dilemmas on page 162 of *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*.

There are two answers, which can be offered to this unpublished and unnecessarily embarrassing dilemma. The first is that the Gurus were not concerned with the institution of caste as such, merely with the belief that it possesses soteriological significance. Caste can remain, but not the doctrine that one’s access to salvation depends upon one’s caste ranking. The way of salvation is open to all regardless of caste. Stripped of its religious contents it can retain the status of a harmless social convention.

This deprives caste of some of its meaning, but by no means all. Was this what the Gurus meant? Although their utterances (notably their stress upon there being no caste in the hereafter) might suggest this, their institutions (commensality in the *langar*,

distribution of *krab parsbad* in the gurdwara, and baptism from a common bowl) indicate that they intended their denunciation of caste to be carried significantly further. A reasonable conclusion appears to be that whereas they were vigorously opposed to the *vertical* distinction of caste they were content to accept it in terms of its *horizontal* linkage. This constitutes our second answer to the suggestion of inconsistency on the part of the Gurus.

Who are these critics that McLeod mentions without citing them? Aren't these critics none other than Christian missionaries who have prejudiced weaker minds?

First of all: Only the first four Gurus, Nanak, Angad, Amar Das and Ram Das were born in Hindu Khatri families but latter six Gurus were the descendents of Guru Ram Das, so they were neither Hindus nor Khatri as claimed by McLeod.

According to Sikh tradition, Brahmin priests tried to kill Guru Nanak during the marriage ceremony when he rejected the Vedic marriage ceremony. Guru Angad and Guru Amar Das became Sikhs when they were already married and had grown up children. According to Sikh tradition, Guru Amar Das' daughter Bibi Bhani expressed interest through her mother in marrying Bhai Jetha, who succeeded her father. Both Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur had one child, a son, respectively, and both of them were killed by the Muslim rulers before the marriage of their sons. Guru Harkrishan died at the age of eight and all of Guru Gobind Singh's sons died unmarried before him. So we are talking only about the children of the fourth and sixth Guru. So for McLeod to assert that "All the Gurus, themselves Khatri, married Khatri wives and all, without exception, arranging the marriages of their children in strict accordance with traditional caste prescription" is preposterous.

The fact is that the Sikh Gurus not only didn't believe in caste and the Caste System, but also rejected Hinduism in its entirety. To say that, "The ten Gurus were all Khatri by caste" is nothing less than reintroducing caste and imposing the label on them. McLeod says, "All, [Gurus] without exception, arranged the marriages of their children in strict accordance with traditional caste prescription." Did Guru Gobind Singh do that? Did Guru Tegh Bahadur do that? Did Guru Harkrishan do that? Did Guru Nanak do that? Which Sikh Guru

followed the traditional caste prescription in marrying his child? Is McLeod familiar with *Dharmashastras* that detail the marriage ceremonies based on caste? Can anyone link these requirements of *shastras* to the Sikh Gurus? I think by now the reader can sense how wrong McLeod has been all along. And he still keeps churning out these stories to distort the Sikh message. My feeling is that McLeod has a poor knowledge of Hinduism including its caste system. Today, even in the twenty-first century, we are seeing many more elements of the caste system than just the mere marriage stratum of the subcaste (*jati*) among those who adhere to the caste system practices. During the Sikh Guru's historical times, the adherents practiced the caste system in full swing and to say (or imply) that some people (for example Sikh Gurus) would pluck out only "marriage" caste by-laws and not the rest of the caste package is nothing less than manipulation of history and evidence. Where is the evidence that Sikh Gurus' in-laws practised the caste system? Where is the evidence that Sikh Gurus married off their children to homes where the caste system was in practice? Has McLeod ever given a thought to the fact that like-minded people and their families can have nuptial arrangements irrespective of caste, even in the Gurus' times? In the example of the Gurus and their family cases, one needs to weigh-in that these marriages were in accord with people of like-mindedness, and not in tune with the caste system. If McLeod had his way, he might even cast doubt on Thomas Paine, a great leader of the American Revolutionary War, who was opposed to the Bible and talked about freedom of the black slaves. Just because Thomas Paine didn't marry a black person doesn't mean by any stretch of imagination that he harbored negative views toward Blacks, and went along with the racial norms of the society.

McLeod, trained as a missionary, who spent several years as a missionary in Punjab, may not have raised these questions, had he asked, "Why were Jesus Christ, his apostles and Biblical Prophets all Jews?" Why did the "Christian God" never send any prophet to Europe? Do European Christians bewail the fact that their Savior was a Jew, and not a European? It is intriguing that McLeod does not mention the names of Jats who bewail that no Guru was a Jat or critics who question the sincerity of the Gurus! Moreover, it is difficult to understand why a white man with a Christian background would make

such outrageous statements. He is fully aware that even after two thousand years white Christians practice segregation/apartheid against non-white Christians, not to speak of resisting interracial marriages.

A genuine scholar would have thoroughly studied the impact of the caste system on Indian society, particularly inter-caste marriages in Hindu, Muslim, and Christian communities, especially the latter two, which are much older than Sikhism.⁷⁸ Christianity was introduced in South India in the first century AD. Later on in the sixteenth century, European Christians who came to India as traders, established their own colonies, culminating in the British rule over most of India for about three centuries, and this resulted in the spread of Christianity all over India. Although Muslim traders brought Islam to South India, it was the Muslim conquest from the North that began in the early eighth century, which established Muslim rule over a large territory of India for almost seven centuries. On the other hand, Sikhs ruled over the Punjab for less than a hundred years, long after the time of Gurus when Sikhism was subverted and transformed into a “warrior sect of Hinduism” due to historical circumstances.

The caste ideology is deeply embedded in the psyche of Indian people irrespective of their religions. Muslims in India were regarded as *Malechas* (uncivilized, unclean) by Hindus. They were considered so much outside the pale of Hindu society that Hindus once converted to Islam could on no account be taken back in the parent fold even though converted forcibly. Yet Muslims hold on to Hindu customs and practices, which their faith does not permit.

Indian Muslims have two familiar social divisions: Ashraf (or noble) that includes descendents of foreigners and converts from higher Hindu castes, and Ajlaf, or common people. Intermarriage between Ashraf and Ajlaf is not approved, as it is seldom that a man of higher class will give his daughter to one of the lower. Though Muslims decry the caste system, they follow it very rigidly when it comes to marriage.⁷⁹

There is no evidence that Christians who are converts from higher Hindu castes marry Christians who are converts from lower castes. The average Indian Christian is a staunch observer of the caste system. There are large numbers of Christians in South India who even boast of their being firmer and truer adherents of the caste system than

their counterpart Hindus. In Tamilnadu, there were churches with separate outlets going on to a common channel of water to accommodate hostile castes.⁷⁹

Another important point to bear in mind is that caste restrictions on marriages between exclusive groups are not the only restrictions. Individual and group prejudices against marriages based on considerations of various factors: health, beauty, talent, color, race, class, occupation, wealth, etc., exist in societies where there are no castes. In other words, in caste-ridden Indian society, endogamy is superimposed on prejudices about marriages between mutually exclusive groups common to non-caste societies as well. This means that the problem of restrictions on marriages between exclusive groups or classes is not solved by simply undoing the caste endogamy. Second, the problem of removing prejudices regarding marriages, as in non-caste societies, is very complicated. In the case of Indian society, the caste-based endogamy is reinforced by race (color), occupation and wealth, which divide the higher castes from lower castes and the untouchables (Dalits) from the rest. So arranging inter-caste marriages would have been impossible during the period of the Sikh Gurus.⁸⁰

During the time of Sikh Gurus, Hinduism was practised in strict observance of caste rules and rituals. Transgressors were severely dealt with – excommunicated from the community. Such people were the real outcasts as they were shunned by the entire Hindu society. Even *bhagats* like Kabir, Namdev and Ravidas were refused entry in temples, not to speak of ordinary untouchables. Even in the twentieth century “Mahatma” Gandhi and Hindu reformers were unable to secure the entry of untouchables into Hindu temples. “With regard to the matter of the right to enter Hindu temples, the exterior castes were advised by Gandhi not to attempt to gain entry, as God resides in their breasts.”⁸¹ Even today, contrary to the laws of the land, Dalits are forbidden entry into the Hindu temples in rural areas.

One can imagine the uphill task the Gurus faced in breaking the caste barriers among their followers. The caste system was the greatest obstacle in the way of developing an egalitarian Sikh society. The Gurus took a cautious but bold approach to tackling this problem. Guru Nanak started the institution of *sangat* (congregation) and *pangat* (eating together sitting in a row). *Sangat* was made up of people

without regard to religion, caste and gender. Food prepared in the *langar* (public kitchen) by volunteers was served to the *sangat* sitting in a row without regard to religion and caste. Guru Nanak also advised his followers to address each other as *bhai* (brother) and *mai* (mother) and touch each other's feet during greeting rituals. These were daring and effective attacks on the pillars on which the superstructure of the caste system rested. These practices were condemned by Brahmins and Khatri, and became intolerable for them when the third Guru Amar Das made eating in the *langar* mandatory for those who wanted to meet him. They appealed to Emperor Akbar to stop this practice.

Your Majesty is the protector of our customs and the redresser of our wrongs. Every man's religion is dear to him. Guru Amar Das of Goindwal has abandoned the religious and social customs of Hindus and abolished the distinction of four castes. ... He does not revere Hindu scriptures or deities or Yogis, Jatis and Brahmins. ... He makes his followers sit in a line and eat food from his kitchen irrespective of caste, religion and gender.⁸²

The Emperor found no merit in their complaint and dismissed it. This embittered the Brahmins and Khatri further and they intensified their campaign against the Gurus and harassment of Sikhs. They conspired with the upper caste (Rajput, Brahmin and Khatri) government officials against Guru Arjun. It was Emperor Jehangir whose mother was a Rajput princess and maternal uncle, Raja Man Singh, the most prominent commander of the Mughal army, who ordered the execution of Guru Arjun.⁸³ Thenceforth, the Gurus were engaged in a battle on two fronts, against the forces of caste ideology and the Mughal rulers.

It must be pointed out that up to the time of the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das, there was no Muslim opposition, either religious or political, to the Sikh movement. On the other hand, the proponents of caste ideology started their opposition during Guru Nanak's time. They tried to subvert Guru Nanak's teachings through apocryphal composition under the name of Nanak and creating *sakhs* (stories) about Guru Nanak that contradicted his teachings. They infiltrated the Sikh movement to cause schism and to undermine its institutions and practices. After the death of the sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind, some *masands* (in-charge of a religious district) started separate *langar*

for higher castes. That is why Guru Gobind Singh abolished the Masand system.⁸⁴ When Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa order, Brahmins, Khatri and Rajputs derided the initiation ceremony, which required taking a sip of *Amrit* (holy water) from a common steel bowl. Sikhs from high caste background deserted the Sikh movement in large numbers. And the Rajput chiefs as protector of Hindu Dharma declared war on Guru Gobind Singh for his challenge to the age-old caste system.⁸⁵ The hostility of the higher caste Hindus and the Mughal authorities to the Sikh movement and internal feuds within the movement posed a grave danger to the survival of the movement.

Inter-caste marriages were an anathema to Hindu society, which was the main reservoir for new recruits to the Sikh movement. Inter-caste marriages would have resulted in excommunication of Sikhs from their “parent” communities. Even today one can see the consequences of violations of even sub-caste (*got*) rules for marriages within the Jat community of Haryana. The caste *panchayats* (committee of village elders) excommunicate not only the couple but their families also.

The abolition of the caste was not the only goal of the Sikh movement. “Suffering due to alienation from God, grinding poverty and tyranny of the ruler” were the major problems facing the masses.⁸⁶ Religious and political oppression of the Muslim rulers became the major challenge to the movement.⁸⁷ In fact, the pursuit of this objective became more urgent, especially when the Mughal rulers launched a frontal attack to convert the Hindus to Islam. The Sikh movement depended for almost all of its recruitment on the Hindu society. The Gurus were not idle dreamers interested only in the postulation and declaration of a utopian ideology. Their aim was to create an egalitarian plebeian movement outside the caste structure for the sake of capturing political power for the masses. The Gurus never swerved for a moment from this objective, and even paid with their lives to achieve this objective. They weighed beforehand the feasibility of each and every step they took in the light of the likely consequences on the course of the movement as a whole. It could not afford to cut itself off completely from its base. By doing so, none of the three social objectives of the movement would have been advanced and strengthened. Neither would it have succeeded in building a society outside the caste order, nor could it have successfully challenged the

religious and political domination or captured political power for the masses.⁸⁸

The vast majority (95%) of today's Sikhs are descendants of lower caste Hindus. Most of the Sikh leaders after Guru Gobind Singh were Jats, Labanas/Vanjaras, Mazhbis, Klalas, Carpenters, and Sansis. In recent times, Sikhs with Mazhbi and Carpenter backgrounds have been appointed as *Jathedar* of Akal Takht – the seat of highest spiritual authority. On the other hand, in the 2,000-year history of Christianity, in India, no one of untouchable background was ever appointed a Bishop not to speak of a Cardinal. Similarly, no Muslim of untouchable background was ever appointed as an Imam of a prestigious mosque like Jama Masjid.

The issue of inter-caste marriages in the past and present contemporary Sikh community should be looked at in light of the above discussion, not the scurrilous propaganda of McLeod. By saying “ten Gurus were all Khatris by caste,” McLeod is implying that caste was the determining factor in the selection of Gurus. The evidence suggests otherwise. The sole criterion for the selection of a successor to the house of Nanak was the total commitment to Guru Nanak's teachings and the objectives of his movement and the ability to carry them forward under the most difficult circumstances, even at the cost of many lives including their own. The path of spirituality laid down by Guru Nanak is an arduous one. Spirituality means seeing God in all and respecting all as equal. In other words, love for God and God's creation is the essence of spiritual life. It is this “love” that demands the highest sacrifice:

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ ॥
ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ॥

If you want to play the game of love (with God) then follow my path and be prepared to make a supreme sacrifice. Once you step on this path, do not hesitate to offer your head.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M, 1, p 1412.

This proclamation is central to the Sikh Movement – the selection of a successor to the house of Nanak, the foundation of *Miri Piri* (temporal and spiritual sovereignty) and the noble Khalsa order. Only

a moral person (*gurmukh*) can be a *mir pir* or Khalsa.

Guru Nanak's selection of Angad as his successor is illustrative of the process of accession to the house of Nanak.

ਨਾਨਕਿ ਰਾਜੁ ਚਲਾਇਆ ਸਚੁ ਕੋਟੁ ਸਤਾਣੀ ਨੀਵੈ ਚੈ ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਚੇਲੇ ਰਹਿਰਾਸਿ ਕੀਈ ਨਾਨਕਿ ਸਲਾਮਤਿ ਥਵਿਦੈ ॥
ਸਹਿ ਟਿਕਾ ਦਿਤੋਸੁ ਜੀਵਦੈ ॥
ਲਹਣੇ ਦੀ ਫੇਰਾਈਐ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਦੇਹੀ ਖਟੀਐ ॥
ਜੋਤਿ ਓਹਾ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਸਾਇ ਸਹਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਫੇਰਿ ਪਲਟੀਐ ॥

Nanak established his spiritual kingdom on the firm foundation of Truth. Nanak bowed before his disciple Lehna and installed him on the spiritual throne. Due to the greatness of Nanak, Lehna's fame spread far and wide. They were one and the same in spirit, only different bodily.

– Guru Granth Sahib, Balwand and Satta, p 966.

ਸੋ ਟਿਕਾ ਸੋ ਛਤ੍ਰੁ ਸਿਰ ਸੋਈ ਸਚਾ ਤਖਤ ਟਿਕਾਈ ।
ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਹੰਦੀ ਮੋਹਰ ਹਥ ਗੁਰ ਅੰਗਦ ਦੀ ਦੇਹੀ ਫਿਰਾਈ ।

It was declared with the beat of a drum that with the seal of approval of Guru Nanak, Guru Angad ascended the true throne with the same spiritual and temporal authority.

– *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, p 19.

J S Grewal has explained this process very lucidly. Before his death at Kartarpur in 1539, Guru Nanak chose his successor from amongst his followers, setting aside the claims of his sons. Nomination of a successor from amongst one's own disciples was not a new thing; it was known to many an ascetical order of the times. But the nomination of Lehna by Guru Nanak was regarded as unique because Guru Nanak himself installed Lehna in his office. His name too was changed from Lehna to Angad, making him "a limb" of the founder. This nomination was important not merely because it enabled Guru Nanak to ensure the continuation of his work, but also because it served as the basis of the idea that the positions of the Guru and the disciple were interchangeable. Closely linked with this was the idea that there was no difference between the founder and the successor, they represented one and the same light.⁸⁹

Bhai Gurdas says that after the fourth Guru, Guru Ram Das, Guruship remained in his family because the burden of Guruship became unbearable due to the hostile attitude of the Mughal rulers, proponents of the caste system and schismatic sects. Attempts were

made to kill Guru Arjun's only child, Hargobind by Pirthi Chand, elder brother of Guru Arjun. He collaborated with detractors of the Sikh movement and sought help from government officials to usurp Guruship, resulting in the martyrdom of Guru Arjun at the hands of government authorities.⁹⁰ Guru Hargobind had armed conflicts with Mughal officials and Khattris.⁹¹ Guru Tegh Bahadur sacrificed his life in opposition to the tyranny of the Mughal rulers.⁹² Guru Gobind Singh sacrificed his father, mother and four sons.⁹³

ਫਿਰ ਆਈ ਘਰ ਅਰਜੁਨੇ ਪੁਤ ਸੰਸਾਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਹਾਵੈ ।
ਜਾਣ ਨ ਦੇਸਾਂ ਸੋਢੀਓਂ ਹੋਰਸ ਅਜਰ ਨ ਜਰਿਆ ਜਾਵੈ ।
ਘਰ ਹੀ ਕੀ ਵੱਥ ਘਰੇ ਰਹਾਵੈ ।

Then Guruship was conferred on Arjun, whose son openly declared spiritual and political sovereignty (Miri Piri). He said now Guruship will stay within his family (Sodhi), as others may not be able to bear the burden of Guruship.

– *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, p 19.

The first three Gurus did not confer Guruship on their sons or relatives or people who have served the longest period. After Guru Ram Das, when Guruship remained in his family, there was no change in the criteria of selection. He chose his youngest son Arjun to be his successor; Guru Hargobind did not choose either of his sons, but his grandson Har Rai, younger son of his deceased eldest son, Gurdita. Guru Har Rai rejected his elder son Ram Rai because he showed a willingness to compromise truth to win favor from Emperor Aurangzeb, who granted him a large estate. Instead, he appointed his younger son Harkrishan, who was only eight years old. The young Guru who died from smallpox shortly thereafter, appointed his grandfather's youngest brother, Tegh Bahadur (youngest son of Guru Hargobind Sahib). Guru Tegh Bahadur opposed the forcible conversion of Kashmiri Brahmins by Aurangzeb and made a unique and unparalleled sacrifice in the annals of human history in defence of religious tolerance, freedom of worship, and freedom of conscience.

IV

ATTEMPTS TO MALIGN THE INSTITUTE OF SIKH STUDIES

McLeod blames the Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh for launching a vigorous campaign against his writings and made Daljit Singh the main target of his attack.⁹⁴ He singles out Daljit Singh because his *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir* pulled off the mask of “Western methodology of historical research” from McLeod’s face. He admits that Daljit Singh was an honest man⁹⁵ and a prolific writer⁹⁶ who was the major contributor to books and seminars that criticized McLeod’s works. Without pointing out specific charges, he blames Daljit Singh for carrying out a vendetta against him: “Daljit Singh was the person most active in all the campaigns against me and Pashaura Singh, and much more will be heard of him before this account is completed.”⁹⁷

He uses the testimony of a discredited scholar, Prof. Piar Singh to denigrate Daljit Singh:

The reason for the dispute (between Piar Singh and Daljit Singh) was, as Piar Singh maintains the fact that he had disagreed with Daljit Singh concerning the Kartarpur Granth, the manuscript regarded as the one which has been recorded by Bhai Gurdas at Guru Arjan’s dictation. Piar Singh had spent many years working on the manuscript and had come to the conclusion that it is not the original one. This of course, was not what Daljeet Singh had said in his “*Essays on the Authenticity of Karatrpuri Bir*” and would be held by him to be rank blasphemy.⁹⁸

However, in essays on the *Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir*, Daljit Singh makes no mention of Piar Singh. On one hand, McLeod says that he has explicitly renounced his earlier views about the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir*, but on the other hand, he has no qualms about supporting Piar Singh’s assertion that it is not the original one.

“In 1968 I had come upon Jodh Singh’s *Sri Kartarpuri Bir De Darshan* and this had led me to halt my earlier speculation. I concluded that the issue is still open, and later I was persuaded by my student that my original theory was wrong.”⁹⁹

In October 1992 a group that included Daljit Singh had visited

the library of Guru Nanak Dev University, their purpose being to inspect manuscript 1245 which Pashaura Singh had used extensively while writing his PhD thesis. Their intention was not just to inspect it, but to have it declared it fake. Piar Singh was asked to assist the team and soon discovered that he was not speaking to experts. “Notwithstanding loud pretensions to a knowledge of manuscriptology made by Daljit Singh in his work *Authenticity of the Kartarpuri Bir* [sic], he could not, by himself, make out any thing of MS 1245 shown to him, I therefore, had to explain to the visitors its peculiar features.”⁹⁹

From the above, McLeod concludes that an embarrassment of this kind is likely to have been at least a contributory reason for turning Daljit Singh against Piar Singh.¹⁰⁰ Daljit Singh as pointed out by McLeod himself was a well-known and prolific author on Sikhism. His *Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism* is the only work on the systematic analysis of *Gurmat* philosophy *vis-à-vis* other religious systems. In my opinion, this work is a “must read” for the proper understanding of *Gurmat* philosophy. On the other hand, Piar Singh’s only claim to fame as a Sikh scholar is the same as that of McLeod’s famous student, Pashaura Singh. Both of them opted to prostrate before the ignorant clergyman to restore their honor – thus making a mockery of academic research.

Since 2000, I have studied almost all of McLeod’s writings starting with *Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion*, in which he has indulged in gross distortion of Guru Nanak’s teachings. He has created a lot of confusion in the minds of readers by distorting Guru Nanak’s teachings, as well as Sikh history and traditions. He has drawn his conclusions and formulated his opinions and theories on various facets of Sikhism without proper investigation of *Guru Granth Sabib* (GGS), or Sikh history and traditions. He does not rely on GGS, which is the only authentic source of Sikh teachings. He does not point out the weakness or flaws in Sikh traditions and historical accounts or provide relevant evidence in support of his views, thus giving the impression to his readers that Sikhism is based on unsound oral tradition. When such theories are challenged, either he remains silent or lets his surrogates including his students, attack his critics. In the meantime, others who piggyback on McLeod, ply their trade as Sikh scholars by propagating

his baseless theories.

Generally, scholars present their work in unambiguous, concise, and definite statements, whereas McLeod does the opposite. He uses “if and but”, “I said this but I also said that”, “yes and no” and “may be and may be not”, leaving it up to the readers to draw their own conclusions. He has used this style throughout his writings and he has replied in the same manner to the questions raised by Gurdev Singh in *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*.¹⁰¹ He uses clever language to blame Gurdev Singh for misunderstanding his writings. In spite of admitting his mistakes or modifying and retracting his earlier statements, he continues to insist on distorting the truth in a clever manner in his answers to Gurdev Singh’s questions. For the sake of brevity, I examined the following four answers :

A. GURU GOBIND SINGH DID NOT APPOINT THE GRANTH SAHIB AS GURU OF SIKHS

McLeod says:

According to what I have written Guru Gobind Singh, we are told, did not appoint the Granth Sahib as Guru of the Sikhs. This belief was subsequently adopted by the Sikhs in order to impart cohesion to a hard-pressed people. But this is not what I wrote. What I said was that it may have been the situation, not that it was definitely the case. It was, in other words, a possible theory and it remains no more than that. As a theory I am unwilling to give up. No firm evidence exists for the belief that a pronouncement to this effect was made by Guru Gobind Singh. I do, however, accept that he may have done so and the near-contemporary evidence provided by Sainapat supports this. As a result the theory may be mistaken.¹⁰²

First of all every Guru before Guru Gobind appointed his successor. Why does McLeod think that Guru Gobind Singh did not and for what reason? Secondly, when he proposed his theory, why did he ignore the contemporary evidence of Sainapat and the views of Sikh historians, for example, his own esteemed friend, J.S. Grewal?

Guru Gobind Singh did not nominate any individual as his successor. For nearly a century now the Sikhs had been nurtured in the belief that Guruship was confined to the family of Guru

Ram Das. This is explicitly stated not only in the *Bachittar Natak* towards the end of the seventeenth century but also at the beginning in the *vars* of Bhai Gurdas. At the time of Guru Gobind Singh's death, however, there was none in the three generations of the surviving Sodhis who could be considered for taking up this grave responsibility. More important than this was the process by which Guruship had been gradually impersonalized, bringing *bani* and *sangat* into parallel prominence with the personal Guru. The decision taken by Guru Gobind Singh did not abolish Guruship itself but personal Guruship. The position of the Guru was henceforth given to the Khalsa and to *shabad-bani* as a logical development from Guru Nanak's decision to nominate a disciple as the Guru during his lifetime and his equation of the Shabad with the Guru. As a further logical development, the decision of Guru Gobind Singh crystallized into twin doctrine of Guru-Panth and Guru-Granth. Larger and larger number of Sikhs came to believe that Guruship after Guru Gobind Singh was vested in the Khalsa Panth and the Granth.¹⁰³

Furthermore, Guru Nanak and his successors have pointed out that *shabad (bani)* is the Guru :

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

When the Jogis asked Guru Nanak, "Who is your Guru or whose disciple are you?" "The shabad (Word) is my Guru and my mind which is focused on the shabad and comprehends it, is the disciple," he replied.

Here he has made it abundantly clear that Guru is the *shabad* (Divine knowledge), not the Guru person. Guru person is the medium for transmitting the Divine knowledge :

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p. 942.

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

Marvelous is the bani (Word) as it is the embodiment of the Formless One and nothing equals it.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 3, p. 515.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥

Word is the Guru and Guru is the Word as it contains the elixir of spiritual life. The Guru utters the Word, the Sikh who accepts it, certainly finds

salvation through the Word.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 4, p 982.

ਪੋਥੀ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਕਾ ਥਾਨ ॥

Adi Granth (Pothe) is the place to meet God. In other words, it is the bani enshrined in Adi Granth, which puts a Sikh on the path to realization of God.

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 5, p 1226.

McLeod himself has said the same thing very explicitly: “The Word is the Guru and the mind (which is focused on it) continuously is the disciple.”¹⁰⁴ So why is he unwilling to give up his theory that Guru Gobind Singh did not appoint Guru Granth Sahib as Guru? Why is he so adamant on destroying the core of the Sikh belief system that *Aad Guru Granth Sahib* is the eternal Guru for the Sikhs? Is it just a mere coincidence that he was invited to a Namdhari Conference in 2001?¹⁰⁵ Namdharis do not believe that Guru Gobind Singh appointed Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru of the Sikhs and they have their own line of Gurus after Guru Gobind Singh.

B. JATS CHANGED THE COURSE OF SIKH MOVEMENT

McLeod says:

Gurdev Singh is largely correct with regard to what I say concerning the influence of Jats. There are, however, two further points that should be added. One is that Guru Hargobind’s policy of open warfare must be traced to the hostility that the Mughal authorities in Lahore showed at this time. The presence of a strong Jat constituency in the Panth made Guru Hargobind’s policy possible, but it certainly cannot be held to have caused it. The second point is that the effect of Jat cultural patterns within the Panth is a theory, not an established fact. To this it should be added that I have yet to be persuaded that there is a better theory.¹⁰⁶

Why does he still insist, “I have yet to be persuaded that there is a better theory” in spite of the fact that his theory has no merit, and it has been refuted point by point by Jagjit Singh?^{107, 108} And what was he trying to accomplish by advancing this theory in the first place?

McLeod was disappointed and frustrated as Sikh scholars rejected his perspective/interpretation of Sikhism and Sikhs expressed very little interest in his writings. His Jat theory is a calculated scheme to

kill two birds with one stone. He is trying to win the approval of his writings from Sikh Jats, who constitute a majority of the Panth by appealing to human weakness – chauvinism. Also, at the same time, he is lending a helping hand to those who have been trying to undermine Sikhism by destroying the cohesiveness of the Panth since 1947.

Though McLeod admits that the effect of Jat cultural patterns within the Panth is a theory, not an established fact, others are still propagating this absurd theory as an established fact. Recently, Prof. Mark Juergenmeyer padded his resume by authoring, *“The Sword of Sikhism”: A study of Sikh militancy.*” He states: “Members of the tribal group, the Jats, began joining the Sikh community at the end of the sixteenth century. They were great warriors and imposed their martial values and symbols onto the whole of the Sikh community.”¹⁰⁹

Where did Juergenmeyer learn that Jats were warriors before joining the Sikh movement? He did not even bother to check the criticism of “Jat theory” by Jagjit Singh^{107, 108} and J.S. Grewal¹¹⁰ or McLeod’s own altered views on the subject. Moreover, the Indian history is silent about the role of Jats as warriors from 710 AD when a young Muslim commander, Mohammed Bin Qassem led an expedition to Sindh and looted town after town in the Jat heartland and carried away thousands of men and women as slaves. There is no evidence that the Jats of Sindh, Rajasthan, Punjab, Haryana, and Uttar Pradesh ever fought against Muslim invaders. How could they? Being Shudra, they were not allowed to wear arms, which was the prerogative of Rajputs and Khatri according to caste rules. Whereas Rajputs were among the celebrated commanders of the Mughal army, there is no evidence that the Mughals recruited Jats in the armed forces. Furthermore, to escape persecution from Muslim rulers, a majority of the Jat population converted to Islam.

Ishwinder Singh has aptly pointed out that Juergenmeyer has given no reference to support his statement; instead he has relied on McLeod’s *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*. “They were great warriors and imposed their martial values and symbols onto the whole of the Sikh community” implies that it is an established fact.¹¹¹ What a travesty of historical truth and disregard for academic ethics !

C. GURUS DID NOT PREACH ONE RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE

Earlier McLeod claimed that the ten Gurus did not preach one set of religious doctrine or system and particularly the third Guru created new institutions on old Hindu lines, the very thing Guru Nanak had spurned.¹¹² Now he has retracted most of these statements.

The ten Gurus did preach one set of doctrines. The paramount stress that Guru Nanak laid on the *nam* and regular practice of *nam simran* lay at the very heart of the system that was upheld by all the Gurus from the first to the tenth. The features that were introduced by the third Guru were additions, not changes. ... The fact that Guru Amar Das introduced customs that were taken from Hindu society apparently has much to do with Gurdev Singh's objection. There was, however, nothing wrong with doing this, provided that Guru Nanak's emphasis on the *nam* was preserved. For Amar Das it was an entirely natural source. The problem lies rather in the insistent message of Kahn Singh Nabha and the Singh Sabha movement that *ham hindu nabin* (We are not Hindu).¹¹³

He does not explain why the assertion "We are not Hindu" is not compatible with Guru Nanak's teachings or the practices that Guru Amar Das introduced. Did not Guru Arjun say the same thing – we are neither Hindu nor Muslim?

ਵਰਤ ਨ ਰਹਉ ਨ ਮਹ ਰਮਦਾਨਾ ॥ ਤਿਸੁ ਸੇਵੀ ਜੋ ਰਖੈ ਨਿਦਾਨਾ ॥
 ਏਕੁ ਗੁਸਾਈ* ਅਲਹੁ ਮੇਰਾ ॥ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹਾਂ ਨੇਬੇਰਾ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਹਜ ਕਾਬੈ ਜਾਉ ਨ ਤੀਰਥ ਪੂਜਾ ॥ ਏਕੋ ਸੇਵੀ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਦੁਜਾ ॥
 ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਉ ਨ ਨਿਵਾਜ ਗੁਜਾਰਉ ॥ ਏਕ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਲੇ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਉ ॥
 ਨਾ ਹਮ ਹਿੰਦੂ ਨ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਨ ॥ ਅਲਹੁ ਰਾਮ ਕੇ ਪਿੰਡ ਪਰਾਨ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ ॥ ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਖੁਦਿ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥

Neither do we fast like Hindus, nor observe Ramadan like Muslims. We dwell only on the One, Who protects everyone. We don't follow the Hindu or Muslim religion. We dwell on the One, Whom Hindus call Gusani and Muslims call Allah. Neither do we go on a pilgrimage to Mecca, nor to sacred Hindu centers. We serve only the One, not anyone else. Neither do we follow the Hindu worship or the Muslim prayer. We meditate on the Formless One. We are neither Hindus nor Muslims. Our bodies and breaths belong to the Almighty, Whom people call Allah or Ram. Hey Kabir, "Say that we have found the Lord through Guru's guidance."*

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 5, p 1136.

By saying "The problem lies rather in the insistent message of

* *Gusani* means Lord of the Earth.

Kahn Singh Nabha and the Singh Sabha Movement that *ham hindu nahin* (we are not Hindu)” McLeod is endorsing Harjot Oberoi’s thesis, *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* and the views of those who claim that Sikhs are “Kesadhari Hindus”. That is why in his writings he makes no mention of the Sikhs being described as Hindus in article 25 (2b) of the Indian Constitution or of the imposition of the Hindu Code Bill on them.

McLeod says, “My primary objective has been to communicate an understanding of the Sikh people and their religion to educated Western readers, and that consequently, it is important that I speak to their mode of understanding.”²³

There is no doubt that he has succeeded in communicating his version of Sikhism to Western readers. For example, Crispin Paine published an article “Sikh Pilgrimage: A Study in Ambiguity” in which he outdid even McLeod in distorting the Gurus’ teachings about pilgrimage. He starts out by claiming that even Guru Nanak himself was ambivalent toward pilgrimages.¹¹⁴ There is hardly any verse of *gurbani* in the article that the author did not distort to support his thesis. In a befitting response to this article, Ishwinder Singh in his article “Sikh Pilgrimage: A search for Ambiguity”¹¹⁵ makes it very clear that he is primarily concerned with the teachings of Sikh Gurus with regard to pilgrimage, not what the Sikhs practice. And Singh concluded that there is no ambiguity in the teachings of Gurus with regard to pilgrimage: the only pilgrimage is the awareness of the Infinite within each of us.

The integrity and credibility of McLeod and Paine are vividly reflected in their terse comments on Ishwinder Singh’s rebuttal published in the *Sikh Spectrum*.¹¹⁶

“It is an exploratory paper and I am absolutely delighted if in some way I have helped to prompt discussion of these matters,” remarked Paine. He does not acknowledge the mistakes in his paper, amounting to gross distortion of the Gurus’ teachings with regard to pilgrimage. He is not bothered a bit. He is happy to add one more fraudulent publication to his resume.

McLeod says, “The article is very well written, as it brings out the teachings of the Gurus clearly. If Sikhs fully accept their teachings, why then are they so attached to Darbar Sahib?” Look at the logic of

McLeod! Not only has he changed the subject altogether, but has even injected the “Darbar Sahib” into the fruitless debate. He admonishes the Sikhs for not being faithful to the teachings of the Gurus. He completely ignores Paine’s distortion and offers no word of advice to Paine. Is it because Paine is simply exaggerating what McLeod himself said in *The Evolution of Sikh community*?

Why do articles like Paine’s “Sikh Pilgrimage: A Study in Ambiguity” get published in Western journals? “We publish only novel and high quality work,” is the answer I got from Shinder Singh Thandi, one of the editors of *International Journal of Punjab Studies*. Considering the names of some of the editorial advisors, it is not surprising why Shinder Singh Thandhi considers distortion of Sikhism as novel work.¹¹⁷

D. GURU NANAK AND THE SANT TRADITION

In Guru Granth Sahib, the words *sant*, *sadh* and *bhagat* occur frequently and interchangeably. Their meaning is the same, and in English, it has been translated as a saint, though it does not convey the proper meaning. In the *Adi Granth*, compiled in 1604, the honorific “*bhagat*” is used for Namdev, Kabir, Ravidas and others, and their *banis* (compositions) are called “*bhagat bani*”. Had they been known as “sants” at that time, Guru Arjun would have used the honorific “*sant*” for them. Therefore, *sant* came to be associated with their names later on.

Under the heading “Academic Statements Which Do Not Agree With Mine” McLeod has responded only to an article by Shackle *et al*, though he has cited two more articles, one by Balwinder Bhogal and the other by Nirvikar Singh. It is not difficult to understand why he did not discuss Nirvikar Singh’s article: “Guru Nanak and the ‘Sants’: A Reappraisal.”

Was Guru Nanak a “Sant”? What does the term “Sant tradition” mean in this context? This paper surveys the state of academic responses to these questions. We make the case that the concept of “Sant tradition” and the membership of Guru Nanak in that tradition are quite problematic. In doing so we argue that previous attempts to frame arguments on these issues in terms of “historical scholarship” versus faith are flawed and sometimes ahistorical themselves. Instead, alternative answers emerge from within

standard scholarly inquiry, depending on varying interpretations and combinations of fragmentary historical facts. We show how this process of interpretation and selection occurs particularly in W.H. McLeod's writings on the subject. We also discuss the nature of the sources used by scholars, and the biases that may thereby be introduced.¹¹⁸

In response to this article, McLeod complained about why he was singled out as the main target in the article. But he was forced to acknowledge the fact that the "sant tradition" label applied to Northern Indian *bhakats* (*bhagats*) such as Kabir and Ravidas does not emerge until the nineteenth century. Nevertheless, he argues that the term is useful in distinguishing individuals such as these from Vaishnava *sarguna bhakats*.¹¹⁹ It is a lame argument, as he has not made any effort to distinguish Sikh Gurus from other categories of gurus. On the contrary, he has made an unsuccessful attempt to link them to Nath yogis and Vaishnava *bhakats* through his so-called sant tradition: "It was the influence of Nath doctrine and practice upon Vaishnava *bhakti*, which was primarily responsible for the emergence of the Sant synthesis. Muslim beliefs, both Sufi and orthodox, had at most a marginal effect."¹²⁰ He gives his favorite answer, "yes and no" to the question: was Guru Nanak a Sant?¹¹⁹

E. UNWILLING TO FACE THE TRUTH

McLeod has dismissed the criticism of his writings by Trilochan Singh, Sangat Singh, H.S. Dilgeer, S.S. Sodhi, and S.S. Kohli as absurd and well off the mark.¹²¹ On the other hand, he has devoted three pages to a friendly review of his work by Fauja Singh.¹²² However, he has totally avoided the discussion of Jagjit Singh's Works,^{107,108,123} which completely demolished his thesis, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community* built on wild interpretations and speculations, and flimsy evidence. He has quoted a paragraph from J S Grewal's *Contesting Interpretations of Sikh Traditions* that points out the names of Sikh scholars and organizations that were created to project a correct image of Sikhism and the Sikh community in India and abroad, and to watch, report and rebut any distortions or misinterpretations of Sikh religion and Sikh history.¹²⁴ And he has recommended it for studying the controversies in the Sikh Panth, particularly the modern dispute involving him.

However, he makes no mention of the issues raised by Grewal about his (McLeod's) approach to the understanding of Sikhism. Moreover, he makes no mention of Grewal's article, *The Role of Ideas in Sikh History* that refutes his interpretation of the institutionalization and militarization of the Sikh movement and development of the Khalsa identity.¹²⁵

He has no compunction in casting aspersions on the integrity of those who disagree with him. The foreword by Khushwant Singh to *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition* and the introduction by Choor Singh to *Sikhism: Its Philosophy and History* were too much for him to swallow. He got even with them in his own way:

The foreword by Khushwant Singh came as an unpleasant surprise. Khushwant Singh, as we all know, is a free spirit, who has riled his fellow Sikhs with opinions that contradict some of their cherished beliefs. There was, however, nothing in his foreword that was likely to upset traditional believers who regard my works as a menace to the Panth.¹²⁶

"In fairness it should be added that at the end of 2001 Justice Choor Singh, in conversation with a friend of mine in Singapore, strongly supported my work."¹²⁷

F. MANIPULATION AND DECEPTION

He has described his critics as traditionalists, conservatives, fundamentalists, who have vindictively created the impression that Sikhs in general lack appreciation and understanding of critical research on Sikhism. On the contrary, within a short span of time, the first generation of Sikh immigrants has endowed several chairs for Sikh studies in the USA, Canada, and England. And McLeod's associates, Pashaura Singh, Gurinder Singh Mann, and Harjot Oberoi are the beneficiaries at the University of Michigan, University of California at Santa Barbara, and University of British Columbia, respectively. After seeing gross distortions of Sikhism by McLeod and his associates, Sikhs are having second thoughts about the utility of such chairs and are discouraged to set up more chairs, nor is any attempt being made to strengthen the existing ones.

To deflect the criticism of his and his associates' works, he wants the readers to believe that they have been victimized by blood-thirsty

Sikhs. Moreover, he wants the readers to believe that Pashaura Singh, Harjot Oberoi, and Gurinder Singh Mann are great scholars of impeccable credibility by hiding the truth about their fraudulent research. His “Western methodology of historical research” is nothing more than “deception and manipulation of facts” as the following discussion demonstrates. Let me first give you an example of his “selective” reporting of facts to suit his own agenda with total disregard for objectivity and fairness.

McLeod wrote, “Fauja Singh published in the first issue of *Journal of Sikh Studies* (vol. 1, no. 1, February 1974, pp 79-89) a version of the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur that contradicted the traditional account and was, as a result, vilified for doing so.”¹²⁸ But he did not disclose the fact that Fauja Singh attempted to “give a new look – Marxist viewpoint” to Guru Tegh Bahadur’s execution by Emperor Aurangzeb, a bigoted Suni Muslim known for his persecution of non-Muslims, based on Ghulam Hussain’s historical work, *Siyar-al-Mutakbirin*.¹²⁹ Fauja Singh as a historian was well aware of bias of Muslim writers towards Sikhs, who called them infidels and used abusive language against them. In spite of this he went ahead to argue his proposition on the basis of a single account by a Muslim writer. His article drew criticism for his weak and contradictory arguments in support of his proposition and his disregard for other accounts that support the traditional version of Guru Tegh Bahadur’s martyrdom. Shortly thereafter Fauja Singh himself published another detailed article on the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur based on *Bhatt Vahis* corroborating the traditional account.¹³⁰ The association of Bhatt (Brahmins) with Sikh Gurus goes back to the time of Guru Nanak and some of them kept records of important events in the lives of the Gurus.

Fauja Singh’s article was criticized not only by Trilochan Singh and Kapur Singh, but also by his academic peers including J.S. Grewal. One should ask McLeod: Since when criticism of someone’s research work came to be equated with vilification?

McLeod is a master of deception par excellence. Earlier on page 112 he accuses Daljit Singh of unfairly criticizing him for views on *Kartarpuri Bir*, which he says he had explicitly renounced.⁷⁰ However, on page 172 he still raises questions about the *Kartarpuri Bir*.

The general question of the nature of the Kartarpuri text is still open, though not as result of anything that I have written. Many years ago I decided that questions concerning the *Adi Granth* were altogether too sensitive for an outsider to handle and that all research should be left to scholars who were also Sikhs. The books by Piar Singh, Pashaura Singh, Gurinder Singh Mann and Balwant Singh Dhillon show that the origin and nature of the manuscript are still being debated and there are some considerable differences of opinion.

It is deplorable and shameful that Dhillon's work is lumped in with the works of the other three – as Dhillon disagrees with them in no uncertain terms, “Similarly, after going through the studies of the above scholars on the *Adi Granth*, I also feel that they have not told the whole story, honestly and truly.”¹³¹

Perhaps that is why Pashaura Singh and Gurinder Singh Mann did not want the Sikhs to read their theses and McLeod defends their actions without showing any deference to academic ethics :

After completing his Ph D, Pashaura Singh was appointed to teach Sikhism and Punjabi in the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, and it was there that disgraceful treatment was visited upon him. A few conservative Sikhs regard my supervision as a certain route to dangerous untruth and Pashaura Singh was made to pay for having me as a supervisor in a most shameful manner. His thesis was photocopied without authorization and numerous copies were circulated in North America and elsewhere.”¹³²

It is a strange logic that McLeod finds the photocopying of the thesis for which Pashaura Singh was awarded a Ph.D. shameful. The thesis was in the public domain. Genuine scholars feel honored when their work receives public attention! Is not research for the benefit of the public? Moreover, did not Sikhs pay for Pashaura Singh's research? McLeod does not stop there. He continues his diatribe against the Sikhs by proclaiming that Pashaura Singh's life was in danger, therefore, a police car of the University's Public Safety Department accompanied him whenever he moved about the University of Michigan campus, and this protection stopped only when Pashaura Singh himself asked for it to be removed.¹³³ Pashaura Singh too has been continuously complaining about the photocopying of his thesis and defending

McLeod as a great scholar.¹³⁴

Having learnt a lesson from Pashaura Singh's example, Gurinder Singh Mann locked up his thesis until he got a secure faculty position at the University of California at Santa Barbara, endowed by Dr Narinder Singh Kapany in the loving memory of his mother. This is exactly what McLeod did – he kept his thesis out of reach until he was declared as being among the foremost scholars of Sikh studies by a reviewer (Prof. Zaehner) of the *Times Literary Supplement*, who was totally ignorant about Sikhism. We know that McLeod wants to teach his version of Sikhism to “inquisitive educated Western people.”²³ May I ask: To whom do Pashaura Singh and Gurinder Singh Mann want to teach their version of Sikhism? Surely they did not want the Sikhs to read their theses! Like McLeod, they too want Sikhs to support them financially, in order to propagate their version of Sikhism! They have no qualms about holding faculty positions sponsored by the Sikhs!

McLeod uses a clever tactic to defend himself by projecting Pashaura Singh, Gurinder Singh Mann, and Harjot Oberoi, whose works have come under severe criticism, as distinguished scholars:

It is in fact a grievous disgrace for those Sikhs who joined on the hunt against him. Pashaura Singh's thesis has since been published by the Oxford University Press in New Delhi as *The Guru Granth Sahib: Canon, Meaning and Authority* and was a strong contender for the best book published in Religious Studies for 2000. ... From time to time the Pashaura Singh debate is raised on the Internet (particularly by Sikh-Diaspora, a discussion group of younger Sikhs). In this case, however, Pashaura Singh appears to receive far more bouquets than brickbats.¹³⁵

Were the judges of Pashaura Singh's thesis expert in Sikhism or were they just like McLeod's thesis supervisor? Besides, why was Pashaura Singh demoted from the rank of assistant professor to lecturer? Further, I would like Pashaura Singh or McLeod or the editor of *Studies in Religion/Sciences Religieuses* to point out the scholarly worth of Pashaura Singh's article *Recent trends and prospects in Sikh studies* published in 1998.^{21, 134} In what manner does this article advance the cause of Sikh studies or the understanding of Sikhism? Would McLeod enlighten us about the expertise of an Internet discussion group of younger Sikhs on Sikhism! Their offering of bouquets to Pashaura

Singh is like a blind person applauding the marksmanship of a person with myopic vision!

McLeod has picked only certain statements from chapter 1 (Introduction) and chapter 12 (Pashaura Singh's Thesis on "The Text & Meaning of *Adi Granth*" by Trilochan Singh) in *Planned Attack on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Academics or Blasphemy* to create the impression that this text is devoid of academic discussion and is full of absurd and wild accusations against him and Pashaura Singh¹³⁶. He makes no mention of the contents of 37 articles by different Sikh scholars, mostly Ph Ds, both academics and non-academics, which discuss and challenge every aspect of Pashaura Singh's thesis built on the basis of *Goindwal Pothis*, belonging to the schismatic sect of Baba Mohan and the GNDU Manuscript 1245 [GNDU stands for Guru Nanak Dev University] discovered from unknown sources in 1987.¹³⁷

To my knowledge, so far, Pashaura Singh has not responded to any of these articles or the two questions Dr Jasbir Singh Mann asked in a letter of December 4, 1992, addressed to Hew, Joseph and Pashaura.¹³⁸

1. When and how did Pashaura Singh come across GNDU Manuscript 1245 and where it was before 1987?
2. Who published articles under the authorship of Dr Loehlin in 1987 & 1990 suggesting, "Western friends of Sikhism and the Sikhs likewise have noted this lack of critical interest on part of the Sikhs. Fortunately, many of their scholars and research experts are doing research on textual and historical problem."

Pashaura Singh, on page 92 of his thesis, provides a rationale for the textual analysis of the *Adi Granth* by quoting Dr Loehlin who had urged Sikhs to submit the *Adi Granth* to textual criticism: "The Sikhs will hold a unique position among the religions of the world if they prove through careful textual criticism the widely accepted belief that the *Kartarpur Granth* is the MS dictated by Guru Arjun." And at the bottom of the page he cites the following reference for this quote:

C. Loehlin, "The Need for textual and Historical Criticism", *The Sikh Courier* (Spring-Summer, 1987), p 18. Originally, this paper was read at the Punjab Historical Conference and published in its proceedings, 1966. Archer's comments may be seen in "The Bible of Sikhs", *The Review of Religion* (January 1949), pp 11-25.

Dr Loehlin, a missionary colleague of McLeod from California, was Vice-Principal of Baring College, Batala. After his retirement he settled in California, and was admitted to an Assisted Living facility in 1983. The administrator of this facility indicated that since 1983 Loehlin was neither capable of writing nor asked anyone to write any such article until his death in August 1987. Dr Loehlin's daughter also confirmed the same. And yet the article published under Loehlin's name in 1987 was republished with additional material in 1990 in the March-April issue of *The Sikh Review*, Calcutta. Since Dr Loehlin was incapacitated and died in 1987, who was the ghostwriter of the articles under his name in 1987 and 1990? Could it be someone who questioned the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir*? In *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, McLeod mentions that others including Loehlin had suspicions concerning the Kartarpur manuscript and were seeking alternative explanations.⁷³

A genuine Ph.D. degree requires original research of high calibre, not reinterpretation of information gathered by unreliable sources. Moreover, a researcher makes a thorough search of literature relevant to the thesis and uses only impeccable references, not hearsay or private conversation as evidence to support the argument. On the other hand, Gurinder Singh Mann has used the information about the extinct *Guru Har Sahai Pothi* (manuscript) and two extant *Goindwal Pothis* for his thesis, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*. These *Pothis* have been in the possession of the descendants Prithi Chand, elder brother of Guru Arjun, and Baba Mohan, elder son of Guru Amar Das, respectively. And these *Pothis* were solely used for pecuniary purposes.

Both Baba Mohan and Prithi Chand were found to be unworthy for Guruship by their fathers, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das, respectively. These embittered and disgruntled men set themselves up as Gurus in opposition to Guru Ram Das and Guru Arjun, respectively. Bhai Gurdas, who was the nephew of Guru Amar Das and contemporary of five Gurus (Guru Angad to Guru Hargobind) and also the amanuenses of *Adi Granth* under the supervision of Guru Arjun, has described Baba Mohan as mentally deranged (ਕਮਲਾ, *kamla*) and Prithi Chand as crooked (ਮੀਣਾ, *mina*).^{139,140}

Professor Sahib Singh spent most of his life studying Guru Granth Sahib; first he prepared its grammar and then translated it into modern

Punjabi prose in ten volumes. He has explained beautifully, logically and convincingly that Guru Nanak wrote down his *bani* (sacred composition) and kept it safely and gave it to Guru Angad when he assumed the Guruship, and that in turn he gave it to Guru Amar Das along with his own, and that this process was repeated. So when Guru Arjun compiled the *Adi Granth*, he had in his possession all the *bani* of his predecessors and the *bani* of *bhagats* collected by them.¹⁴¹

The first time reference to *Goindwal Pothis* is found in Sarup Das Bhalla's *Mahima Parkash* wherein he alleges that Guru Arjun composed a hymn in praise of Baba Mohan in order to borrow *Goindwal Pothis*, which he needed for the compilation of *Adi Granth*.¹⁴² However, contemporary sources, *Varan Bhai Gurdas* and even later sources, namely *Das Gur Katha* (Kavi Kankan) and *Bansawali Nama* (Kesar Singh Chhibbar) make no mention to the above incidence. However, later Sikh sources beginning from *Sikhan Di Bhagat Mala*, *Gurbilas Chbevin Patshahi* (Sohan), and *Sri Gur Partap Suraj Granth* (Bhai Santokh Singh) have depicted this incidence in a dramatic way.¹⁴²

Professor Sahib Singh has also refuted this absurd story of "Guru Arjun borrowing *Pothis* from Mohan" convincingly and logically by pointing out that Guru Arjun had all the *bani* he needed for the compilation of *Adi Granth*, and that the word *mohan* (Delightful) in an epithet for God, not for any person.¹⁴³ Guru Nanak has also used *mohan* in the same sense.¹⁴⁴

As pointed out aptly by Dhillon, textual analysis of *Guru Har Sahai Pothi* in the absence of the *Pothi* is absolutely impossible and looks to be unacademic.¹⁴⁵ I may add further that it amounts to "daylight academic fraud."¹⁴⁶ In spite of this Mann, went ahead to build his sandcastle, *The Making of Sikh Scripture*, which was demolished by Dhillon and others. This is what Professor Pritam Singh, former head of Sikh Studies at Guru Nanak Dev University, who was among the earliest and ardent supporters of McLeod, as J S Grewal and Khushwant Singh, says about Mann's work:

The pick of Western scholars, interested in Sikh Studies, including, I am told my old friend, the venerable Dr W.H. McLeod, has rallied round Dr Gurinder Singh Mann, the author of *The Goindwal Pothis: The earliest Extant Source of The Sikh Canon* (1996).... As I look back, it becomes clear that Professor Sahib Singh had already

thrown a spanner into the prevalent theory by persistently claiming that Guru Arjun Dev had compiled the *Adi Granth* on the basis of an inherited corpus containing the works of his predecessors and others... The professor also dismissed, as pure concoction, the whole story in which Guru Arjun Dev was shown as composing and singing an eulogy in honor of Baba Mohan and receiving, as reward, the Goindwal MSS, on loan. The “Mohan hymn” according to the Professor’s interpretation is a paean adoring the great Lord Himself. ... I may say, in all humility, that my study of the contents of the *Abhiyapur Pothi* confirms, though indirectly, Professor Sahib Singh’s thesis and negates some of the major, if not all the conclusions, of Dr Mann and Giani Gurdit Singh. In a nutshell, my finding is that the *Adi Granth* and the *Abhiyapur Pothi* are two parallel recensions of *Gurbani* and *Bhagat-Bani* with the *Adi Granth* serving as the scripture of the Sikh mainstream and the *Abhiyapur Pothi* intended to be the official sacred book of the faction set up by Mohan and his son.¹⁴⁷

The interpretation of a couplet from Guru Arjun’s *shabad* on page 15 of Pashaura Singh’s thesis is a typical example of how both Pashaura Singh and Mann use logic and interpret *gurbani* and historical facts to justify their formulations.¹⁴⁸

ਪੀਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਕਾ ਖੋਲਿ ਡਿਠਾ ਖਜਾਨਾ ॥ (*piu dade ka khol dittha khjana*)

ਤਾ ਮੇਰੈ ਮਨਿ ਭਇਆ ਨਿਧਾਨਾ ॥ (*ta merai man bhaya nidhana*)

When I opened the treasure of my father and grandfather to see it myself, then I realized the divine treasure in my *man* (heart-mind-soul).

– Guru Granth Sahib, M 5, p 186.

Pashaura Singh has given the literal translation, which may be accepted by the “inquisitive Western educated people,” but not, even by illiterate Punjabi people because paternal grandfather (*dada*, ਦਾਦਾ) is not the same as maternal grandfather (*nana*, ਨਾਨਾ). Guru Arjun did not inherit any *bani* (sacred writings) from his *dada*; he inherited *bani* from his *nana*, Guru Amar Das. Moreover, in Punjabi expression like *piu dade di iṛṛṛat* (ਪਿਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਇੜੜਤ) or *piu dade di milkh* (ਪਿਉ ਦਾਦੇ ਦੀ ਮਿਲਖ) do not literally mean father and paternal grandfather’s honor or riches, rather it means ancestral (ਵਡੇਰਿਆਂ ਦੀ, *vderian di*) honor or riches. So here Guru Arjun is talking about his inheritance from his spiritual ancestors –

Guru Nanak, Guru Angad, Guru Amar Das and Guru Ram Das – collection of their sacred writings. Besides, Pashaura Singh has quoted only two lines from a shabad of ten lines. In the other lines, Guru Arjun makes abundantly clear that his inheritance is invaluable, immeasurable and inexhaustible and that it is for sharing with others.

Further down on the same page Pashaura Singh elaborates on his interpretation of the couplet.

Here the reference to both his father and grandfather’s “treasure” may suggest that Guru Arjun received at least two sets of manuscripts of *gurbani*, one belonging to his father and the other to his grandfather. The works of Guru Nanak and Guru Angad together with Bhagats were grouped with his grandfather’s *bani* in the *Goindwal pothis*. Since his father, Guru Ram Das, was not represented in these volumes Guru Arjun presumably had access to a second manuscript.

First, he is not sure (or perhaps he is suggestive) whether Guru Arjun received at least two sets of *gurbani*, one belonging to his father and the other to his grandfather.

Second, he claims that the works of Guru Nanak and Guru Angad together with Bhagats were grouped with his grandfather’s *bani* in the *Goindwal pothis* without providing any proof or logical reasoning – an example of wild and absurd speculation reflecting McLeodian mentality.

Third, what does “Since his father, Guru Ram Das, was not represented in these volumes Guru Arjun presumably had access to a second manuscript” mean? In which volumes was Guru Ram Das not represented? What was in the second manuscript presumably accessible to Guru Arjun? What was in the set of manuscripts he got from his father and maternal grandfather if Guru Arjun had to consult a second manuscript?

Instead of saying clearly that Guru Arjun borrowed *Goindwal pothis* in order to compile the *Adi Granth*, Pashaura Singh has implied the same cleverly in confusing language – the tactic he learned from his thesis supervisor, McLeod.

Did not Guru Amar Das give all his collection of *bani* whether in the form of *pothis* or separate manuscripts to Guru Ram Das as Guru Nanak did to Guru Angad and he in turn to Guru Amar Das?

Does it make any sense that Guru Amar Das appointed Ram

Das as his successor but gave his collection of *bani* to Baba Mohan whom he found unfit to lead the Sikhs as Guru?

Moreover, it is absurd to suggest that there was paucity of recorded *bani* during the time of Guru Arjun or Guru Amar Das. On the contrary, there was abundance of recorded *bani* during the time of Guru Amar Das and Guru Arjun. We know that Guru Nanak and Guru Angad constructed a modern, easy and efficient script, Gurmukhi from crude scripts current at that time, to record *gurbani* (sacred hymns) and the propagation of its message. We can well imagine the enthusiasm among Sikhs for learning to read and write this script, as in Hindu society at that time reading and writing was the privilege only of upper castes, Brahamins, Khattris and traders, due to caste restrictions. So it was not only the Gurus and their close associates who were preparing manuscripts of *gurbani*, but also ordinary Sikhs making notes of *gurbani* for their personal use. We also know that during the time of Guru Amar Das, the population of Sikhs was so large and widespread that Guru Amar Das organized it into 22 dioceses (*manjis*, ਮੰਜੀਆਂ), each headed by a Sikh (*manjidar*, ਮੰਜੀਦਾਰ) well versed in *Gurmat*. So it is reasonable to believe that each *manjidar* had a complete collection of recorded *gurbani* for conducting religious services and for the propagation of *Gurmat* philosophy. And many Sikhs may have a full set of *gurbani* records for their personal use. People like McLeod would ask what happened to those records of *gurbani*? The answer is simple and logical. The manuscripts were destroyed by the enemies of Sikhs or disintegrated due to the ravage of time for lack of proper care. In recent times, we witnessed the looting and burning of the Sikh Reference Library by Indira Gandhi's army during the attack on the Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) complex in 1984. After the conquest of the Punjab, the British not only looted precious jewels and valuables from Maharaja Ranjit Singh's treasury, but also stole many rare Sikh manuscripts. According to Sikh tradition, the entire collection of literature in the possession of Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib was lost during transportation or destroyed and looted by the enemies. After the death of Guru Gobind Singh, the enemies launched an all out assault to destroy Sikhs and Sikh philosophy. There were two major massacres (*chbota ghallughara* and *wada ghallughara*) of Sikhs, and then there was a systematic extermination of the Sikh population under

Farrukhsiyar and Zakaria Khan and his *Divan* Lakhpat Rai. A price was fixed on the heads of Sikhs, informers and bounty hunters were well rewarded, and hunting parties were organized to search for Sikhs. Their belongings were looted and their homes and lands confiscated. The utterance of the words, Guru or Granth and the keeping of Guru Granth Sahib or *gurbani* in any form were proscribed. As a consequence of this campaign only a few thousand Sikhs survived by taking shelter in the desert of Rajasthan and the forests of Shivalik hills, and among their ranks only a few could read and write. Among the heads of twelve Sikh Misl (confederacies) only Jassa Singh Ahluwalia could read or write. In the meantime, Hindu *mahants/udasis* took control of Sikh religious places and they played havoc with *Gurmat* using anti-*Gurmat* literature that was created during this period.¹⁴⁹ How and who could have saved Sikh literature under such circumstances? Whatever little was left was subverted through interpolation.

McLeod was well aware of the information about Piar Singh's unethical behavior described in Dhillon's *Early Sikh Tradition: Myth and Reality*. In spite of that, he showed no hesitation in using Piar Singh's testimony to denigrate Daljit Singh and build up Pashaura Singh and defend his own work.¹⁵⁰

It was Piar Singh who penned down two notes one in Punjabi and one in English in GNDU MS # 1245. It was Piar Singh who got it from somewhere and in collusion with manuscript dealers, Chawla Brothers sold it to GNDU at a good price in March 1987. The dealers are reluctant to divulge the actual source of acquisition,¹⁵¹ but why? What are they afraid of or hiding? May be it has something to do with the four events that took place in 1987. GNDU acquired MS # 1245; Pashaura Singh started his Ph.D. research on it;¹⁵² Harjot Singh Oberoi completed his thesis: *A World Reconstructed: Religion, Ritual and Community among Sikhs*¹⁵³ and was installed in the Chair of Sikh Studies at the University of British Columbia, Canada through the machinations of the Indian government,¹⁵⁴ and a ghostwriter published an article under the name of Dr Loehlin who was either incapacitated or dead, urging Sikhs to submit *Adi Granth* for textual analysis.

McLeod condemns the Sikhs while praising Oberoi's academic accomplishments :

So intense was the volume of abuse and condemnation that Oberoi

resigned his Sikh Studies chair, though not from the teaching staff of the University. The University of British Columbia gave Oberoi strong support throughout his ordeal and continues to benefit from his presence as a teacher and a scholar, taking full responsibility for funding his position and continuing to do so in the future. His book *The Construction of Religious Boundaries* was highly acclaimed by the American Academy of Religion and was awarded the Best Book Prize for 1994.¹⁵⁵

Did the American Academy of Religion read *Invasion of Religious Boundaries*,¹⁵⁴ a compendium of rebuttals to *The Construction of Religious Boundaries*? Were there any experts on Sikhism in the award committee? Or were they just like McLeod's thesis supervisor and examiners or people like Barrier and Juergensmeyer?

It is doubtful that Oberoi has understanding of *Gurmat* philosophy or Punjabi literature and culture. For example, he did not cite any reference from Guru Granth Sahib which is the only authentic source of *Gurmat* philosophy in support of his thesis: *A World Reconstructed: Religion, Ritual and Community among Sikhs*. Oberoi is also ignorant of Sikh history. His understanding of Sikhism is based on the writings of the detractors and opponents of Singh Sabha Movement, who were claiming that Sikhs are Hindus while denigrating Sikhism and Sikhs.

Oberoi claims that before the Singh Sabha Movement there was no difference between Hindus and Sikhs. If there was no difference between Sikhs and Hindus before the Singh Sabha Movement then how come Mughal rulers put a price only on the heads of Sikhs? Why did Hindus support the Mughal authorities by organizing hunting parties to capture and kill Sikhs? In view of the rise of the Sikhs as a militant force in Northwestern India, the Mughal administration pursued a policy of tolerance towards Hindus and their places of worship. The upper caste Hindus emerged as the major beneficiaries of the Mughal-Sikh conflict, and rather developed a vested interest in it both for keeping their positions and carrying on their war against Sikhism.¹⁵⁶

Oberoi's lack of expertise in Punjabi language, culture and literature is evident from the texts he uses to teach Punjabi. Ignoring all the Punjabi literature in the world, he uses *The Chaupa Singh Rabit-nama* edited by McLeod in his Punjabi course as it has the Gurmukhi text as well as an English translation.¹⁵⁷ Moreover, Oberoi supervised

Doris Jakobsh's Ph. D. thesis "Relocating Gender in Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity," at the University of British Columbia, 1999. In this thesis, almost all quotes from Guru Granth Sahib are misinterpreted to show that Sikh Gurus were prejudiced against women. Punjabi proverbs are also misinterpreted to support her views.

G. GURU NANAK AND THE SIKH RELIGION

I find McLeod's understanding of Sikhism rudimentary. His interpretation of Guru Nanak's teachings demonstrates his lack of understanding of the basic principles of *Gurmat* philosophy. Most probably he did not study Guru Granth Sahib seriously! It seems he spent most of his time on the study of *janam-sakbis*, as they are so similar to the Christian Bible, and that is why he considers his work on *janam-sakbis* as the best. It is very likely that he formulated his opinion of Sikhism from *janam-sakbis*. However, his work on *janam-sakbis* does not make any contribution to the understanding and success of the Sikh movement. Sikhs had already questioned the authorship and the anti-*Gurmat* contents of *janam-sakbis*. *Jaman-sakbis* were rather considered as the source of history, which McLeod has attempted to destroy! McLeod has compared them to Hadith, which is absurd.¹⁵⁸ If the Gurus thought that history was that important they could have written it themselves or had it written by someone else, as they did with their *bani* (sacred writings). If they thought that additional manuals were needed as moral instructions for the Sikhs, they would have written those too. There is no evidence that any Guru wrote any historical document or manual of moral instructions except their *bani*. So the comparison of Hadith with *janam-sakbis* is pointless, as they are full of anti-*Gurmat* teachings. The *janam-sakbis* were written by the detractors and opponents of *Gurmat* or by ignorant Sikhs or by devout and learned Sikhs whose works were later interpolated.

Non-Sikhs look at Sikhism as simply a religious phenomenon. Whereas Hindus regard it as a reform movement within Hinduism as well as its military wing against the onslaught of Muslims, others regard it as a synthesis of Hinduism and Islam, an attempt to reconcile the two faiths. To my knowledge very few non-Sikhs have seriously studied Guru Granth Sahib or tried to understand how and why the Sikh

movement succeeded against two formidable foes: the Mughal rulers and the caste hierarchy (proponents and defenders of the caste ideology). The Sikh movement had no outside support except among low caste Hindus (peasants, artisans and untouchables). The large number of Khatri who joined the Sikh movement in the beginning, abandoned it later on due to their strong attachment to the caste system and weaker commitment to Sikh ideology, and due to persecution of Sikhs by the Mughal authorities.

McLeod has made an ugly attempt to connect the Sikh movement to Nath yogis and Vaisnava *bhaktas* (*bhagats*) while ignoring the observations of contemporary writers and Prof. Mohammed Iqbal (1877-1938), a celebrated poet, philosopher and a great Islamic thinker.

Moshin Fani, a Parsi, author of *Dabistan-i-Maz̄haib* who came into contact with Guru Hargobind in 1640 AD made the following observation about *Nanak-prasths* (followers of Guru Nanak):

The Guru believes in one God. His followers do not worship idols. They never pray or practice austerities like Hindus. They do not believe in incarnation, or places of pilgrimages, or the Sanskrit language, which the Hindus deem to be the language of gods. They believe that all the Gurus are the same as Nanak.¹⁵⁹

Ghulam Mohyuddin who witnessed the *Khande Di Pahul* (baptism) ceremony on Baisakhi of 1699 and the day's proceedings reported to Emperor Aurangzeb that Guru Gobind Singh has abolished castes and customs, old rituals, beliefs and superstitions of the Hindus, and banded his followers in one single brotherhood. No one will be superior or inferior to another. Men of all castes have been made to drink the holy water (*Amrit*) from the same bowl. Though orthodox men have opposed him, about twenty thousand men and women have taken *Khande Di Pahul* at his hand on the first day. The Guru also told the gathering that I should call myself Gobind Singh only if I can make the meek sparrows pounce upon the hawks and tear them, only if one combatant of my force faces a legion of the enemy.¹⁶⁰

Qazi Nur Mohammed who witnessed the battle between Ahmad Shah Abdali and Sikhs in 1764 called the Sikhs infidels and dogs, but after some reflection could not help making the following remarks:

Sikhism is distinct from Hinduism. The Sikhs never kill a coward

and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They seldom resort to cold-blooded murder even of their enemies. They respect the chastity of woman as a part of their faith and honour. Adultery does not exist among them. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave girl. They never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them and they do not keep company with an adulterer or a thief. When in festivities, they surpass Hatim in generosity.¹⁶¹

Prof. Iqbal's observation about the success of the Sikh movement and its impact on the Indian society is remarkable in the sense that it captures the true essence of *Gurmat* philosophy :

...
ਕੌਮ ਨੇ ਪੈਗਾਮ ਗੋਤਮ ਕੀ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਪਰਵਾਹ ਨਾ ਕੀ ।
ਕਦਰ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀ ਨਾ ਆਪਨੇ ਗੋਹਰ ਜਕਦਾਨਾ ਕੀ ।

...
ਆਹ ਸ਼ੁਦਰ ਕੇ ਲੀਏ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਗਮਖਾਨਾ ਹੈ ।
ਦਰਦੇ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਸੇ ਇਸ ਬਸਤੀ ਕਾ ਦਿਲ ਬੇਗਾਨਾ ਹੈ ।

...
ਫਿਰ ਉਠੀ ਆਖਿਰ ਸਦਾ ਤੋਹੀਦ ਕੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸੇ ।
ਹਿੰਦ ਕੇ ਇਕ ਮਰਦੇ ਕਾਮਲ ਨੇ ਜਗਾਇਆ ਖੁਆਬ ਸੇ ।

The Indian people did not pay any attention to the message of Gautam. They did not recognize the value of their "flawless diamond". ... India is a land of sorrow and suffering for the Shudra (masses of working people). There is no compassion in this place. ... Eventually, a voice rose from Punjab proclaiming the unity of mankind under "One and Only God." A "perfect man" from Punjab awakened the conscience of the Indian people with his message of "universal love and humanism."

– Poem: *Nanak*

ਨਾਨਕ ਨੇ ਜਿਸ ਚਮਨ ਮੇ ਵਹਦਤ ਕਾ ਗੀਤ ਗਾਇਆ ।

Nanak sang his song of "unity of mankind under One and Only God" throughout the land.

– Poem: *Watan* (country)

Iqbal saw no visible impact of Bhakti movement or Sufis or any other movement on the Indian society. Further, his analysis of the victory of Khalsa forces over Muslim rulers is very true :

*Khalsa shamsbeero Quran re burd,
Andrin Kishwar Mussakmani namurd.*¹⁶²

The Khalsa took away the sword and *Quran* from the Muslims and shattered the dreams of Muslim conquest.

In other words, it was *Gurmat* philosophy that inspired the Sikhs to fight the oppression of Muslim rulers and the tyranny of the caste system.

On the other hand, McLeod digs up obscure and unreliable references when he wants to distort Sikhism. For example, he cites John Malcolm's *Sketch of the Sikhs* published in 1810 to mislead the readers about *Dasam Granth*: "It appears that *Dasam Granth* was indeed accepted by the Khalsa as a part of the Guru Granth in the later eighteenth century as the testimony of John Malcolm makes clear."¹⁶³

There is no evidence that *Dasam Granth* was found in Punjab or Delhi in the eighteenth century. There is also no evidence that in the eighteenth century Guru Granth Sahib was not given exclusive preference over the *bani* (composition) of Guru Gobind Singh. Prior to Malcolm's mention of *Dasam Granth*, there is no reference to it either in Sikh or non-Sikh sources (Muslim and European).¹⁶⁴

However, there were 32 *Dasam Granths* circulating in the Amritsar area by 1890. The presently published *Dasam Granth* (1902) was created by the Sodhak Committee made-up of British cronies (1895-1897) to bring it into closer conformity with the Granth floated by the British in the late eighteenth century prepared by Nirmalas/Mahants (Nawal Singh, Dayal Singh and Sukha Singh) at Takht Patna Sahib. The Patna Sahib *granth* was implanted in the East India Company Library by Colebrook and Charles Wilkins and used by John Malcolm to write his *Sketch of the Sikhs* in 1810. Devanagari version of this *granth* was written in February 1847 after the Sikhs lost the first Anglo-Sikh War (Second treaty with Lahore, December 16, 1846 at Bhairowal when the British became virtual masters of Punjab). Treacherous Sardar Tej Singh was the chief of the regency council when this Devanagari *Dasam Granth* was created. In recognition of his services, the title of Raja was conferred on him on August 7, 1847.¹⁶⁴

Takht Patna Sahib came under the control of East India Company near the end of eighteenth century. The revenue records of Patna treasury show that *Nirmalas/Mahants* of Takht Patna Sahib were provided with pension and opium from 1814 onwards by the East

India Company.¹⁶⁴

I have often wondered why the writer of *Bachittar Natak*, which is a part of *Dasam Granth*, portrayed relationship between the Sikh Guru and Mughal rulers as cordial in spite of the fact that the Mughal rulers executed Guru Arjun and Guru Tegh Bahadur. Moreover, the Mughals committed unspeakable atrocities on the Sikhs and there was a bloody struggle between Mughal authorities and the Sikhs that lasted for almost half a century until the victory of the Sikhs. Dr Jasbir Singh Mann's discovery of the relationship between the East India Company and the *Nirmalas/Mahants* of Takht Patna goes a long way in solving this riddle. Most probably, before the takeover of Takht Patna Sahib by East India Company, the *Nirmalas/Mahants* were on the payroll of Mughal rulers.

In chapter 13 of *Bachittar Natak* the writer implies that the Gurus approved of the Mughal rulers and *as quid-pro-quo*, the latter respected and supported the former.

ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਚੋਉ ॥ ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਸੋਉ ॥
 ਦੀਨਸਾਹ ਇਨ ਕੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੋ ॥ ਦੁਨੀਪੱਤਿ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਅਨੁਮਾਨੋ ॥
 ਜੋ ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਦਾਮ ਨ ਦੈ ਹੈ ॥ ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਗਹਿ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਹੈ ॥
 ਦੈ ਦੈ ਤਿਨ ਕੋ ਬਡੀ ਸਜਾਇ ॥ ਪੁਨਿ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਲੂਟ ਬਨਾਇ ॥

God Himself created the successors of Baba Nanak and Babur. Recognize the former as spiritual and the latter as temporal sovereign. The successors of Babur punished and looted the property of those who failed to tithe the house of Nanak. When these penniless wretched ones begged Sikhs for help, the Mughals looted the Sikhs who helped them. The Guru also shunned them. The Mughals punished and killed those who turned their back on the Guru, but those who remained faithful, were saved by the Guru.

Why was the British (East India Company) involved in the subversion of Sikhism? Dr Mann deals with this subject in detail in his forthcoming book.

People like McLeod who interpret the Sikh movement in terms of historical factors ignore the fact that Sikhs, who were locked in a struggle of life and death against the oppression of Muslim rule, and the forces of caste ideology in the eighteenth century, were insignificant in terms of numbers in the population of Punjab. Why did not the same historical factors inspire low caste Hindus in the rest of India or even in Punjab to pick up arms against the tyranny of the caste system

and Muslim rule? In order to fit Guru Nanak into his so-called “sant tradition” McLeod has distorted Guru Nanak’s teachings. Commenting on the reaction of Sikhs to *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, he says:

“The hostility focused exclusively on the portion which concerned the life of Guru Nanak, the section dealing with his teachings being almost completely untouched by criticism. Apparently this later part was entirely acceptable.”¹⁶⁵

Here again McLeod is not telling the truth. Both Daljit Singh and Jagjit Singh have challenged his interpretation of Guru Nanak’s teachings in *Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism* and *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, respectively, without naming him as they criticized his works again without naming him in *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*.¹⁶⁶ Besides, others may have been frustrated and discouraged from questioning McLeod’s interpretation of Guru Nanak’s teachings, as I found out myself.

In April 2002, I wrote an article challenging McLeod’s assertion that Guru Nanak accepted the doctrines of *karma* and transmigration and submitted it for publication to *Understanding Sikhism/The Research Journal*. The editor, Prof. Devinder Singh Chahal liked it so much that he included it in the July-December 2002 issue¹⁶⁷ and encouraged me to examine critically the entire section of Guru Nanak’s teachings in *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*. So I sent him another article in September 2002 challenging McLeod’s other interpretations of Guru Nanak’s teachings. To my surprise, he didn’t even acknowledge the receipt of the article. When I asked him about the article, he said, “You should write your own article.” I could not understand what he meant, so I asked, “What do you mean, I wrote the article and I am the sole author.” With some hesitation, he remarked, “It is not proper to name the author whose work you are criticizing, rather you write your own article on that topic.” “How do you review someone’s work without naming the author?” There was no answer and I kept wondering why is he reluctant to publish the article, which he encouraged me to write? Suddenly, the cat came out of the bag and started mewling loudly.

In June 2003 Prof. Cole and Prof. Barrier advised the Internet Sikh Diaspora discussion group not to read Gurdev Singh and Trilochan Singh’s books that criticize McLeod’s works, and Prof. Chahal carried this advice to a wider Sikh audience.^{7,8} I asked Chahal, “Do you endorse

Cole and Barrier's advice?" "Who are you to question my intention? I am my own man, I do not take orders from anyone, I will answer and deal with such questions in later issues of my journal." So far he has neither answered me nor dealt with my questions in his journal.

"Do not be discouraged, do not give up, try other journals," advised my wife and friends.

The editor of *The Sikh Review*, Saran Singh relied, "Your articles are on file for publication in future issues. However, he has not published either of the two articles.

The editor of the *Quarterly Journal of Sikh Studies* published by Guru Nanak Dev University, Prof Balwant Singh Dhillon did not even acknowledge the receipt of two articles. In response to my persistent inquiries he said, "We do not use the name of authors whose work is reviewed." I was surprised that Chahal also gave me the same answer. It would have remained a puzzle for me had McLeod not disclosed that *The Teachings of Guru Nanak* section of *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* was translated into Punjabi as *Guru Nanak De Udesb* by Guru Nanak Dev University in 1974. And a summary of the English version was for a time distributed at the Golden Temple in Amritsar (presumably without McLeod's name).¹⁶⁸ Now I can understand why Dhillon refused to publish my articles. How could he go against his own university? But Dhillon has his own way of disclosing the identity of people without naming them.

In December 1995, the then vice-chancellor of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, disallowed me to obtain photostat copies of some folios of MS # 1245 that I needed badly for my present study. Yet prior to that, this very gentleman had, in a very clandestine manner carried a microfilm of this very manuscript to America, at the expense of university exchequer, for a foreign-based Sikh scholar. Subsequent events have shown that this had probably been done deliberately for promoting certain scholars to establish a particular point of view to put the very authenticity of the *Adi Guru Granth Sahib* – the eternal Guru of the Sikh community to doubt.¹⁷²

However, when Dr Kharak Singh became the editor of the *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, he immediately informed me that he would publish the articles.^{169, 170} Shortly thereafter Preet Mohan Singh

Ahluwalia the editor of *sikhspectrum.com* published the articles in the August-November 2003 issue. Copies of the articles were sent to McLeod and he responded with the following comment¹⁷¹ :

In reading the articles I was grateful also for the fact that I had managed to start something which was being conducted in a reasoned and logical way. So often responses to what I write have been highly emotional and lacking in all reason. My overall view was that it all hinges on one simple fact. Did Guru Nanak believe in karma or did he not believe in it? It seems to me that the answer is both yes and no. He did believe in karma as the fate of what I called unregenerate man, but he did not believe that it could triumph over the divine Name. The person who followed the divine Name was thereby freed from the power of *karma*.

I wrote back that *Gurmat* rejects the theory of *karma* and transmigration and hell and heaven, and urges again and again that the present life is the only chance to realize God. According to the theory of *karma* and transmigration there could be many chances, theoretically unlimited and this drew the following response :

I have read your message with much interest. Obviously you have been putting much study into the question of whether Guru Nanak accepted the doctrine of karma. I don't see that there is any *significant* difference separating us. I can still accept that Guru Nanak believed in the doctrine as it applied to unregenerate man and you will maintain that he did not accept it. We both can accept, however, that every person is confronted by the divine Name and that for him or her who responds to it the doctrine can have no effect. That, it seems to me, is the message of Guru Nanak.

Then I asked him why he calls Aad Guru Granth Sahib as *Adi Granth* in his works.¹⁷² The dialogue ended with no answer from him.

Finally, due to an uprising of Christians – Nagas and Mizos in the Northeast part of India in the 1950s, the Indian government banned the entry of Western missionaries in India. Why was McLeod allowed to go to Punjab, a state that shares a border with Pakistan, which has been in a state of perpetual war with India since 1947, and Kashmir, a disputed territory? After 1984, the Indian government banned the entry of foreigners going to Punjab. It seems McLeod had no problems

traveling in the Punjab. Moreover, McLeod was not involved in any manner helping the lowest of the low and most destitute people like Mother Teresa; he was teaching English to high school students and Punjab history in Punjabi to college students who had problems understanding both his English and Punjabi.

Furthermore, I would like to point out the role of Western universities and academic journals in spreading misinformation about Sikhism. As pointed out earlier, neither McLeod's thesis supervisor nor examiners knew anything about Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion, yet the University of London accepted his thesis for the award of a Ph.D. degree. Moreover, to add insult to injury a review of this thesis in the *Times Literary Supplement* declared him as being among the foremost scholars of Sikh Studies in the world by Prof. Zaehner from the University of Oxford, who himself had no knowledge of Sikhism. It seems that even in the days of global communication and awareness, Western universities continue to have different standards for research on non-European people. And as far as Western academic journals are concerned, the editors regard the distortion of Sikhism, as novel work worthy of publication and correct interpretation in the category of already disclosed information not suitable for publication. The editors regard the response to articles containing misinformation on Sikhism as a personal attack on the author, an excuse for rejection. To my knowledge, among the current Western scholars of Sikhism, no one has seriously studied Guru Granth Sahib, the only authentic source of Sikh philosophy. Their knowledge of Sikhism is based on unreliable secondary sources!

CONCLUSION

Research is not immune to mistakes and misinterpretations; however, intentional misinterpretation is beyond the pale of research. Scrutiny of McLeod's works on Sikhism reveals a persistent pattern of distortion. The readers can draw their own conclusions about McLeod and his scholarship. Is he a genuine scholar or a propagandist? Is his misinterpretation of Sikhism intentional or unintentional? Did he do it on his own or was there someone else pulling the strings? I hope McLeod will someday tell us the truth and not put us through the windmill again.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I am deeply indebted to Colonel G.B. Singh of the U.S. Army for providing invaluable scholarly discussions. His insightful and thought provoking suggestions and critical review of the manuscript are appreciated. My special thanks to Mr. Mike McEvers and Dr Timothy Watson for reading and editing this long article. I am grateful to Dr Jasbir Singh Mann for providing me with *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality* and *Planned Attack on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib: Academics or Blasphemy*. Also I extend my sincere thanks to Ishwinder Singh for drawing my attention to Prof. Nirvikar Singh's article and providing me with a summary of Prof. J.S. Grewal's article, and Prof. Blaur Singh Dhillon for getting me a hard copy of Prof. J.S. Grewal's article. Finally, I appreciate the encouragement I received from my wife Nakshatar and daughters, Amrita and Nimrita, to pursue the Sikh Studies.

DEDICATION

This article is dedicated to all the scholars like M.A. McAuliffe and J.D. Cunningham who have tried to present *Gurmat* philosophy and the evolution of the Sikh movement in proper perspectives from the information available to them. I am deeply indebted to Giani Dit Singh, Prof. Gurmukh Singh, Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Prof. Sahib Singh, Prof. Jagjit Singh and Daljit Singh whose works have been very helpful in my understanding of *Gurmat* and the Sikh revolution in an integral manner.

REFERENCES

1. a. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1968.
 b. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, Oxford University Press, Delhi, 1974.
 c. *Early Sikh Tradition: A Study of Janam-sakhis*, Clarendon Press Oxford, 1980.
 d. *Who is a Sikh? The Problem of Sikh Identity*, Clarendon Press Oxford 1989.
 e. *Sikhs and Sikhism*, Oxford University Press, 1999.
 f. *Exploring Sikhism*, Oxford University Press, 2000.
2. Daljit Singh, *Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism*, Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 1979. Jagjit Singh, *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, Delhi, 1981. *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, Ed., Gurdev Singh, Siddharth Publications, Chandigarh, 1986. Daljit Singh, *Essays on the Authenticity*

of Kartarpuri Bir and the Integrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism, Punjabi University, Patiala, 1987.

Advanced Studies in Sikhism, Ed., Jasbir Singh Mann and Harbans Singh Saraon, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 1989. *Fundamental Issues in Sikh Studies*, Ed., Kharak Singh, G. S. Mansukhani and Jasbir Singh Mann, Institute of Sikh Studies, Chandigarh, 1992. *Recent Researches in Sikhism*, Ed., Jasbir Singh Mann and Kharak Singh, Punjabi University, 1992. *Planned Attacks on Aad Guru Granth Sahib: Academics or Blasphemy*, Ed., Bachittar Singh, International Centre of Sikh Studies, 1994. *Invasion of Religious Boundaries*, Ed., Jasbir Singh Mann, Surinder Singh Sodhi, Gurbaksh Singh Gill, Canadian Sikh Study & Teaching Society, Vancouver, 1995. Balwant Singh Dhillon, *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999. These books and other critiques of McLeod's works will be shortly available online at www.globalsikhstudies.net.

3. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004.
4. Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 904: ਝੂਠੁ ਨ ਬੋਲਿ ਪਾਡੇ ਸਚੁ ਕਹੀਐ ॥ ਹਉਮੈ ਜਾਇ ਸਬਦਿ ਘਰੁ ਲਹੀਐ॥
5. Guru Granth Sahib, M 5, p 268: ਅਪਨੀ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ਆਪ ਹੀ ਖੋਵੈ ॥ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਉਸ ਕਾ ਬਿਸਵਾਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਵੈ ॥
6. Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 953: ਕੂੜ ਨਿਖੁਟੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਓੜਕਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੀ ॥
7. Chahal, D.S. Integrated and Comprehensive Philosophy of Sikhism, *Understanding Sikhism Res. J.* 2003, 5 (2), pp 3-6.
8. Chahal, D.S. Integrated and Comprehensive Philosophy of Sikhism, *Sikh Virsa*, 2003, 8 (93), pp 56-58.
9. Singh, I. The McLeod Controversy, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2004, 6 (1), pp 71-82.
10. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 39.
11. Ibid, p 40.
12. Ibid, p 63.
13. McLeod, W.H. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996, p 162.
14. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 148.
15. Ibid, p 137.
16. Ibid, pp 46-47.
17. Ibid, pp 62-63.
18. Ibid, p 39.
19. Ibid, p 68.
20. McLeod, W.H. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996, cover.
21. Singh, B. An Unacademic Advice, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2004, 6 (3), pp 50-62.
22. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 38.

23. Ibid, p 129.
24. Ibid, p 1.
25. Ibid, p 63.
26. Ibid, p 73.
27. Ibid, pp 197-98.
28. Ibid, p 211.
29. Ibid, p 213.
30. Ibid, p. 154.
31. Ibid, pp 134-35.
32. Ibid, pp ix-x.
33. Ibid, p x.
34. Ibid, p ix.
35. United States of America, the most powerful nation in the world was attacked by a handful of foreign terrorists on September 11, 2001. Whereas it was the Indian Army that carried out the cold-blooded massacre of its own citizens – thousands of innocent men and women, young and old, and children – pilgrims who had gathered at the Golden Temple to commemorate the martyrdom of Guru Arjun on June 3, 1984. The army also attacked seventy-four other gurdwaras (places of worship) simultaneously. The excuse for this attack was to capture or kill a band of forty Sikhs, whose leader, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala was described as a saintly man without political ambition by Rajiv Gandhi on May 5, 1984 while the Indian army was secretly making preparation for the attack on Golden temple (Jaijee, I.S. *Politics of Genocide*, Ajanta Publications, 1999, p 40). In the beginning of 1984, the government ordered the military to make preparations for the attack on the Golden Temple complex. And RAW – a unit of Indian Intelligence services gave special training to commandos at Chakrata, where they had built a large replica of the Golden Temple complex for practical exercises (Jaijee, I.S. *Politics of Genocide*, Ajanta Publications, 1999, p 43). After the assassination of Indira Gandhi, there was organized massacre of Sikhs all over India under the direction of the Congress Party. In Delhi, the Capital of India, thousands of Sikhs were killed by mobs led by Congress leaders while the military and police looked the other way. Sikhs were pulled out of trains and busses and lynched. Their homes and properties were singled out for destruction. About twenty thousand Sikhs were killed in that carnage all over India (Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed., 2001, pp 420-30). From 1975 when Sikhs spearheaded a peaceful agitation against the emergency rule imposed by Indira Gandhi to the year 2000 may be as many 200,000 Sikhs have been killed by the police, military and mobs organized by politicians. The real figure may never be known because the efforts of human rights groups to collect the data have been frustrated by government, police and the judicial system (Jaijee, I.S. *Politics of Genocide*, Ajanta Publications, 1999, pp 102-04. Kumar, R.N., Singh, A., Agarwal, A., Kaur, J. *Reduced to Ashes: The Insurgency and Human Rights in Punjab*, South Asia Forum for Human Rights, 2003. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed, 2001, pp 361-526.)

36. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp 134-35.
37. The bogey of Khalistan was created by Indira Gandhi to destroy the vibrant Sikh community, which constitutes only 2% of India's population. When Indira Gandhi imposed "emergency" on the country in 1975, the Congress party and communists supported her. The so-called "free press" buckled under pressure and some of the journalists called "emergency" a necessary and positive step, while others like McLeod's friend, journalist Khushwant Singh (son of Sir Sobha Singh) started serenading Indira Gandhi and her son, Sanjay. No political party except the Shiromani Akali Dal took up the challenge to oppose the imposition of emergency; the only other exception was the Rashtriya SwymSevak Sangh (RSS). However, its chief, Balasaheb Deoras, while still in jail pleaded for a compromise, and RSS periodicals started praising Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay, whereas the Sikhs continued their agitation against emergency. According to the Amnesty International, 140,000 persons were detained without trial during the emergency, and of them 60,000 were Sikhs. When the whole of India lay prostrate before Indira Gandhi and her son Sanjay, the Sikhs continued their anti-emergency agitation. Indira Gandhi took it as a personal affront. She made up her mind to teach the Sikhs a lesson. An obscure country preacher, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala with no formal education was projected as a great spiritual leader and foisted on the Sikhs through the machination of the central government. He was well financed and armed and finally installed with the help of musclemen (criminals) in the Golden Temple complex, the most important center of the Sikhs. In order to find a justification to attack the Golden Temple complex, Indira Gandhi started accusing Bhindranwala of being an extremist and separatist. Additionally, "intelligence service agencies" hired criminal and depraved elements from the Sikh community to do the dirty work for them. People like Jagjit Singh Chauhan, Sohan Singh Boparai and many others were sent overseas to mislead the Sikh community and to malign them internationally. (Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed., 2001, pp 361-419, 370, 375-76, 444, 452n, 493.)
38. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed., 2001, pp 593-594.
39. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 72.
40. Ibid, p 78.
41. Ibid, p 121.
42. Ibid, pp 201-202.
43. Ibid, p 92.
44. Ibid, p x-xii.
45. Ibid, pp 22-23, 27-28.
46. Ibid, pp 47, 65-66.
47. Ibid, pp 22-23.
48. Ibid, p 23.
49. Ibid, p 24.

50. Ibid, p 24.
51. Ibid, p 163.
52. Ibid, pp 65-66.
53. McLeod, W.H. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996, p 161.
54. Ibid, p 125.
55. Ibid, p 127.
56. Ibid, p 128.
57. Ibid, pp 128-129.
58. Ibid, p 130.
59. Ibid, pp 131-132.
60. Ibid, p 132.
61. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 143.
62. Ibid, p 143.
63. Singh, D. *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir and the Integrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism*, Punjabi University, Patiala, 2nd ed., 1995, p 37.
64. Ibid, pp 31, 37.
65. Ibid, pp. vii, xi, 81-87.
66. Ibid, p 47.
67. Ibid, p 73.
68. Singh, P. Ph D Thesis: *The Text and Meaning of Adi Granth*, University of Toronto, 1991, p 138.
69. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 171.
70. Ibid, p 112.
71. McLeod, W.H. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1999, pp 75-79.
72. Ibid, pp 75-78.
73. Ibid, p 77.
74. Singh, D. *Essays on the Authenticity of Kartarpuri Bir and the Integrated Logic and Unity of Sikhism*, Punjabi University Patiala, 2nd ed., 1995, p 36.
75. Ibid, p 82.
76. McLeod, W.H. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press 1999, p 117.
77. Ibid, pp 87-88.
78. Singh, J. *The Sikh, Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, pp 47-57, 58-79, 115-35.
79. Ibid, p 51.
80. Ibid, p 130
81. Ibid, p 131.
82. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed. 2001, p 26.
83. Ibid, pp 37-39.
84. Ibid, p 70.

85. Ibid, p 73.
86. Guru Granth Sahib, M 1, p 1256: ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭੂਖੁ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਕਤਵਾਰ ਜਮਦੂਤੁ ॥
87. Singh, J. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, pp 136-73.
88. Ibid, pp 130-133.
89. Grewal, J.S. *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p 41.
90. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed. 2001, pp 32-33, 37-39.
91. Ibid, pp 45-49.
92. Ibid, pp 62-63.
93. Ibid, pp 76-77.
94. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 167.
95. Ibid, p 117.
96. Ibid, p 110, 167-74.
97. Ibid, pp 101-02.
98. Ibid, p 103.
99. Ibid, p 103.
100. Ibid, p 103.
101. Ibid, pp 157-164.
102. Ibid, pp 162-163.
103. Grewal, J.S. *The Sikhs of the Punjab*, Cambridge University Press, 1994, p 80.
104. McLeod, W.H. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, Oxford India Paperbacks, 1996, p. 199.
105. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 213.
106. Ibid, pp 161.
107. Singh, J. in *Perspectives on the Sikh Tradition*, Ed., Gurdev Singh, Singh Brothers, 1996, pp 273-444.
108. Singh, J. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, pp 260-281.
109. Juergensmeyer, M. *The Sword of Sikhism: A study of Sikh Militancy*, part I, *The Sikh Review*, 2003, 51 (10), pp 39-47, Part II, *The Sikh Review*, 2003, 51 (11), pp 37-45.
110. Grewal, J.S. The Role of Ideas in Sikh History, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 1999, 6(2), pp 139-153.
111. Singh, I. *Sword of Sikhism: Tribalist Origin Refuted*, *The Sikh Review*, 2004, 52 (1), pp 83-84.
112. McLeod, W.H. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1999, pp 7-16.
113. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp 160-161.
114. Paine, C. Sikh Pilgrimage: A study in Ambiguity, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2003, 10 (1&2), pp 143-162.
115. Singh, I. Sikh Pilgrimage: A Search for Ambiguity, www.SikhSpectrum.com, 2004, May-June. *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2004, 6 (2), pp 61-66.

116. <http://www.sikhspectrum.com/letters.htm>, comments and feedback on issue no. 16, May 2004.
117. Roger Ballarad, Gerald Barrier, Mark Juergensmeyer, Gurinder Singh Mann, Hew McLeod, Harjot Oberoi and Nikky-Gurinder Kaur Singh.
118. Singh, N. Guru Nanak and the 'Sants': A Reappraisal, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2001, 8 (1), pp 1-34.
119. Singh, N. Guru Nanak and 'Sants': A Response to Professor McLeod, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 2002, 9 (1), pp 1-4.
120. McLeod, W.H. *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, 2nd ed., Oxford University Press, 1999, p 6.
121. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp 200-203.
122. Ibid, pp 147-150.
123. Singh, J. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*, Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, pp 128-35, 260-292.
124. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 113.
125. Grewal, J.S. The Role of Ideas in Sikh History, *International Journal of Punjab Studies*, 1999, 6 (2), pp 139-153.
126. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 155.
127. Ibid, pp 172-73.
128. Ibid, pp 134-135.
129. Singh, F. Execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur – A New Look, *The Sikh Review*, January 1976, pp 28-36.
130. Singh, F. *Bhat Vahis* as Source for the Life of Guru Tegh Bahadur, *The Sikh Review*, January 1976, pp 75-85.
131. Dhillon, B.S. *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999, p 34.
132. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 100.
133. Ibid, p 101.
134. Singh, P. Recent Trends and Prospects in Sikh Studies, *Studies in Religion/ Sciences Religiuses*, 1998, 27 (4), pp 407-25.
135. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp.102, 106.
136. Ibid, pp.180-85.
137. *Planned Attack on Aad Guru Granth Sabib: Academics or Blasphemy*, Ed., Bachittar Singh Giani, 1st ed., International Centre of Sikh Studies, 1994.
138. Ibid, pp.13-14, 46-48, 302.
138. Gurdas, B. *Varan, Bhai Gurdas* (Punjabi), Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh and Co. 1976, p.214.
140. Ibid, pp.278-80.
141. Singh, S. *Shri Guru Granth Sabib Darpan, Pothi 3* (Punjabi), Sohan Lal Khana, pp 812-827, 841-916.

142. Dhillon, B.S. *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999, p.92.
143. Singh, S. *Sbri Guru Granth Sabib Darpan, Pothi 3*
144. (Punjabi), Sohan Lal Khana, pp 812-827.
144. *Aad Guru Granth Sabib*, pp 112, 1187, 1197, 1233.
145. Dhillon, B.S. *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999, p 79.
146. In 1994 Professor Gurinder Singh Mann and Rabinder Singh Bhamra attended religious services at Princeton Junction, New Jersey. After the religious program Rabinder Singh Bhamra talked about Mann's academic program at the Columbia University and appealed to the congregation for financial help. Afterwards a group of Sikhs started asking Mann questions about his thesis and the meaning of *mohan* in Guru Arjun's composition. To extricate himself from the unpleasant situation he was in, he replied, "I am a historian, not a theologian." When the inquisitors were gone, I told Mann that according to Professor Sahib Singh *Mohan* is an epithet for God. "We disagree with Professor Sahib Singh, after all Mohan was Guru Arjun's *mama* (mother's brother)," quipped Mann.
147. Singh, P. *The Abiyapur Pothi. Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2003, October-December, p 14-21.
148. Singh, P. Ph.D. Thesis: *The Text and Meaning of Adi Granth*, University of Toronto, 1991, p 15.
149. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed. 2001, pp 73-110.
150. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, pp 101-03.
151. Dhillon, B.S. *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999, pp 183-85, 187-189.
152. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 100.
153. Ibid, p 108.
154. *Invasion of Religious Boundaries*, Ed., J.S. Mann, S.S. Sodhi and G.S. Gill, Canadian Sikh Study & Teaching Society, 1995, appendices IV and V.
155. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004 pp 109-110, 185.
156. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed. 2001, pp 96-104.
157. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004. pp 152-153.
158. McLeod, W.H. *Early Sikh Tradition*, Oxford University Press, 1999, p 8.
159. Singh, S. *The Sikhs in History*, Uncommon Books, 4th ed. 2001, 52.
160. Ibid, p 72.
161. Ibid, p 107.
162. Mehboob, H.S. *Sehje Rachio Khalsa (Punjabi)*, Singh Bros. Amritsar, 2000, p 1113. Also a review in *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, October-December, 1996, pp 76-79.
163. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 207-08.
164. Mann, J.S. *Fresh Look at Text and History of Daasam Granth*, presented at Guru Nanak Memorial Lecture, Punjabi University, December 9, 2003.

165. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 137.
166. Ibid, p 110.
167. Singh, B. Misinterpretation of *Gurbani* by W.H. McLeod, *Understanding Sikhism*, Res. J. 2002, July-December, pp 32-36.
168. McLeod, W.H. *Discovering the Sikhs: Autobiography of a Historian*, Permanent Black, 2004, p 72.
169. Dhillon, B.S. *Early Sikh Scriptural Tradition: Myth and Reality*, Singh Bros. 1999, p 9.
170. Singh, B. Misinterpretation of *Gurbani* by Hew McLeod, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2003, 5 (2), pp 72-80.
171. Singh, B. Misinterpretation of *Gurbani* by Hew McLeod, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2003, 5 (3), pp 66-78.
172. Singh, B. Karma and Transmigration, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2003, 5 (4), pp 108-109.
173. Guru Arjun compiled the first Sikh Scripture by incorporating the compositions of his predecessors, his own and that of *Bhagats* and Sufis and the resulting codex is called *Adi Granth* (ਆਦਿ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ). It is also known as *Pothi* (sacred text) and *Kartarpuri Bir* (sacred text of Kartarpur) as it is in the possession of a Sodhi family of Kartarpur. *Bir* means *Jilad*—binding of a book. Since the *Adi Granth* was a bound manuscript, it acquired the name *Adi Bir*. Later on Guru Gobind Singh added the composition of his father, Guru Tegh Bahadur, to the compositions of *Adi Granth* and the resulting sacred text was (is) called *Damdami Bir*, as according to Sikh traditions it was prepared at Damdama (rest stop). The current Sikh Scripture is a copy of *Damdami Bir*. The Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) which manages the historical Gurdwaras in Punjab, Haryana and Himachal Pradesh, and Sikh-religious affairs, is also responsible for the printing and distribution of the current Sikh Scripture and it has named it as “Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji (ਆਦਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ).” In literature it is referred as Guru Granth Sahib or Guru Granth or Granth or Sikh Scripture or even Sikh Bible. However, quite often people not only call it *Adi Granth* but also pronounce it as Adee Granth (ਆਦੀ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ), erroneously. From the time of Gurus, the Punjabi language has undergone evolutionary change in pronunciation. For example, the vowel, *i* (*sibari*) of Awid (Adi) in modern pronunciation is de-emphasized and Awid (Adi) is pronounced as Awd (Aad). In Adi, *i* denotes (*sibari*). In my writings I use the name, Aad Guru Granth Sahib, as Aad (ਆਦਿ) which means (eternal or first in preference) is very important to distinguish it from other Granths or Guru Granths. Recently, some malicious people have started calling *Dasam Granth* as Guru Granth. I have dropped Sri (Mr.) and Ji (yes, Sir) as the use of Sri before Guru and Ji after Sahib is redundant.

POST-PARTITION SOCIAL TRANSFORMATION OF THE SIKH PEOPLE

GURDIP SINGH*

The time span of half a century from the Partition of Punjab in 1947 to the present times can be roughly assumed as spanning two generations. And for the sake of human link to social challenges of this period, I posit two family paradigms : one, that of Grandfather and Grandchild at the time of the Partition: second, that of Grandchild who has now become a Grandfather. For ease of reference I shall mention the personalities of Paradigm I as Grandfather I and Grandchild I, and that of Paradigm II as Grandfather II and Grandchild II.

As the capacity of the weakest pillar determines the strength of a bridge, so also the human quality of any society must be assessed from the quality of life of its weakest segment.

Since the mass base of the Sikh people in 1947 as of now is peasantry, it is only valid that the farmer is postulated as the building block of Sikh communal life as well as its expressive manifestation.

In order to obtain a reference framework, a brief glimpse of the social ambience during Paradigm I is described here:

- a) The family of Grandfather I was a three generation family. It harboured deep attachments, intimate bonding, and uninhibited communication pattern.
- b) The family was integrated in a self-sustaining village commune and considerably insulated from the influences of the external world.
- c) Human values dominated the ethical structure of the community and honour formed a substantial component of the family's wealth.

* Brig, 243, Sector 9-C, Chandigarh

- d) Grandfather I had probably been told during his childhood, by his Grandfather, about the first-hand accounts of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's times. The Raj Khalsa reminded the Sikhs that they alone remained invincible against the invasion from Afghanistan while simultaneously surviving the brutal repressions by the Mughals and that they had established sovereign rule within a period of few decades of their struggle, proving the truth of 'hane hane miri' meaning that every horseman is sovereign.
- e) The repertory of the community's collective memories of historical events, and the cherished values ascribed to those events, was their proud cultural heritage. The prevalent folklore of that period narrating the background of "*Haria ragle*" illustrate the ethos. This was a reference to the quote by the Afghan women for silencing their children invoking the fear of approaching Sardar Hari Singh Nalwa.
- f) The religious life during the period of Grandfather I and Grandchild I was as much a part of daily existence as eating and sleeping. Above all the aforementioned influences, Grandchild I had also imbibed the humility that not only the Sikhs but the whole mankind and the entire nature were One God's creation. In other words, there was faith in "nature of God being God of nature".

To my mind the Sikh people as a whole have undergone, apart from the tragedy of 1947 Partition, three major upheavals. These pivotal circumstances compelling social reorientation have been: 1.The Green Revolution; 2.The 1984 Holocaust; and 3.Precipitational crisis for the Sikh Youth.

THE GREEN REVOLUTION

The Green Revolution of 1970s for the farmers of Punjab was a well-earned economic boom but concurrently, it also became the cause of social degeneration.

Characteristically, the Sikh farmers had been innovative and enterprising. They had earlier displayed their prowess in rehabilitating the Canal Colonies in West Punjab, and then after the Partition, the Terrai belt in U.P. The adaptation to improved techniques was an opportunity they grabbed with enthusiasm, and thus enhanced their

earnings. The farmers now had disposable and surplus income.

The sudden prosperity was accompanied by an exhilarating sensation of having mastered the past adversities of uprooting in 1947 as well as being the main architects of 1965 victory against Pakistan – a war fought mostly on their lands. All these factors added an additional measure to a generic superiority temper of rural Sikhs.

The financial gains from the Green Revolution were wide-spread. The affluence, however, got channeled mainly into unproductive consumerism. Sadly, there was negligible long term investment, at macro level, in institutions of social concern like educational facilities, industrial ventures for generating employment or diversification in cropping pattern. On the contrary, the uninhibited spending on the ostentatious life of luxury, comfort and enjoyment became a field of competitive activity. The material boisterousness was hollow in absence of investment in social capital. The propensity for good life led to addictions which became an endemic social malady. It appeared that the Sikhs had, by and large, moved away from their fundamental religious tenet of “*Kirat Karo, Nam Japo, Wand Chhako*”. By the time the graph of the benefits of the Green Revolution started dipping the socially degenerative habits had taken roots.

The Green Revolution phase was accompanied by a process of mechanization in agricultural practices. The introduction of the “tractor” assumed a unique social significance. Besides an efficacious agricultural device of revolutionary proportions, the “tractor” symbolized far reaching social ramifications – both inter and intra community.

To begin with, the ownership of a “tractor” was viewed as quantum elevation in social status. It was, prospectively, an instrument of empowerment and a source of exultation. Around 1980s, based on the overall exhibited social display of the community’s prosperity (not without ostentatiousness) and not so remotely ascribed to the image of the “tractor”, “tractor riding Sardar” became an anathema in the eyes of the less privileged communities.

In the traditional farming community of yore, the trinity of land, labor and wealth was a “totality”. The three elements were naturally and habitually interconnected, provided “wholeness” and resulted in general social equipoise. This equation has been seriously disturbed.

The mechanized farming (not to mention the dwindling holdings of successive generations) has rendered large proportion of rural workforce as surplus from the farming routine. The unhinged worker with his unaltered capacity (specifically the youth) has a bleak future.

During 1990s, with the vanishing gains of the Green Revolution, in just about two decades, the “tractor” could only be acquired on loan and not bought outright as in majority of the cases during the initial stages. And it became an item of saleable debt for obtaining ready cash by impoverished farmers for compulsive social obligations like provision of dowry for their marriageable daughters. And thus burdened with mounting debt, the farmer, in some cases, sought escape in suicide. Such cases of suicide are far cry from the confident, energetic and virile farmer who provided social barometer of a dynamic community.

1984 HOLOCAUST

It is not my intention to analyze the political genesis or the political misadventure and insensitivity that attended the happenings of 1984. In this paper, I will restrict only to its sociological impact on the Sikhs. In many ways, the horrendous occurrence of 1984 had greater traumatic effects on Sikh psyche than even the tragedies of 1947 Partition.

The Partition was a great human tragedy but the Sikhs were not alone in enduring the sufferings. The agony of dislocation too was not totally uprooting because the resettlement was among their own people with familiar background. The feeling of alienation did not arise. On the contrary, the Sikhs having been in the vanguard of Independence movement, were respected and identified as dynamic people of substance. Apart from these extraneous circumstances, the Sikh people around 1947 inherited a pervading spirit of invincibility. And in pursuit of worthy goals religion, politics and ethics were not disconnected. The perennial optimism reflected in their slogan of “*chardhi kala*” had a meaning.

By 1980s, the traditional and habitual way of life of the rural Sikhs was disintegrating. The society at this juncture was subjected to “metachange”. The agrarian community was not only glaringly exposed to urban culture, but the social values of that culture were themselves

changing fast. Simultaneously, a sense of disillusionment had come to persist on account of perceived discrimination primarily on the following issues:

- a) The Sikhs had to wage a struggle for Punjabi Suba and when established, it was handicapped with constitutional and territorial dispensations. All this was a far cry from “the space where the Sikhs could enjoy a glow of freedom”.
- b) The flow of enrollment into the defense services had been curtailed by a quota system. This was a grievous blow because it denied (without any visible alternative) a natural outlet of employment which the Sikhs had come to consider as their birth right.
- c) Approaching 1984, the solid economic base provided by agriculture had started to liquify and the state was perceived responsible for failure to provide avenues of gainful outlets.

First and foremost, the attack on the Golden Temple Amritsar in June 1984 by the Army was – for the Sikhs without exception – a sacrilege of the worst kind. It was viewed as nothing different than the desecrations of the sanctum sanctorum committed by Ahmad Shah Abdali in the eighteenth century. Psychologically, it was more devastating because it was executed by the home-government. The community, as a whole, felt betrayed and spiritually insulted. It was a profoundly emotional moment with bitter revulsion against the government. This event changed the trajectories of the social life of the Sikhs.

The entire community was castigated and targeted throughout India, particularly in Delhi in an organized manner, in November 1984. This could only enforce the stunning sense of alienation experienced by the Sikhs. The media offensive labeling the Sikhs as secessionists and antinationalist completed the process of social calumny. The Sikh people had lived as ‘People of Substance’. 1984 events were a watershed for diminution of the Sikh people as ‘No Body’. First, the soul and psyche and then the pride, dignity, and loyalty (to the country) of the Sikhs became the targets. Retrospectively, the analysis of 1984 events shows that while previously the Central Government had interest in manipulating the virile community for their qualities of martial spirit and agricultural skills, at this point of time the interest

of the wily Central Authority was better served by humiliating the haloed minority community to win favour of majority's vote bank.

Post 1984, the Sikhs were placed socially at the "first bottom" – "the solids had been melted and the sacred had been profaned". The "second bottom" was to be touched soon due to the incapacities of the Sikh (Akali) leadership.

Before going on to cover the crisis for the Sikh youth, I wish to briefly touch on two important aspects which, apart from the factors described already, gravely affected the youth; namely, the declining religious commitment and the constriction in defense recruitment.

The Sikh Religion lays down very high standards of ethical conduct. Investment in morality is a vital part of the commitment to the religion. And morality is essentially the standard of behaviour expected of man as a social being. Religion and morality are so interdependent that, according to Sikh belief, the goal of human life for contact with the ultimate spiritual reality is gained primarily through performance of righteous deeds.

However, in a growing void of faith, the trust in religious values and civic virtues was being eroded by the life-experiences. If the commitment to religion around 1980s had been as strong as at the time of the Partition, it would have served well for supporting a stable society. And society, after all, is not only a factory of meanings but an organism of meaningful life. Religion, as a collective conscience and a crucial human need for a socially familiar sense of belonging was indispensable at this juncture. In a period of transition from a conservative society to a modernizing society, the internal reform in the community had not been idealized commensurably with the fast changing world.

As far as the recruitment in the defense services is concerned, it had not been merely an employment continuum, but the social signification of this service was far greater than a means of livelihood.

To fight for a cause is a fundamental Sikh trait. The military service was thus much more than a natural vocation or a matter of pride, it simultaneously provided a recourse to spiritual fulfillment. The devotion attached with the career in the Army was shared by the other members of the family, and generation after generation joined the Army.

Among the Sikhs service in defense forces was accorded a very respectable social status. It also afforded other tangible externalities like cosmopolitan exposure and had provided pioneering emigration opportunity. The Army also took in some rowdy and social rebels from the villages who in most cases, when disciplined, reformed into shining social assets. Then there were the Sikh ex-servicemen who were in the forefront of many social reform movements like the Gurdwara Reform Movement and Independence struggle at the National level.

Restricting the recruitment, based on a quota system which curtailed the numbers by more than 80 per cent appeared akin to an outright disclaimer (if not betrayal) of the valorous contribution by the Sikhs. And all this soon after the euphoria of 1965 victory against Pakistan in which the rural Punjab's participation was scintillating. Blockage of the well deserved Army occupational avenue had devastating effect on future of many a Sikh youth.

The psychologism dynamics of all these events accumulated to engineer a militant explosion of faith affecting the existential life of the Sikh youth.

PRECIPITATIONAL CRISES FOR THE SIKH YOUTH

It is a historically established fact that the youth forms the critical mass which provide an impulse for any social transformation. The social circumstances of the Sikh youth at the time of Partition were quite generative. They were economically secure, drew inspiration from their heritage and faithfully impledged themselves to the doctrine of Miri-Piri (harmonious blend of temporal and spiritual activity). In short, this generation of Sikh youth were "producers" of social values.

The challenges which the Sikh youth has had to face after the Partition have been rather disorienting and crippling. Consequently, the contribution of the youth to the Sikh society has not been elevatory during the period under review. A generation after the Partition, the lure of good life, facilitated by the comparative affluence, veered the Sikh youth away from the pragmatic struggles of life. They had become "consumers" of whatever was "consumable".

The disturbances of 1980s and 1990s played havoc with the lives of Sikh youth. Basically, it was the push from the traditional

occupation of the “unhinged worker with his unaltered capacity” which was zealously enforced by the emotional pull of religiously inspired ideology and bravado. The ideologues considered the religious indoctrination of youth inadequate and over-stated the political vulnerability and subservience. The young minds, already antagonistic (generally for economic reasons), were readily inflamed by theology of rage. The circumstances then conspired to impel the Sikh youth to rise in support of whatever was proclaimed as the cause of their community. The youth became the “gap-men” acting between the ideologues of counter-culture and the proposed beneficiaries of that ideology. And they executed their mission with an intensity of a cosmic war. But when the idealism was grievously mismanaged by their leaders, the power of the gun and the privileges derived from it could not be shed easily. The overall effect was that an internalized parasitic syndrome came to prevail. Simultaneously, the government’s inhuman and prolonged repressive measures decimated the Sikh youth.

The ‘social reform’ movement of 1986-87 engineered by the Sikh youth became overzealous. Numerous codes of conduct enumerating do’s and don’ts issued for all sections of society were rigidly assertive through the barrel of a gun and became counter-productive. The vicious cycle of violence came to a close only by brutal eliminations during early 1990s.

In the times of Grandfather II now what is the point of repose of the social gravity of the mass of Sikh people based on farming community?

In a period of just over half a century, the Grandfather II has been subjected to intra-community decadence, without any substantial or durable socially invigorating infusion, and externally exposed to the influences of globalizing society where the life meanings have changed (reality to virtuality; nobility to notoriety; lives lived and stories told to stories lived and lives told). The traditional way of life of his childhood has been disrupted. The family is no longer a three generation family. Economically devastated, politically abandoned (except during elections), he is tolerated as “Budha” (no longer a respected “Buzurg” as during Grandfather I’s times). Religiously denigrated institutionally he can scarcely transmit any residue of the spirit of invincibility to the Grandchild II for whom he envisions a bleak future.

(Note: I am of the “class” of Grandchild I. Though Guru’s grace

and two generations of education and professional service has spared me from the aforementioned fate of Grandfather II, I deeply feel and express the agony of the circumstances of Grandfather II as many of my associates of childhood are in the above stated category. Furthermore, my religious matrix could not be in the same mould as my grandfather because obliterating the influences of globalizing society concerning “rationale” and “dogma” would have been unrealistic. Expectantly, my grandchild, irrespective of being in foreign land, will continue to follow Sikh religious persuasions with “devotion”; “moral discipline”; and “humanistic” commitments as the cognant seeding has been well oriented from the earliest phase.)

If a single agency is to be apportioned blame for the decline and the dismal state of affairs of the Sikh people in general, it is the Sikh leadership whose telos has merely shifted from being subjectively selfish to depraved.

Yet there is the other side of the coin. The Sikhs themselves have started looking at themselves. There are exceptions where individuals and families took the path of education, development and progress from the times of Grandfather I. In this genre, there are singularly outstanding individual achievements in the political, economic and professional fields and various other social pursuits, both at the national and international level. It also needs to be highlighted that the urbanized Sikhs too have rendered unparalleled contribution to the society. The inter-community polydomainal spheres of activities and associations of this segment of the Sikh people have expanded the horizon of benignant impacts of the Sikh value system.

There are a few other redeeming features beyond the desolation described above. The most significant one may be the possible contribution by the diaspora. Much of the exodus of the Sikhs from Punjab can be ascribed to the sociological pressures emanating from the contingent Dark Period. The emigrated Sikhs broadly constitute a larger proportion of intellectually energetic and high profile social component within their regionally determinist circumstances. While they are distanced from the current trends of political and community acculturation in Punjab, the present generation of senior Sikh emigrants (unextinguished-self in Sikh tradition) are deeply touched by the dismal situation at the “roots” of their origin. They possess a viable potential of aggregate resources (intellectual, financial, and lobbyist power)

for genuine expansion of fundamental Sikh social values. However, in order to arrest possibility of any future duality or segmented variant by the nested sub-groups, a broad based and participatory social communication with the heartland is essential. A heartland which has become unattractive for habitation, at least by the future generations of the Sikh diaspora. Noticeably, a widening social discontinuity between the diaspora and their brethren in Punjab is emerging; one, because of the level of education (social and professional); and the other, because of the hiatus in economic status. Only the present generation of intelligentsia at both ends has the capacity to reverse this pattern. The other redeeming feature is the impact of prolific production of literature about Sikhism specifically highlighting its visionary social ideology for a universal socio-cultural ethical base in the post-modern world. These progressive forces need to be synergized so as to regenerate the exceptional value system which had been the core and essential motif of the Sikh society.

□

INTERNATIONAL CONCLAVE ON ISC

The IOSS has decided to hold an International conclave on the proposed Sikh Apex Body, International Sikh Confederation, 12th-13th November, 2005 (*Katak* 29-30, 537 NS). The theme is *Launching of the International Sikh Confederation*. The proposed constitution will be discussed and approved after considering the suggestions received on the draft circulated earlier. A large number of representatives of Sikh organisations from USA, Canada, UK, Singapore, etc., have also agreed to participate.

All Sikhs committed to bring back the pristine glory of the Panth are cordially invited to join it so that the prestigious Organisation is set rolling during this seminar. An *ad hoc* committee will be set up to take the initial steps for creation of the Confederation.

~ ~ ~

HARDHAN SANCHIAYE BHAI
(BROTHER, LET US GATHER THE WEALTH OF NAAM)

BHAGWANT SINGH*

The tragedy of our times is that even spirituality is now becoming a pawn in the hands of commercial soothsayers, politico-religious leaders, *dera sants*, *jibedars*, pseudo-teachers of meditation and, above all, the traders of material prosperity through godliness. In fact, the very nature of spirituality is to get rid of the material domination and concentrate on the independence of spirit to be able to engage oneself in the pursuit of Man's perpetual welfare. The commercial agents of spirituality have so dominated the prayer houses, the tombs, the *dargahs* and the temples of learning that even when one becomes wealthy in terms of worldly riches, one is not able to get rid of the malady of unhappiness. That is why we see the spectacles like :

- highly placed political and religious leaders involved in one scam or the other;
- rich and wealthy merchants of materialism go on amassing ill-gotten wealth by illegal means;
- The policemen, the protectors of the innocent – themselves indulge in rioting, murder and rape;
- The Sorens, the Lalloos, the Bangarus, the Badals, the Amrinders and the like dominated the news;

And that is why only the wealth, the pelf, the power and political, religious, social and societal chicanery attracts the people.

It appears no one is interested in the wealth of *Naam* (*Hardhan*) although Guru Granth Sahib repeatedly tells us that this is the wealth that is capable of meeting not only our spiritual aspirations, but also our material desires. Having spent 40 years in relative luxury, 20 of

* Tapovan, Amravati, 444 602, Maharashtra

which were spent abroad in diplomatic life, I have now personal experience of the uselessness of worldly wealth, worldly pleasures, worldly glory or worldly admiration. Indeed, I knew nothing of the contents of Guru Granth Sahib, because I was only a show-case Sikh, only my turban and beard signalling that I was one. God, in His Mercy, subjected me to a two-year depression, rendered me a helpless creature, and then miraculously restored me to normal health and perpetual peace and happiness through the grace of my Guru Granth Sahib where I learnt how to gather *Hardban*, because of the following hymn :

ਕਾਚਾ ਧਨੁ ਸੰਚਹਿ ਮੂਰਖ ਗਾਵਾਰ ॥
 ਮਨਮੁਖ ਭੁਲੇ ਅੰਧ ਗਾਵਾਰ ॥
 ਬਿਖਿਆ ਕੈ ਧਨਿ ਸਦਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਹੋਇ ॥
 ਨਾ ਸਾਥਿ ਜਾਇ ਨ ਪਰਾਪਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 665-66

Let me render the whole shabad in English :

Only the folls amass useless wealth; these mind-oriented misguided people are blinded by it. The wealth of poisonous *maya* always produces pain because it can neither remain in our possession here nor goes with us when we leave the world. *Gurmat* grants us the true wealth, whereas worldly wealth comes and goes again and again. Those controlled by mind, derailed by *maya* destroy themselves drowning right in the middle of this worldly ocean. Those who receive the guidance of Satguru are fortunate and because of *Naam-rang* are always unaffected by *maya*. The word of the Guru is like *Amrit* in every age and with good fortune dwells in us. The world abounds in seekers and sadhus who yearn to obtain *Naam* but only the most fortunate obtain it. The Lord is Truth and Truth is the Lord. This high wisdom is recognised only rarely by someone. The Lord Himself bestows this Truth and confirms it, says Nanak, by witnessing the assignment Himself.

Naturally, an urge rose in me to go into the question of the whys, hows and the availability of this wealth of *Naam*. After all when the whole world is blinded into the pursuit of useless worldly wealth, what are the attributes of this *Hardban*, why is it necessary to go after it, what are the possibilities and assurances in the pursuit of this wealth and, finally, how does it help live a peaceful, happy life ? While I shall

come to the Guru's word in confirmation of what is detailed below, let me recount, in my own understanding of *gurmat*, the attributes of the wealth of *Naam* :

1. The wealth of *Naam* is helpful in perpetuity;
2. This wealth is obtained only by the grace of the Guru. In other words, when one listens to the Guru's advice, lives it and obeys the commands in every field, one can obtain *Hardban*.
3. One must be sure that there is no other way to obtain it, but why we must go after it is the guarantee that this is our support both in this world and the next.
4. The clarity of Guru's Word and Advice is strengthened by the affirmation that the method of Guru's grant of this wealth is through *sat sangat*, where we are taught how to earn it.
5. It must be repeated that this wealth is available only in *sat sangat* and only through the grace of the Guru and there is no other place, no other method and no other source.
6. *Hardban* means diamonds, rubies and pearls, with this wealth one does business at *amritvela* and remains immersed in the Lord, thereby amassing more wealth. Just as the sowing is done after showers when land becomes soft, *Hardban* gathered at *amritvela* is limitless, one can enjoy it in life, save it for the future, but it is never fully exhausted.
7. *Hardban* ensures glory of the possessor in this world and thereafter because it makes you fearless.
8. Whereas other wealth can be stolen or forcibly taken away, this *Hardban* is free from any external onslaught, fire, flood, theft included.
9. There are no taxes on it, *Yamas* cannot take it away, robbers cannot loot it.
10. The Lord Himself honours the Master of *Hardban*, because the mind-oriented people have missed the opportunity, whereas the *gurmukh* has earned it by obedience and self-surrender.

Ever since I learnt the basics of Sikh philosophy I have been dumbfounded by the hiatus between what our Guru says and what we do. In addition, in direct violation of Guru's commands, our emphasis is on externals including *tamasha*-type celebrations, ostentatious decorations, bewitching and sometimes glittering *pandals*, but no

emphasis on the transmission of the message, understanding of the core essentials, life of humility, honesty and integrity, and presenting ourselves as the examples of *hardban* wealthy *gurmukhs*. The tragedy is that even those who display themselves as *gurmukhs* or *gianis* exhibit no splendour of spiritual wealth in their behaviour, in their character and in their spiritual dealings with others. On the contrary, they too fall prey to worldly wealth, worldly grandeur and worldly majesty thus belittling the message of our Guru. While I am quite convinced in my personal experience that the Guru's word is 100% true and parade its truth day in and day out in its stark nakedness, living in voluntary vivid state of poverty and yet enjoying the richness of the millionaires, I am unable to witness in practice the Guru's word impacting on the lives of our mentors who are supposed to guide us. I have no hesitation in saying that most of us, perhaps, do not even understand that there can be wealth called spiritual wealth, i.e., *Hardban*, if we did, we would have long developed indifference to worldly pelf and power. At least our dear *sants* or so-called spiritual guides, the *jathedars* and the *pracharaks* would have given such examples. But what we see is the quarrels in gurdwaras in the presence of Guru Granth Sahib, the drunkards among preachers and leaders, worldly money-oriented illegal activities and illicit relations even among *amritdhari* Singhs. the hankering after worldly wealth is no less visible among the preachers than among us worldly mortals. You must have heard of the following quotes from *Gurbani* but I have witnessed their truth in the lives of *gurmukhs* :

ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੇ ਧਨੁ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥
 ਸੇ ਧਨੁ ਮਿਤੁ ਨ ਕਾਂਢੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਚੋਟਾਂ ਖਾਇ ॥
 ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਪਲੈ ਧਨੁ ਵਸੈ ਤਿਨ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ਫਕੀਰ ॥
 ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਤੂ ਵਸਹਿ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਗੁਣੀ ਗਹੀਰ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1287

You are assured of your honour as well as *dharmā* if you receive the wealth of *Naam*. Do not call this worldly wealth your friend because this will hurt you endlessly. Those who have amassed this wealth are called beggars, but in whose heart resides the Lord representing the wealth of *Naam*, they become the treasures of virtues.

As I have already expressed my chagrin about our discussing the

externals of our philosophy, I must now turn to our debates, our discussions and our seminars. Most of the time, we dwell on our external *soorat*, our Sikh-look, our place in the world on an external plane, our *amritdhari* status, control or use/misuse of gurdwaras, external display of Sikh influence, Sikh glory. As a matter of fact, we go out of our way even to pronounce on the basis of the views of many great personalities that our religion is now the only religion of the future. We did so in the external exhibition of the 300th anniversary of the Khalsa, the 400th anniversary of *pebla parkash* of Guru Granth Sahib, the 300th anniversary of the martyrdom of *Sahibzadas* and the 500th anniversary of Guru Angad Devji's *parkash*, but have we assessed that despite external pomp and show, how many of us now know the contents of the message of our Guru, how many of us have pledged to live our lives in accordance with the dictates of our Masters, how many of us now live in a status of ecstasy, worry-free life, universal love and in perpetual presence of the Lord? And, finally, how many of us are now really in possession of *Hardhan* to be able to see the truth of the following hymns in our life :

Mai mein dhan paayo har naam
Man mero dhawan te chhootayo kar baito bisraam
Maya Mamta tan te bhaagi upjayo nirmal gayan
Lobb moh eh paras na sakeh gahi bhagat bhagwan

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 1196

O my mother, I am now in possession of the wealth of *Naam*, My mind is now free from running around and is in perfect state of equipoise. Further, the scourge of *Maya* and attachment has vanished from my body because the pure spiritual knowledge has sprouted from within. Greed, familial fetters cannot come near me. I am enthralled by the loving devotion to my Lord.)

I have no pretensions to be knowledgeable or a good theologian, but I have no doubt that the truth of the Lord's existence is vividly evident through Guru's Word. If Guru Tegh Bahadur envisages a life of total equipoise for the one who is in possession of the wealth of *Naam*, surely the Sikhs should be able to experience it. And Guru Arjun assures us that –

ਬਸਤਾ ਤੁਟੀ ਤੁੰਪੜੀ ਚੀਰ ਸਭਿ ਛਿੰਨਾ ॥

ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਪਤਿ ਨ ਆਦਰੋ ਉਦਿਆਨ ਭ੍ਰਮਿਨਾ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 707

(With torn clothes, the one living in a broken hut can be the king of the whole world, if he is immersed in *Harnaam*.)

The only point left for me to deal with is how one earns this wealth and how one keeps it in fixed deposit within. I do not wish to venture in this hypothesis in my own words and set Guru's dictates to us unambiguously.

ਹਰਿ ਧਨੁ ਰਤਨੁ ਜਵੇਹਰੁ ਮਾਣਕੁ
 ਹਰਿ ਧਨੈ ਨਾਲਿ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੈ ਵਤੈ
 ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤੀ ਹਰਿ ਲਿਵ ਲਾਈ ॥
 ਹਰਿ ਧਨੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲੈ ਵਤੈ ਕਾ ਬੀਜਿਆ ਭਗਤ
 ਖਾਇ ਖਰਚਿ ਰਹੇ ਨਿਖੁਟੈ ਨਾਹੀ ॥
 ਹਲਤਿ ਪਲਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਧਨੈ ਕੀ ਭਗਤਾ ਕਉ ਮਿਲੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 734

(The wealth of *Naam* is like diamonds, rubies and pearls. One uses this wealth of *Naam* when the time is appropriate at *amritvela* to engage oneself in meditating on the Lord and remaining in communion with Him. When the earth is a little soft after the first showers, the *kisan* sows the seed for a crop. Just like that *amritvela* is the most appropriate time for sowing the seeds of *Hardban*. The seeds sown at *amritvela* produce such limitless wealth of *Naam* that the devotee goes on eating. Spending and saving and yet, the *Hardban* never diminishes. The devotees, because of *Hardban*, are acclaimed in glory in this world and the next.)

Little wonder What our Gurus talks so much of the wealth of *Naam* and stress that we must become permanent traders of this wealth while living in this world and doing our worldly duties. Is it not a pity that most of us pay little attention to the importance of *amritvela*, even if we pay lip service to devotion ? We often say that *Japji Sahib*, in a way, sums up the entire message of Guru Granth Sahib but we rarely pay attention to the most serious message of Guru Nanak about *amritvela*. Now that I have pointed out Guru Ram Dasji's concrete message about when the *Hardban* can be sown and gathered, maybe we will be tempted to listen to Guru Nanak's words too :

ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ ॥

ਮੁਹੋਂ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣਿ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵਿਚਾਰੁ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 2

(What, then, should I place before the Lord so that I can see His *Darbar* ? And what shall I speak from the mouth so that I can receive His Love ? Ponder over the majesty of the Lord through His true *Naam* at *amritvela*.)

I have the habit of singing the praises of the Lord at *amritvela* with my companions – Rajlakshmi, a blind Tamil girl and Sunita, a Punjabi girl, both my spiritual daughters – in *sat sang*, wherever we are, from 4.30 am to 6.00 am. But when I am alone at Tapovan or in town staying with a family, my only *amritvela* banquet is the TV/Radio transmission from Amritsar Sahib. Needless to say that this transmission is like my life-line. At the time of *Prakash* at home, this morning, Guru Arjun bestowed on me the following *rebmata* :

ਸਹਜ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਅਨੰਦ ਸੂਖ ਪੂਰੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਚੀਨ ॥
ਸਦਾ ਸਹਾਈ ਸੰਗਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਗੁਣ ਚੀਨ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 807

Before I conclude, let me refer to the *shabad* from which I gathered the ten points of *Hardhan* mentioned earlier. Can there be any doubt that a Sikh can become a millionaire in *Hardhan* by living Guru's commands? The *shabad* is :

ਜਿਥੈ ਹਰਿ ਆਰਾਧੀਐ ਤਿਥੈ ਹਰਿ ਮਿਤੁ ਸਹਾਈ ॥

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 733-34

Let us then become the merchants of the wealth of *Naam*.
Hardhan sanchiaye bhai – Brothers, let us gather *Hardhan*.

□

*The heart that does not cherish Truth,
Must be dismantled and rebuilt.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 146

ਜਿਤੁ ਘਟਿ ਸਚੁ ਨ ਪਾਇ ਸੁ ਭੰਨਿ ਘੜਾਈਐ ॥

SEVA AND SIKH RELIGION

RAMESH SETH*

Seva is the essence of Sikh religion. If there is one solitary word to sum up the Sikh religion, I would unhesitatingly pick *seva* as the operative word. *Seva* is the voluntary service to the fellow beings without any expectation of reciprocation. It is deeply ingrained in the collective psyche of the Sikhs. *Seva* is what shines in Sikhism above all. I can say it without any exaggeration or the fear of contradiction that the extent of *seva* that is found among the Sikhs is rarely found in any other religion. The accent is upon the word, 'Voluntary.' That makes the Sikhs unique.

It has often been seen in India that whenever there is any natural calamity on a large scale, the Sikh organizations are the first to reach there to provide succour to the affected people. After the devastating earth-quake in Katchh in the Gujarat State of India in 2001, the Sikhs had put up some of the biggest camps to provide free food to the quake-affected people. The contributions to run those camps were voluntary. The Sikhs from all over India came forward to foot the bill to run those camps. On such occasions, their largesse is not bound and constricted by the thoughts of serving only the Sikhs. They serve the needy. That is but one of the examples. There are far too numerous examples of their wonderful spirit.

During our travels of North America I and my wife had seen numerous examples of *seva*. From small thing to big thing the philosophy behind *seva* is always there among all the Sikhs. We choose one of the examples of the many that we came across :

We were then in California. After we had shown the documentary on Sri Harmandir Sahib in Stockton Gurdwara Sahib, our next show

* 231-B, Jolly Maker I, Cuffe Parade, Mumbai 005, E-mail <rkseth2000@yahoo.com>

was El Sobrante Gurdwara Sahib, a small township near San Francisco. Having completed our engagements on Sunday, we wanted to leave Stockton on Monday itself.

However, Stockton did not have any direct Bus link with El Sobrante. So, I requested the Stockton *Giani ji* to arrange for some transport for us, if possible. On Sunday evening *Giani ji* informed us that he had made the necessary arrangements. One Tarsem Singh Gill would pick us up on Monday morning at 9 A.M., to drive us to El Sobrante.

On Monday morning Tarsem Singh came at 9 A.M. with his car; we were waiting for him. He parked the car there and introduced himself to me. We exchanged greetings.

“Are you ready?”

“Of course,” I said. “The *Giani ji* had told me that you would like to return well in time, before the evening.”

We loaded our luggage and he drove on. Tarsem Singh was over sixty-five, seemingly in good health, though slightly on the stockier side. In the car, by way of conversation I asked him what he did for a living.

“I am a retired person,” he said with a relish of a person who has had the satisfaction of having done all that was wanted of him in his life. “However, after the retirement my main preoccupation is to perform this *seva*, transporting the *jathas*, etc., to and from the Stockton Gurdwara.”

I was surprised. Hitherto, we had come across people doing such *seva* once in a while. But for some one to make it as his main preoccupation was news to us.

“Does it happen very often?” I asked. My tone betrayed my curiosity. “I thought providing this type of transportation *seva*, like today, would be a stray occurrence.”

“Well,” he said with a disarming smile, “at least once in a week I am given the chance to render such *seva*; may be twice in a week, sometimes.”

I looked at him, wondering; he performing such *seva* week after week. And yet he claimed to be a retired person. Obviously, a retired person, but certainly he was not yet a tired person.

“How come you have chosen this *seva*?” I asked him, full of

surprise.

“In our religion the accent is upon the fact that whoever can perform any *seva* he must do it, even without being asked,” he said with a smile. Then he was slightly hesitant whether to add some more to that or not. Then he added, all the same. “Secondly, I am very fortunate. I have a car always available to me. There are retired persons, among our Sikhs over here, who may have all the time to do the *seva*, but may not have a car available when needed. This type of *seva* can call upon your service any time. Therefore, it is necessary to have a car available at that time.”

That was a new angle. I knew from my own experience, considering the strata of life that ordinary Sikhs came from, most of the retired persons were in more straightened circumstances. Those who still had jobs did not have the time to do such *seva*.

“How do you always have a car available?” I was curious to know. One never knows what new knowledge may be gained during discussions with new people.

He smiled. “I am lucky,” he said. “My younger son is in the business of buying and selling pre-owned cars, that is what in India we call ‘secondhand cars’. He has his own car-yard. In that yard there are always 8-10 cars in transit, awaiting sale or delivery. I can pick up any one of those cars for a few hours, to perform the *seva*. For example, this car that we are using, came only two days ago.”

“But, considering it is his business, does your son allow you that liberty?”

He smiled broadly. “Even he knows that it is for *seva*. I do not use the cars for pleasure, but for serving the cause of Guru Nanak.”

Obviously, the son was very understanding. That warmed the cockles of my heart. Besides, the cars were truly available to him. Therefore, his *seva* made a lot of sense. But, still there was the physical effort and the cost of petrol involved, especially considering his advanced age.

“Don’t you get tired driving so much?” I asked. “After all, no round trip would not be less than four hours. Please don’t mind my saying so, but you are not young any longer.”

He laughed. “I am sixty-seven,” he said with obvious pride, “But

in good health, thanks to *Wahaguru*. I believe that *Wahaguru* has given me this good health so that I can perform this *seva* for Him.”

“What about the petrol?” I asked. “That costs money. You are required to drive long distances.”

“Yes, it is true. The distances are there,” he said. “But it is nothing that I cannot afford. *Wahaguru* has been so kind to me and to my family. I am in good financial condition, even without recourse to my son. I have saved enough for myself. Besides, my son has a very flourishing business.”

“Do you help your son in his business?” I asked. “After all in a family business any numbers of family hands are welcome.”

“Not really,” he said. “Since I am free most of the day, so I go and sit in the car-yard,” he said. “It enables my son to go around hunting for old cars to buy, or do all the other things that in a business need to be done. He is not worried about the things back in the yard. I look after them.”

“What do you do in the yard?” I wanted to know.

“Basically I sit there and see that every thing is okay,” he said. “As it is, throughout the day someone or the other keeps dropping by to have a look at the cars on display there. Seeing that it is a second-hand car-yard some of them bring over their secondhand cars that they are interested in selling. Some one has to be there to welcome the clients. Since my son is mostly out I fill in for him.”

“You make the sales?”

“No, not normally,” he said. “In America selling a car, either new or a secondhand, involves a whole lot of bargaining. That is handled by my son.” Then he added with a chuckle, “The haggling is worse than what you would expect in India.”

“What if a customer comes and your son is not there?”

“Thanks to the Cell-phone we are in constant touch. I seek his guidance on the opening bid. Well, we have been in it for some time. It is not difficult. Tricky yes, but not difficult, we get by.”

“Well, the *sangat* would be thankful to you for this permanent *seva*. The itinerant *raagis* and the *gianis* would find it difficult otherwise,” I said coming back to the earlier topic.

“I do my duty for my Guru’s sake. I enjoy it. Besides, when the Guru has given me so much there has to be a way to show my gratitude.

This is it,” he said happily.

“I appreciate your *seva* and your attitude,” I said.

He seemed to look back in his mind and what he recollected seemed to amuse him. His face lit up with a smile, the eyes became merry, “I will narrate an interesting story.” He then added, “One day I went to Sacramento to pick up a *jatha*, to bring them to Stockton. At Sacramento there was another *raagi* Singh, a single soul, who wanted to go to Fremont but was not getting a ride. When he saw me and came to know the purpose of my visit there he asked me if I could drop him at Fremont. I agreed. After all, it would involve only one more hour’s drive. We all got in the car. First, from Sacramento I drove to Fremont to drop him there. Strange to say, at Fremont I met another *raagi* Singh who wanted to come to Stockton. You know they keep shuffling all the time. So I took him next, along with the group that I had picked up at Sacramento. By the time we finally landed at Stockton, it was evening. My son was frantically trying to locate me. He was worried about his old man. So, the next day he gave me a cellular phone, to remain in touch. Till then I had not much liked the idea of keeping a Cell-phone. But now the necessity had arisen.”

I was touched by his dedication. It is the people like him who are the true salt of the earth. For these simple Sikhs, religion is not a matter of mere abstract philosophical discussions, but it is *seva*. The heads must bow before such simple dedication.

□

*They alone become nobles in His Court
Who obey His Orders.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 142

ਹੁਕਮੁ ਮੰਨੇ ਸਿਰਦਾਰੁ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਬਾਣੀਐ ॥

TERRORISM, A CREATION OF THE RULERS

RAGHBIR SINGH*

As academic analysis shows that terrorism is practised by the rulers and not by ruled. In the past, a despot and his coterie or a colonial power used terror-inspiring methods to suppress any opposition to their methods of governance in order to keep themselves in power. This benefited a few persons while the majority suffered. Today, a cleverly manipulated form of government installed by a vote system whereby the poor people 'enjoy' the right to decide which elite political group of influential people, not statesmen, should rule them. This has now replaced the old despotic system. In this so-called modern democratic system, common man never becomes an effective partner. Some of the elected poor people of the majority party do have humble background no doubt, but their reins are in the hands of some elite political group who finance their election. They pull their reins in the direction they want. No example needs to be quoted here.

People have come to know this reality after participating in a number of election processes since independence. To get majority, these elite groups always inspire communal or caste passions (root cause of violence) and talk insincerely about questions of common interests only to get elected. Actually, they are never for the common man whom they soon forget after the election.

The poor illiterate and ignorant people fail to appreciate the political phraseology used by these groups. As a result, an elite group of another communal minority, succeeds to get majority and forms the Government. That is how the UPA (United Progressive Alliance of Congress) and NDA (National Democratic Alliance of BJP, etc) and similar combinations in the states consisting always of communal

* # 2984, Phase VII, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab

majority manage to come to power.

Such governments pass laws authorizing them to use terror-inspiring methods to create terrorism. In this case the culture, education, language, economic progress and the sentiments of the minorities suffer. Any economic demand from them, which goes against the interest of the elite class, is ruthlessly suppressed. Swayed by the communal passions aroused by such groups, the poor section of the majority and of the minority fail to make a united front against such alliances to save their interests. Minority, whose point of view and difficulties are ignored, and sidetracked under the cloak of sheer majority, loses confidence in the electoral process. They then feel forced to adopt violent methods to achieve their genuine rights denied by the majority. Their actions to draw the attention of the rulers is dubbed as anti-national, they are labelled as terrorists. That was the reason why Jai Parkash Narain gave the call of total revolution when Indira Gandhi declared emergency.

Birth of terrorism could be due to regional dissatisfaction also, where a region feels that the yardstick of administration applied to it is different from the one applied in other regions. Refusal to demarcate states on linguistic basis and unfair distribution of river waters resulted in violent agitations in Punjab and other parts. India is a federal republic. And if a state wants to be treated as a federal unit with powers as defined in the Constitution and passes a resolution not acceptable to the centre, like that of Anandpur Sahib, it becomes a terrorist state. Agitation for Telengana is still going on since pre-partition days.

Situation in Punjab which precipitated in eighties and nineties was also due to this reason and has not yet seen its end. Many Sikh youth who raised their banner of revolt against such treatment are lingering in jails and reasons thereof are still not removed. It is whispered that Sant Bhindranwala was being propped up as a force against the traditional Sikh leadership by Indira Gandhi, and when he realized her deceitful designs, he refused to toe her line. He and the entire Sikh community including defence officers, bureaucrats, political and religious leaders were painted as terrorists and degraded in the eyes of other Indians. Efforts were made to dub the community as such in foreign lands too. To sow the seed of dissent in them, some of them were helped by dubious means to get majority in the elections

and form Government to suppress the Sikh opposition which they did. People know it. It needs no repetition.

Thus, the seed of terrorism is sown by the ruling elite political groups to keep the poor and the minorities divided on communal lines so as to continue their economic exploitation. They also try to demoralize the religious minorities with a view to force them to merge their identity with the majority community.

World events show that such rulers, dubbing some people as terrorists, were themselves put behind bars when the people's rule came. Russian example is before us. If we look at the happenings of the 20th century alone in India, Indian leaders like Gandhi and Nehru, etc., who were hailed as heroes by the nationalist Indians, were all terrorists in the eyes of the British Government. Shaheed Bhagat Singh was a terrorist in the eyes of Gandhi and the people of his thinking who branded Subhash Chander Bose also as a protagonist of terror-inspiring activities. Sheikh Abdullah of Jammu and Kashmir was put in jail by Nehru because he pleaded the cause of people of that state. Jai Parkash Narain was imprisoned by Indira Gandhi when he opposed her autocratic rule. Some groups of Jammu and Kashmir, which represent the sentiments of Kashmiris and those from the North Eastern parts of India, who want more rights in the Indian Republic, are terrorists as per the thinking of the people running Government of India.

On the other hand, in the eyes of public and tax payers, those politicians, government servants, industrialists, businessmen and other influential persons are terrorists who, because of their political clout, use terror-inspiring methods.

They try to subjugate the minorities and exploit the religious sentiments and labour of the poor because of their majority obtained by dubious means. They play fraud with the national treasury by concealing income to save income tax, not returning loans to the government and banks, siphoning of money through stock scam, avoiding payment of taxes such as income tax, sales tax, excise and custom duties, etc. They adopt dubious means when placing orders for the purchase of imports resulting into Bofors, Fertilizer and Tehlka scams, etc. Terrorism is a term with very wide range which defies any

definition. Saner elements of the public justify it when a minority, religious or otherwise, fails to get its genuine demands accepted by the Government through peaceful means. And it is condemnable when Government, to enjoy the fruit of their success in elections, exploits the poor people and indulges in terror-inspiring methods to suppress a minority to deprive them of their genuine rights. It is in the interest of the minorities; a) not to get provoked communally; b) to forge a united front against the evil designs of the elite political persons; and c) organize protests at various centres and levels of known corruption to expose the corrupt elements. Only thus they can get rid of the injustice being done to them by communal and so-called secular persons and governments.

Time has come for the poor, irrespective of any caste and creed, to stand up against their exploitation by the ruling groups, as they had risen in the period of Sikh ascendancy which conferred on them the right to rule. They did serve society in the real sense.

□

*Riding a beautiful horse
With a pretty dagger hanging by one's waist,
Should not make one proud
Lest one should fall headlong on the ground*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 956

ਕਮਰਿ ਕਟਾਰਾ ਬੰਕੜਾ ਬੰਕੇ ਕਾ ਅਸਵਾਰੁ ॥
ਗਰਬੁ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਮਤੁ ਸਿਰਿ ਆਵੈ ਭਾਰ ॥

ROLE OF SIKH RELIGION IN SOCIETY

RIMPLEJEET KAUR*

The universally-accepted function of religion is to protect people or society from social and moral degradation, and to guide its destinies in such a way as to achieve the good for greatest number of people. If a religion is to be a living force, it must be a practical religion, one that teaches mankind to live worthily and not to escape from the world.

The history of Sikh religion dates from the birth of Guru Nanak in 1469. Guru Nanak spread a simple message of '*Ek Ong Kar*' : we are all one, created by the one Creator of all creation. This was at a time when India was being torn apart by castes, sectarianism, religious factions and fanaticism. He respected all religions and expressed the reality that there is one God and many paths.

Gurus preached their philosophy through holy scriptures (*dhur ki bani*). They all opposed the old dogmas, superstitions, injustice and hypocrisy. For spiritual matters, the Guruship was given to 'Guru Granth Sahib', a compilation of sacred writing by those who experienced Truth. For Sikhs 'Guru Granth Sahib' is the living embodiment of Guru and the source of the spiritual instructions and guidance. The only worship they have is the singing of the Gurus' hymns in praise of the Lord.

Sikhism differs from other religions in that it is a way of life and it proclaims human equality. According to it, caste, creed, gender and race have no value in His court. Idol worship, animal sacrifice, and fasts, etc, to please God are considered futile.

The Gurus did not endorse celibacy; they respected householders life. Further, they gave mankind a system of economic and social principles for the regulation of mundane life.

* Lecturer (Sociology), # 1029, Sector 37-B, Chandigarh

In political ideas, Guru said that authority in every sphere ultimately derives its validity from God. Guru suggested a 'theocracy' government or to be more exact a 'theo-democracy' where common man has been given a limited popular sovereignty under the suzerainty of God, who is the only real sovereign, and no dominance of any priestly class is recognized.

As a great educationist, Guru Sahib agreed that true education consist in development of a rational mind. Gurus taught mankind, how to live in this world and to face its problems. He laid stress on noble living through moral education, good deeds and social services, and hard work and dignity of labour in his teachings.

The Gurus used wit and humour to break the walls of illusion and superstitions. They believed that only right words and appropriate action at the right time could disseminate light and reason effectively.

It was suggested that religion has got two aspects, esoteric and exoteric. The esoteric aspect of religion is the upliftment of soul and the exoteric aspect is to ameliorate the economic status of the people. So, religion is required not only for spiritual upliftment, but also for social regeneration. Sikhism ensures stability and equilibrium, by keeping close to each other the parallel streams of external and internal life.

Guru in Sikhism is a guide or preceptor, a vehicle of philosophy of Sikhism and an ideal to be followed. No Guru ever called himself God. The authority of Guru was vested in the holy Granth after Guru Gobind Singh, the last Guru of the Sikhs.

To conclude, Sikhism is a religion of householders looking after a family, and actively engaged in the service of society, regarding the entire mankind as brotherhood, believing in the Fatherhood of One benevolent Father, who created the universe. It rejects asceticism, and monasticism as escapism and parasitism.

It is, therefore, a religion, which addresses humanity as a whole and is the need of the hour in this strife-torn world, which is heading towards annihilation through communalism, racial hatred and excessive worldly attachments.

OBITUARIES

JASWANT SINGH*

SANT SINGH MASKEEN

Among the gems of Sikh Panth like Bhai Vir Singh, Bhai Sahib Singh, Professor Puran Singh and Dr Ganda Singh, Sant Singh Maskeen shines bright, stands tall, nay tallest, in the galaxy of *Katbakars*.

Having learnt the finer nuances of *gurbani* meanings from Giani Balwant Singh of *Nirmala* order, he perfected and preached it with rare sweetness, simplicity, zeal and magical effect for almost half a century till the last breath of his life. He would take up a subject, go into its depth, quote *slokas* from other *ragas*, Gurus, Bhagats, poets, religious philosophers, other languages to prove his thesis with emphasis and in unparalleled sweet voice, binding the audience in devotional trance.

He had command of Punjabi, Hindi, Urdu, Persian, Sindhi, thus was at home in India and abroad. He carried the message of the Gurus beyond Indian shores to Kabul, Kandhar, Kuwait, Singapore, Malaysia, England, Iran, Canada and America. His knowledge of other religions like Hinduism, Islam, Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Jainism was deep. He always eulogized, never criticized any religion and quoted extensively from their scriptures. Endowed with 'elephant's memory', he put it to full use during his discourses. He was both an excellent orator and a gifted writer. He has written several books in Punjabi – *Guru Chintan, Guru Joti, Teeja Netar, Chautha Pad, Panj Parwan, Khat Darsan, Prabhu Simran*. Recently a few of his Hindi books have also been seen. He started International Missionary Society.

* Maj Gen, AVSM, # 1801, Sector 33-D, Chandigarh

Having recounted his contribution to the Panth, let me say a few words about the man. Co-incidentally, a few facts are common with him. He was born in Lak Marwat village, Banu, Pakistan in 1934 to Sardar Kartar Singh and Mata Ram Kaur. While still studying in school, partition took place in 1947, he came to Alwar (Rajasthan) and settled here. He lost his father in 1952 while he was hardly 18 years old (I was also born in 1934 in Pakistan, migrated to India in 1947 and lost my father in 1952, my first day in Medical College). He married Bibi Sundar Kaur in 1958 (my mother's name is Mata Sundar Kaur). Here contrast starts, he bloomed into a saint not only in name but in deeds as well, whereas I drifted into a 'soldier'.

He died suddenly on 18th February this year in Etawa City near Kanpur, leaving behind a generation of admirers, valuable books he wrote, video and audio tapes, cassettes and above all, fond memories of *lacs* of spell-bound listeners of his scholastic and devotional discourses. Awards were showered on him in abundance.

~ ~ ~

JUSTICE RANJIT SINGH NARULA

Chief Justice Ranjit Singh Narula died on 1st June, 2005 at Delhi at the age of 90 fruitful years. He held the post of Chief Justice Punjab and Haryana High Court with distinction for three years.

After retirement, he plunged into Sikhs problems, betterment of community, thus earned a respectful and dignified epithet of modern day 'legend of Sikh affairs'. The thousands of victims of 1984 Sikh genocide engaged his attention and he tirelessly fought for providing justice to 3,000 odd families of those massacred during riots. Hundreds of youth detained without trial under TADA after 1989 was his next expedition to provide them justice. He was both a fighter and provider of justice – a Judge.

If your youth is dedicated to service to humanity, the old age is scented with awards, rewards and more dignified service. Shri Madan Lal Khurana, Chief Minister Delhi appointed him as Chairman of Commission of Enquiry of Anti Sikhs riots. Justice Narula was a member of Minorities Study Group, a member of World Association of Judges since 1977, Chairman of Punjab Branch of Association of

Jurists. As a member of '84 Carnage Justice Committee he appeared before Nanavati Commission.

Promoting education was a great passion with him and this gave birth to Ranjit Singh Narula Trust, providing scholarship to students and medical aid to the poor regardless of their religion. He was secularist in his dealings not only as a judge but also in private life and that endeared him to all communities. "If the State fails to dispense justice it is not correct to call it a civil State" was painful outpourings in his letter after 20 years of anti-Sikh riots.

A firm, dedicated judge, a dauntless crusader of Human Rights, a Philanthropist, an educationist, a true humanist, Justice Narula lives in the hearts of thousands of riot victims, millions of Sikhs, countless fellow Indians.

~~~

#### **GENERAL JAGJIT SINGH AURORA – FINAL SALUTE**

Visiting Madam Tassaude Museum in London in 2001, we saw with deep interest Wax Models of Field Marshal Montgomery, Napoleon Bonaparte and Lord Nelson displayed with great reverence. Lt Gen Jagjit Singh Aurora who died in sleep in Delhi on 3rd May this year, was a greater thinking and achieving General. He liberated Bangladesh, presided over the surrender of 93000 Pakistani soldiers as prisoners of war, the largest in the living memory. This momentous surrender has been captured by a black & white photograph, when General A A Niazi of Pakistan signed the instrument with a borrowed pen on December 16, 1971. Speaking to mourners at Delhi, Field Marshal Sam Manekshaw remarked, "General Aurora won the Bangladesh war but I got the baton and was elevated as Field Marshal." Having served as Army Commander Eastern Command, General Aurora retired almost into oblivion.

He came up again on 31 st October, 1984, when Sikh genocide in Delhi following Indira Gandhi's assassination shook his conscious; the General in him could not rest. Along with like minded people including Inder Kumar Gujral, (later Prime Minister), he ran around to arouse the Government forces from a deliberate slumber when Sikhs were being massacred. He was in the forefront to file an affidavit before Nanavati Commission enquiring into anti-Sikh holocaust.

“From our meeting with the functionaries responsible for maintaining law and order, it appeared they were not at all concerned about the killings of Sikhs... From (their) attitude it was apparent the government was not interested at all in protecting the lives and property of the innocent Sikhs,” General Aurora had said.

General Aurora as Akali Dal nominee was an MP Rajya Sabha during 1986-92, but true to a hard core soldier, kept a low profile in politics as in life.

Born on February 13, 1916, in village Kalle Gujran, district Jehlum now in Pakistan, he studied in Rawalpindi Mission School and then Indian Military Academy in Dehra Dun. Commissioned in the prestigious Punjab Regiment on 1st January, 1939, he commanded the same battalion in 1948 Kashmir Operations. He held various staff and command appointments till he was Army Commander, Eastern Army and earned the honour ‘Liberator of Bangladesh’. He was awarded Param Vashisht Seva Medal and civilian honour of Padma Bhushan.

India has a rich military tradition and richer history. If Government of India ever decides to commission a Wax Museum like Madam Tassaude’s, London or Military Museum as I saw in Lebanon, I am sure General Jagjit Singh Aurora will find a place of pride there.

‘Soldiers do not die they just fade away’, so did General Aurora on 3<sup>rd</sup> May, 2005. A General for War and Peace.

## SUCCESSFUL FIGHT AGAINST DRUG ADDICTION – CHEEMA SHOWS THE WAY –

GURBAKHSI SINGH\*

---

The increasing use of alcohol and drugs has become the most serious problem in rural areas of Punjab. Elders in all villages are concerned about this malady, but they do not know how to go about it and check the onslaught of alcohol and drugs on the youth.

About a year back in March 2004, during an annual function for celebrating the birth anniversary of Sant Attar Singh at his village Cheema, (Distt Sangrur), thousands of the villagers gathered there. A speaker appealed to them to pay a real homage to Sant *ji* by making their village drug-free. He reminded them that Sant *ji* always preached against drug use. The hearts of the listeners were touched when the speaker told them that hundreds of thousands of people, when they read his *jevan katha* (his life history and teachings) gave up drinking. Resident of village, therefore, should not suffer from drug abuse use.

People started talking about this problem and finally on July 11, 2004, they decided to meet Baba Iqbal Singh, the Chairman of the Gurdwara Janam Asthan, built in the memory of the Sant on the site of his house. He advised the deputationists to form a Village Sudhar Sangat of which all the residents were to be treated as members; no formal registration was needed to be done and everyone was to be welcome to voluntarily do whatever he/she considered necessary to improve the life of the villagers. Further, Baba *ji* assured them that the gurdwara would provide full support to them.

The results were fantastic. To begin with a couple of persons, who found it a harmful and expensive habit, volunteered to give up drinking. Weekly *keertan* functions were started in their houses. At

---

\* Dr, # 959, Phase IV, SAS Nagar (Mohali), Punjab

the end of the Kirtan Session (3 AM - 5 AM), the family members using drug/alcohol stand up before the *sangat* and pledge to give up their use. The *granthi sahib*, joined by the *sangat*, prays for the blessings of the *Akal Purakh*. All the arrangements for *keertan*, *parshad*, tea, etc., are made by the gurdwara.

Every one directly involved in these efforts was pleased to find the list of applicants for the morning *keertan* getting longer everyday. To meet the demand of the residents, two functions per week became necessary. Within a couple of months, it increased to three and then four functions per week.

The news of the recovery of the regular drinkers and their having started normal life and getting involved in their family responsibilities, quickly spread to the adjacent villages. They approached the gurdwara for adopting their villages as well. Pressured by these requests, now the *keertan* function is held every day of the week. When I checked the list of the applicants, I found it still getting longer. Sudhar Sangat may have to organise similar units in other villages too to meet this demand.

The Sudhar Sangat took another bold step. There were two dirty drain-water ponds in the village. On the suggestion of *Baba ji*, they came out with their spades, tractor-trolleys, etc., to bring the soil from the fields to fill both the ponds, a gigantic job. Joint efforts of the whole village and hundreds of trolley loads of earth everyday filled the pond of the village creating a large open place for public activities. Landscaping of the same has already been started.

A bonus of this effort was that the village water was drained into a reservoir in the field dug for bringing soil to fill the dirty ponds. Now, the farmers are anxious to use that water as manure. A nuisance and the source of diseases has been changed into a valuable asset.

Students of the Akal Academy, Cheema have played a silent role in this movement. The message they are taught to convey to the drinkers respectfully and with folded-hands is :

“If a child commits a wrong act, the blame goes to the parents; if a Sikh commits an anti-*gurmat* act, the blame would go to his Guru. Therefore, a Sikh, by using drug/alcohol, prohibited for the Sikhs, should not be a cause of discredit to the Guru, who sacrificed all his four sons for our honor & welfare.”

Another village, Mander, Block Budhalada, (Distt Mansa), which



also has an Akal Academy and a gurdwara, decided to repeat this success. In just about two months, Sarpanch Rakesh Sharma and other elders were convinced about the need of this revolution. They moved very fast and passed a resolution to ban the sale of drugs and tobacco in any form in their village. District administration was informed accordingly and copy of it was given to the author.

I congratulated the *Sarpanch* for that bold step and asked him how he managed to achieve that. With a heavy heart, he told me that two youth in his neighbourhood had died because of drug use. “I called a meeting of the village elders and pointed out the misery of the two young widows and their orphaned children. All agreed to give up drinking. After their approval, I called a gathering of all the villagers and presented this resolution to them. All speakers endorsed this decision and they thanked the gurdwara for performing the morning *keertan* in the houses of those who agreed to make their family drug-free. Motivated by the results of the morning *keertan*, all the villagers passed this resolution unanimously.

□

*The Lord, perfection incarnate offers this cup of truth spontaneously  
To whomsoever He shows grace.  
One that deals in amrita, by hollow intoxicants shall not be attracted  
Whoever drinks of the Master's teaching of his immortal Word,  
Is approved at once of God.  
One that to the vision of the Divine Portal is devoted,  
On liberation and paradise little value shall set.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 360

ਪੂਰਾ ਸਾਚੁ ਪਿਆਲਾ ਸਹਜੇ ਤਿਸਹਿ ਪੀਆਏ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਨਦਰਿ ਕਰੇ ॥  
ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਕਾ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਕਿਆ ਮਦਿ ਛੁਛੈ ਭਾਉ ਧਰੇ ॥  
ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਸਾਖੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਣੀ ਪੀਵਤ ਹੀ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ ਭਇਆ ॥  
ਦਰ ਦਰਸਨ ਕਾ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਮੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਬੈਕੁੰਠੈ ਕਰੇ ਕਿਆ ॥

## LORD AURORA OF BANGLADESH

MANOHAR SINGH\*

---

---

General Aurora has finally crossed the river, and walked on to the Valhalla of the marshals. As the days and the years roll by, he will fade into history, and begin to find his true place in it. Thirty years is not enough to consider dispassionately the events of 1970-1971 and the role of the chief protagonists. But for those of us who saw the events, and the aftermath, it is perhaps a moment to reflect and to put down some thoughts.

1970 was a difficult year, with internal difficulties and external tensions with Pakistan in the east and west. The inflow of a vast number of refugees from the east created immense economic and political tensions. Slowly, but surely, the situation came to a boil, and the preparations for war began. The Indian Army was a lumbering giant, an elephant, not a cheetah. Its organisation, structure, and mentality were of the Quetta Staff College and World War II. It had barely managed a slugging match in 1965 in the west, with no substantial losses or gains and both Armies fighting a war in the World War II Montgomery mode.

But this was going to be different. East Pakistan was a swampy riverine delta land. It is criss-crossed by a host of rivers, big and small, like the arteries and nerves in a human body. The logistics of a major operation were mind-boggling. The staff work began, and went on for months at the Eastern Command, Calcutta. GHQ Delhi gave the policy directives, but the job had to be planned in the east by those who were to execute it. This was the daunting task that faced General Aurora, his staff deputy Jacob, and others. They were conscious that they were going to make history for India by victory or monumental failure.

---

\* Dr, MP, Formely Chief Election Commissioner of India

General Manekshaw, the Army chief, a brilliant soldier and charismatic leader of men, laid down the broad objectives and policy directives. But the actual plan, which would hopefully succeed, had to be conceived and worked out in meticulous details by Gen. Aurora. Above all, he had to execute it. President Kennedy said after the Bay of Pigs failure, "Victory has a thousand fathers, defeat is an orphan." Every soldier knew as they planned that while success would be shared, any disaster would be Gen. Aurora's, and his alone.

I remember how the Army went to war that winter, and how there was continuous external political pressure on the country and therefore, anxiety for an immediate and successful conclusion. The paddy fields, rivers, and ditches posed immense problems. Armour and heavy vehicles could hardly move and that too along poor roads well covered defensively. A moment came when it looked that we were bogged down and stalemated. Gen Aurora did not lose his nerve, modified plans where necessary and swept towards Dhaka. In the short span of a couple of weeks, India achieved a historic victory with a hundred thousand prisoners and a new country on the world map. This success had come after a millennium of invasion and imported rulers. It is something which will live in India's historical memory for long and cannot be easily repeated.

There were plenty of claimants to the halo of success. The political leadership of course had played their role, and the achievement was nationally applauded. But in the armed forces, I recall a strange subtle PR effort to enhance the role of the Army chief, and diminish the role of the field commander. A signal from Delhi to Calcutta emphasising the prominent planning and supervising role of GHO, was widely expose. It appeared that the war had been mainly won from Delhi. Those who read military history know that while the German Armed Forces Headquarters in Berlin had played a great role, the battles were won or lost by Guderian, Manstein and Rommel. They were the heroes, and sometimes the fall guys. They paid for failure. They were entitled to the success, and history has given it to them.

Gen Jacob was staff deputy to Gen Aurora. He was not the commander. Many years back I read his memoirs. They seemed to emphasise that he had done most of the planning and execution! Sam got the Field Marshal's baton. As he said somewhere, "Jaggi did the

work, I got the baton.

Gen Aurora, unfortunately, was quickly allowed to fade out and away. He quietly went into civil life, and potted around in minor activities. Once with great effort he became a Rajya Sabha MP. He was not used or recognised or given anything else. I have seen, and see today, plenty of generals and marshals who are governors, and in other high national positions. Sadly, Gen Aurora, who deserved the most from his country, did not adorn any Raj Bhavan or other high position. Heroes are created and honoured to offer role models to the young. In England, I see statues all over London of their warriors. Gen Slim who fought, reasonably well in Burma was created Lord Slim of Burma; Montgomery became Lord Montgomery of El-Alamein. The Punjab governor at the time of the war was Dr D.C. Pavate, a Cambridge mathematician and a senior wrangler. I was his secretary. I remember what he said to me over coffee one day. The Israeli war hero General Moshe Dayan had come to see him. The governor praised his achievements, but Dayan said, "Excellency, my achievements are nothing compared to those of your Gen Aurora. I am amazed at his success against such overwhelming odds." Dr Pavate said to me that it was a pity that he had not been fully recognised and honoured. He said, in England, he would have been made Lord Aurora of Bangladesh. These titles and awards are ultimately little gongs, as the British are fond of saying. At the end of the day, what matters is the cold judgment of history given long after the protagonists have faded away into the mysteries of time. History certainly will place Aurora on the pedestal that he truly deserves. General, rest in peace. (*Courtesy : Asian Age, New Delhi, May 6, 2005*)

□

*Falsehood exhausts itself.*

*Truth alone prevails ultimately.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 953

ਕੂੜ ਨਿਖੁਟੇ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਓੜਕਿ ਸਚਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

## REVIEWS

### NASHIAN DI DALDAL

A REVIEW BY GURBAKHSI SINGH\*

---

*Author : Dr Rajinder Singh*

*Publisher : Dharam Parchar Committee, SGPC, Amritsar*

*Pages : 158*

*Price : Not mentioned*

The drug-related deaths are known to the residents of every village in Punjab. However, two places in Amritsar district got into lime-light. Most of the residents there are widows or orphans, the male members had been taken to *swarg* by the drugs. The newspapers highlighted this tragedy and they published the news of the women marching to the police station. The men in Khaki were accused with abetment of sale of drugs and considered responsible for their miseries. Such shocking news have failed to change the heart of the 'traders of death' or the youth getting into their net.

Dr Rajinder Singh, now retired and living in Mohali has been moved by this self-inflicted human tragedy. He has first-hand experience of handling the drug addicts and has closely studied the social effects of drug use. All those, who wish to save people from this menace, will find his book, *Nashian di daldal*, very helpful. Both the drug users and their saviours can obtain the critical information, they need, from this book.

The author has systematically dealt this subject describing the spread of drug use, the persons responsible for it, and the social and economic damage done by it. Further, he has also briefly surveyed the history of the drug-ban or prohibition, besides the current laws related to it. How the hard-working rural people get attracted to the fun of drug use and thus invite problems for their whole family, has been explained effectively. The ill effects of all drugs including

---

\* Dr, # 959, Phase IV, Mohali - 160 059

different forms of tobacco, chemical substances, opium, alcohol, etc, have been adequately described. This awareness is essential to save prospective victims. Unusual substances being used for drug effects have also been mentioned.

The author regrets the use of drugs by the players who are supposed to be better informed about their negative side-effects. He shows justified surprise that some *devtas/ devis/ pirs* are propitiated with the offering of alcohol. This gives a religious approval for its use. The distribution of alcohol as *parshad* at those places resulting in its over drinking and deaths are known to the devotees and local people. However, the practice goes on unchecked by any official or a welfare organisations.

*Gurbani* hymns have been quoted in the book to impress upon the readers that all kinds of drugs are a taboo for good people. They hurt both their body and mind. This must convince people, believing in God, not to touch drugs.

To assure the readers that they can get freedom even if they have sunk very deep in drug addiction, the author has narrated the classical experience of the famous actor Sanjay Dutt, son of Nargis and Sunil Dutt. The actor himself explained it in an anti-drug conference in Kolkata (Dec 1991). He described how he got into it as a student and later started the use of costly but very harmful and addictive substances. He also explained how, after the death of his mother, the love-drenched advice of his father finally saved him. This is a great lesson both for the drug-addicts and their parents.

A lot is being done by educated persons to save patients suffering from the use of different drugs but the money-hunger of the drug (read death) dealers is very strong. The current spate of the deaths may awaken their conscience and melt their heart to refrain from this trade. The last two chapters provide guide-lines for parents to save their children from slipping into this death-trap. The book rightly ends with the views of intelligentsia and professionals against drug use. The pictures, on the cover are scary, and send a strong warning to those who think of trying any drug just for fun of it. However, to my surprise, the bibliography mentioned in the index is missing in the text.

In the end, Dharam Parchar Committee of the SGPC, Amritsar must be congratulated for publishing this book. The book will go along way in saving our youth from drugs and it must reach all libraries/schools /colleges.

**MANVTA DA PRANAM  
–SARBANSDANI DE NAAM –**

**A REVIEW BY GURDEV SINGH\***

---

*Author : Sardar Kulbir Singh Sidhu IAS*

*Printer : Harjit Printing Press, SCF 83, Phase 5 SAS Nagar (Mohali)*

*Pages : about 500*

*Price : Not mentioned*

The name of the book, rendered in English, would be like “Mankind’s homage to the One, who sacrificed his all”.

The book depicts author’s deep comitment and immense respect for the Gurus and their followers, and martyrs of the Sikh faith. The contents of the book are virbrant streams of passions and feelings dedicated to the great Gurus. It is a scintillating amalgam of Kulbir Singh Sidhu’s painstaking research and sharp intellect. This historical and literary account can be safely termed as encyclopaedia of information concerning many aspects of Punjab’s social life – past and present.

Guru Gobind Singh’s ‘Zafarnama’, some Persian verses of Bhai Nand Lal, and Allah Yar Khan Jogi’s poems *Ganj Shabeedan* and *Shabeedane Wafa* paying tribute to the great sons of Guru Gobind Singh are reproduced in the book. Edifying excerpts from respectful homage paid to the supreme Being and epochal Guru Gobind Singh render this erudite work a rich source of ready reference.

The book can be described as a mini-archives. It is enriched with information regarding Guru’s robes, weapons and pictures of many historic gurdwaras. The author has given amusing account of the mode of life of Nihangs and provides valuable information regarding the

---

\* IAS (retd) 128, Sector 35-A, Chandigarh

Fifty Two poets of Dasmesh's Court (Darbar) and Forty Muktas.

Kulbir Singh played an important role in the organisation and celebrations of the tercentenary of the Khalsa, quadcentenary of the installation of Sri Granth Sahib in Darbar Sahib, Amritsar, quintcentenary of the birth of Sri Guru Angad Dev ji and tercentenary of the martyrdom of Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh and Mata Gugri ji. For many years, Kulbir Singh Sidhu has been treading vast expanses in Punjab and beyond to trace arcane historic foot prints of Guru Gobind Singh to reveal them to the common man. The mode of narration in the book establishes a dialogue with the reader that leaves a lasting imprint on his mind.

Kulbir Singh rightly asserts that the creation of Khalsa was an epoch making event which provided courage and dignity to human beings. Guru Gobind Singh's compliance with the wishes of the Panj Piaras at Chamkaur Sahib is a unique demonstration of the democratic values the Guru cherished.

Sri Guru Gobind Singh made exemplary endeavors for spreading education and while providing for healthy entertainment to his followers in the shape of Hola Mahala, he planned for them to be physically fit. The great Guru taught us that any leadership involves tremendous risk and danger to one's life, but that is no reason to shy away from it.

Kulbir Singh creates transcendent spaces that uplift human spirit. He developed his passion for Sikhs heroic deeds growing up in and serving the tracts hallowed by the Gurus' foot prints. At the core of his write-ups is the fervent passion of a person fired to spread the ennobling teachings of the great Gurus. His work reflects his remarkable industriousness and immense patience which helped him collect monumental information.

His work traverses the history of last five centuries. It can be joy to see the countryside through his eyes. He is scion of that stock of people who stood by the Gurus in the harshest of circumstances. He is born and brought up in an environment enriched with the ennobling impact of Gurus' teachings. Waheguru blessed him by providing him with ample opportunities in the matter of official assignments. He was chosen by the Punjab Government to arrange and supervise immensely important jobs concerning the celebrations of various Sikh centenaries during the last decade. In assignments at the district and



State level, he not only rose to the occasion to justify the confidence reposed in him for successful organisation of the various centenaries, he added to his vast experience and knowledge of the lofty accomplishments of the Gurus and their followers. Thus his knowledge, experience and dedication make him amply capable to set in narration various episodes which would surely leave uneraseable uplifting imprint on readers' minds and inspire them to be worthy practitioners of the teaching of the great Gurus.

I suggest in the next addition he should provide more specific references to the erudite quotes of the distinguished scholars mentioned in his praiseworthy work and do away with avoidable repetitiveness so that richness of his quintessential observations is not diluted through a spread on an expansive canvas. No doubt the material encompassed in the book is invaluable and the high level intellectual input of the author cannot be appraised in money terms, still it will be better if he indicates the cost of the physical format of the book to make it convenient for the prospective readers to procure it.

□

*Let your mind be washed in the pool of truth  
And become the abode of God.  
Make then, as leaf-offerings,  
Your devotion to please Him.  
Serve Him thereafter by dedicating to Him your life.  
You will then be able to enjoy your union with Him.*

– Guru Granth Sahib, p. 728

ਮਨੁ ਸੰਪਟੁ ਜਿਤੁ ਸਤ ਸਰਿ ਨਾਵਣੁ ਭਾਵਨ ਪਾਤੀ ਤ੍ਰਿਪਤਿ ਕਰੇ ॥  
ਪੂਜਾ ਪ੍ਰਾਣ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜੇ ਸੇਵੇ ਇਨ੍ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਰਵਤੁ ਰਹੈ ॥

## NEWS & VIEWS

---

---

### SIKH APEX BODY

#### SGPC REQUESTED TO TAKE INITIATIVE

Chandigarh, April 30, 2005. It may be recalled that the Institute of Sikh Studies passed the following resolution at the end of the Annual Seminar held on November 16, 2003.

“This gathering of Sikhs has noted with great concern that the Panth is passing through a crisis marked by disunity, challenges to Sikh identity and established institutions like the Akal Takht Sahib and SGPC, spate of apostasy, existence of schisms old and new, and unnecessary controversies created to divide and weaken the Panth.

“In order to deal with these problems, to carry the divine message of the Gurus worldwide and to lead the Panth to its destined glory in the service of mankind, it is imperative to invoke the Gurus’ doctrine of *Guru Granth – Guru Panth*. This doctrine gives the responsibility to the Panth to take decisions in the light of teachings of the Gurus with complete faith in *sabad* as Guru.

“This gathering feels that in the situation that prevails today, it is necessary to have a central body of the Sikhs with global representation whose deliberations will guide and assist the entire Sikh community.”

The resolution also called upon the SGPC ‘to take the required initiative for creating an apex body, which includes representatives of all major *panthic* organisations and Sikhs from across the world, with itself as nucleus under the patronage of Akal Takht Sahib’.

Following up on the resolution, Sardar Gurdev Singh President,

IOSS addressed a letter to the President, SGPC on 30th April, 2005, requesting her to take the required initiative for setting up the proposed International Sikh Confederation. Response of the SGPC is awaited.

~ ~ ~

#### **SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL SIKH CONFEDERATION**

Delhi, May 16, 2005. The Delhi Sikh Gurdwaras Management Committee organised a conclave of Sikh intellectuals at Delhi on May 16, 2005 to discuss the present-day issues concerning Sikhs. It was attended by a large number of scholars and public men from India and abroad. About half a dozen IOSS members, in their individual capacity, were invited by the organizers. Dr Gurbakhsh Singh, Bhai Ashok Singh and Sardar Gurdev Singh participated in this conclave in Delhi on May 16, and availed of this opportunity to apprise the scholars about the endeavours of the IOSS regarding the organisation of the International Sikh Confederation (Apex Body).

~ ~ ~

#### **GURDEV SINGH ELECTED PRESIDENT OF THE SES**

In a general body meeting of the Sikh Educational Society held on May 28, 2005 at Chandigarh, Sardar Gurdev Singh was unanimously re-elected SES President for another term of five years. The SES is an old and prestigious society running five colleges and a school in different parts of Punjab and Chandigarh. IOSS members, Bhai Ashok Singh, Maj Gen Narindar Singh, Dr Kharak Singh, Lt Gen Kartar Singh Gill, Dr Gurcharan Singh Kalkat and Dr Kirpal Singh are some of the distinguished members of the SES.

~ ~ ~

#### **MRS DALJEET JAIJEE PASSES AWAY**

We are saddened to record that Mrs Daljeet Jaijee, wife of our IOSS member Sardar Inderjit Singh Jaijee passed away on June 9, 2005 at Chandigarh. She was ailing for some time past. Mrs Jaijee retired as Financial Commissioner/Principal Secretary to Government of Punjab about two years back. *Kirtan* and *Ardas* for the peace of departed soul was held on June 19, 2005 in Gurdwara Sahib, Sector 11, Chandigarh.

~ ~ ~

#### **YOUTH CAMP AT BARU SAHIB**

Baru Sahib, June 11, 2005. Maj Gen Jaswant Singh delivered a lecture on *Public Speaking* to teachers of 21 schools of Akal Academy

Baru Sahib on 11th June, 2005. In the evening, he presided over the Valedictory Function and distributed the prizes to winners from all the schools. Dr Gurbakhsh Singh USA played a key role in organising this camp, and delivered five lectures on various aspects of *gurmat*.

~ ~ ~

#### **AMRITSAR INTELLECTUALS HAIL THE PROPOSAL FOR INTERNATIONAL SIKH CONFEDERATION**

Amritsar, May 15, 2005. A team from the Institute of Sikh Studies (IOSS) visited Amritsar and addressed a large gathering of intellectuals and representatives of prominent Sikh organisations at 11:00 hrs on May 15, 2005. The team consisted of Sardar Gurdev Singh (President, IOSS), Dr Kharak Singh, Bhai Ashok Singh (Vice-President, IOSS) and Lt Gen Kartar Singh Gill PVSM. This meeting was organised by Sardar Inderjit Singh Gogoani, who made all arrangement and also conducted the proceedings as Stage Secretary.

The prominent individuals / representatives of Sikh organisations attended the presentation held under arrangements of the Khalsa Collegiate High School, Amritsar.

The presentation started with a welcome address by Prof. Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, Head, Department of Guru Nanak Studies, GND University. Sardar Gurdev Singh introduced the team, the theme, and background of the subject. Dr Kharak Singh then explained to the august audience the need for forming the International Sikh Confederation and its aims and objectives. He clearly explained the IOSS's efforts in this direction 1999 onwards, leading to the very successful seminar held by the Institute in 2003 which was attended by Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra, the then President of SGPC and a large gathering of eminent Sikhs. He drew the attention of the audience to the Resolution passed in the seminar and published in an issue of the *Abstracts of Sikh Studies* as well as Pamphlets especially outlining the constitution of the ISC. Pamphlets (both in English and Punjabi) had been distributed to the audience, prior to the start of the presentation.

Bhai Sahib Ashok Singh then lent strength to the views expressed by the President and Dr Kharak Singh. He went back in time and history to stress the need to strengthen Guru Granth – Guru Panth and follow in the footsteps of our great ancestors. All speakers stressed the fact that the ISC would not disturb existing Sikh organisations – in

fact, it would unite them under one umbrella.

There was now need for Lt Gen K S Gill to explain in detail the concepts behind the framing of the constitution of the ISC. He stressed the following in lucid terms :

- a. Need for an Apex Body to encompass Indian and Global Sikhs;
- b. Representation by eminent Sikh Scholars and Professionals;
- c. Co-option of top Sikh Organisations;
- d. Creation of a moral authority for the Sikh *Jagat*;
- e. Create an umbrella Organisation while preserving and strengthening existing Sikh Organisations/Institutions;
- f. Introduce a fair and open system of Representation;
- g. Streamline and professionalise decision-making;
- h. Panth and not individuals to be supreme authority;
- i. The salient points of the Organisation of the ISC and its constitution were then highlighted by the General.

### **Open House Discussion**

After the above presentation which lasted approximately 2 hrs, the subject was thrown open to the house for discussion. A number of speakers addressed the audience for one hour. Prominent among them were :

Dr Charanjit Singh Gumtala (Gursikh Sanstha), Giani Baldev Singh (Akhand Kirtani Jatha), Sardar Paramjit Singh Gorenangal, Gurdev Singh Sandhanwalia, Sardar Sarabjit Singh of the Dal Khalsa, Principal Harinder Kaur, Prof Balwant Singh Dhillon.

Giani Kewal Singh *ji*, former *Jathedar* of Takht Sri Damdama Sahib, was gracious enough to address the gathering and give his blessings.

All speakers pledged their whole-hearted support to the proposal and gave a number of suggestions, which will be considered by the Action Committee.

### **Conclusion**

The visit of the IOSS team to Amritsar was a Resounding Success. We must now press home the issue.

The team requested all present to attend our seminar to be held on 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> November, 2005 at Chandigarh, wherein the ISC would be formally launched after the audience formally approves its constitution. (*Report prepared by Lt Gen Kartar Singh*)

~~~

SIKH SCHOLARS HOLD MEETING

Ludhiana, April 9. Sikh Scholars held a meeting at Punjabi Bhawan here today to discuss the present scenario of the Sikh society and other affairs.

“We have constituted an International Sikh Confederation because the Sikhs were without any apex body that could solve, consider or elaborate the problems being faced by the Sikhs internationally”, said Dr Kharak Singh, a Sikh scholar, while speaking to the mediapersons.

He said that there were several controversies, including the issue of *Dasam Granth* and also the *Langar* issue, which had not been solved so far by any religious body of the Sikhs, because of their certain limitations.

Five sub-committees would watch the problems and aspiration of Sikhs all over the world. “All this would be carried out under the supremacy of Akal Takht”, said Dr Kharak Singh.

The meeting was presided over by Dr Kharak Singh and was convened by Col (retd) Chanan Singh Dhillon and Ishar Singh Sobti jointly. Dr Gurbakhsh Singh, N S Kapoor, Col (retd) Grewal and Sukhdev Singh supported the agenda.

Charanjit Singh of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur Chetna Munch, Dr Charan Kanwal Singh, and Prof Balwinder Singh of Guru Gobind Singh Study Circle also agreed to the lead of the organisation. Kirpal Singh Chandan of Sikh Missionary College assured cooperation and J S Kohli and M S Sodhi stressed to do the speedy work. Besides, the Sikh scholars Devinder Singh Sekha and Karamjit Singh Aujla were also present on the occasion. (*Courtesy : Hindustan Times, April 10, 2005*)

(This meeting was organised by Col Chanan Singh Grewal, Sardar Karamjit Singh Aujla, President, Sikh Rights and Duties Awareness Forum, and Sardar Sukhdev Singh, Prof Prithiapl Singh Kapur also participated in the deliberations and blessed the move. — Editor)

~ ~ ~

INDERJIT SINGH JAIJEE PLEADS FOR GRANT OF SUCCESSION CERTIFICATES OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS

In a letter addressed to the Chief Minister, Punjab, reproduced below,

Sardar Inderjit Singh Jaijee, has pleaded that succession certificates of 'disappeared' persons should be issued without further delay :

"On January 2, the press reported that the Government of India is changing the law so as to waive the missing clause for kin of tsunami victims. Formerly, the law required a person to be untraced for seven years before being declared dead. It was legally impossible to issue succession certificate before seven years. The waiver of this stipulation means that kin will be able to get legal inheritance of property expeditiously.

"This is a very reasonable and humane measure, and should also be adopted in Punjab where many persons whose kin have been missing for more than seven years and yet the property continues in legal limbo. In some cases, people have been trying to get succession certificates for more than 20 years. Some of the "missing" persons were believed to have been militants or militant sympathisers, as per police accusation. These persons "disappeared" and nothing could be learned of their fate.

"The Supreme Court has so far given compensation to families of 109 illegally cremated persons out of 2,097 cases. Police admitted that these 109 were in their custody prior to "disappearance". The remaining cases are under investigation. All these cases pertain to only three crematoriums. Also in those days, there were reports in the national press of a large number of bodies found floating in canals and rivers in Punjab. This gives an idea of how many families would be affected in the entire state.

"In the case of tsunami victims, nature bears the blame for the deaths. In Punjab, the needle of suspicion points toward custodial killings. The grief and misfortune of the kin of "disappeared" persons in Punjab is compounded by their inability to legally straighten out their property affairs. Denying succession certificates to next of kin amounts to punishing the innocent families. This has no basis in law and should not happen in any civil society. Militancy in Punjab ended much more than seven years ago and no purpose is served by continuing to harass families of alleged militants. It is, moreover, illegal to harass them on one pretext or another.

"We request the Government of Punjab to bring to an end the distress of kin of "disappeared" persons by ordering that all applications for succession certificates of "disappeared" persons be granted within the next six months. We also request that inquiries be instituted to

find out how and why the persons disappeared.”

Yours sincerely,
Inderjit Singh Jaijee, Convenor, MASR
1501, Sector 36-D, Chandigarh

~ ~ ~

HONOUR FOR FIGHTING ANTI-SIKH BIAS IN US

Richmond (Virginia, US), May 7. As he watched smoke billow from the Pentagon on September 11, 2001, Amandeep Singh Sidhu's anger over the attack on his country slowly changed to trepidation over the misguided backlash he knew he and other Sikhs would face from other irate Americans.

His fear proved well founded that afternoon when a motorist, apparently provoked by the sight of Sidhu's turban, tried to run him off the road.

Sidhu resolved that rather than hide his faith and heritage, he would fight post 9/11 prejudice against Sikhs and other minorities – an endeavour that helped him win the Virginia State Bar's Oliver W Hill Law Student Pro Bono Award. Sidhu, 27, will receive the award next Thursday at the University of Richmond Law School, where he received his degree today.

“Amandeep is the strongest law student leader I have encountered in over 20 years as a legal educator,” said law school Dean Rodney A. Smolla, who nominated Sidhu for the award.

Sidhu, son of a physician originally from Punjab, India, was born in Norfolk and grew up near Richmond.

He recalls a relatively typical American childhood of soccer and Little League and portraying Abraham Lincoln in the elementary school play, but even then he found himself explaining to classmates why his family was different.

“Growing up in the Richmond area with a unique identity as a Sikh, I was kind of thrust into becoming an advocate,” he said. “You can kind of hide in the shadows or become comfortable educating people about who you are.”

In high school, he adopted the practice of wearing a turban, an article of faith that many unenlightened people associated with terrorists, Sidhu said. At the College of William and Mary, he was the third Sikh to join the campus chapter of Phi Kappa Tau fraternity; he

conducted an education programme for each new class on his religion.

Sidhu also co-founded a New York-based Sikh Coalition.

Sidhu was working as a business analyst when terrorists crashed an airplane into the Pentagon, about 3 km from his office. Sidhu could see the smoke from his office window.

As he drove home later, many motorists honked and glared at Sidhu. When one tried to run him off the road, Sidhu slowed down and the enraged man sped away.

In the few days after September 11, Sidhu learned that many Sikhs had endured similar ordeals, scaring some into removing their turban and cutting their hair.

“We were forced into a situation where we could mask our identity or become more proud of it,” Sidhu said. He chose the latter, stepping up his efforts individually and through the Sikh Coalition to educate people about his faith and to battle prejudice.

Those efforts continued as he maintained a full academic load in law school and took leadership positions on the campus.

Sidhu hopes to get a job in Richmond that would allow him to work for social justice and continue his advocacy for Sikhs. (*Courtesy : Hindustan Times, May 8, 2005*)

~~~

### ***Letters to Editor***

#### **SARDAR SARAN SINGH SUPPORTS THE CONCEPT OF INTERNATIONAL SIKH CONFEDERATION**

Dear Editor,

This refers to your letter dated January 18, 2005 forwarding the Concept paper proposing the constitution of International Sikh Confederation as an Apex All-Embracing body.

The Sikh cultural centre has not been able to formulate a collective viewpoint for want of a meeting. However, I have gone thru the booklet and given thought to the basic idea in the context of the ground realities.

There is a compelling need for the kind of an Apex organisation envisaged in the booklet. It must command the willing support of a vast majority of Sikhs and institutions. Consequently, a democratic

and broad-based framework is a pre-requisite. Rigidities can tend to be counterproductive.

Subject to the above comment, I fully subscribe to the concept and suggest a time-bound discussion before adopting the constitution.

Yours sincerely,  
Saran Singh, Editor, *Sikh Review*  
<[sikhreview@vsnl.com](mailto:sikhreview@vsnl.com)>

~ ~ ~

#### **'LET'S DELVE DEEPER'**

Dear Editor,

Thank you for publishing the article by Sumit Kaur on Page 27, in the Jan-March 2005 issue of the *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, titled *Let's Delve Deeper*. The article in my opinion has a lot for the Sikh scholars to think deeply about. She has arrived at those very apt conclusions because she had an open mind and did not carry any baggage of the past as most of the Indian Sikh scholars do.

Col Avtar Singh (retd)  
<[singh.a@rogers.com](mailto:singh.a@rogers.com)>

~ ~ ~

#### **ATHEIST OR A DEDICATED CHRISTIAN ?**

Dear Editor,

It should not be difficult for us to see how dedicated W H McLeod is to Christianity. This becomes abundantly clear from his works. He did not fail to see where the danger lay, when he came to Punjab and studied the Sikh religion and history. So, in a subtle manner, he trained his guns on the very roots of *Sikhi*, in order to make it appear as one of the other mythology-based religions, that do not cater to the spiritual aspirations of seekers of Truth.

The garb of atheism is a part of his strategy, and has facilitated his clandestine (un)academic activities. When, and if ever, he was a Christian, the thought of applying 'Western methodology' to his own religion for the benefit of 'educated Western readers' never occurred to him. His charity did not begin at home, but was reserved for Sikhism.

Birendra Kaur  
<[birendrakaur@yahoo.com](mailto:birendrakaur@yahoo.com)>

~ ~ ~