

THE SIKH SWORD

The Sikh sword is the symbol of a Sikh's *dharam* to resist aggression, tyranny and injustice. It is a symbol of self-reliance, self-confidence, self-help, and self-protection. It is meant to destroy evil and evil-doers, root and branch. It is to sweep aside obstacles that obstruct the performance of his *dharam*, duty, and way of life, to uphold what is good, and punish who is bad and a bane for humanity. The tenth Nanak says :

Thou bestowest happiness on the good, Thou terrifiest the evil-doers, Thou scatterest sinners; I seek Thy protection, O Sword.

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਹ ਕਰਣੈ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੈ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੈ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੈ ।

Kabir in *Rag Ramkali* says :

I accept only the good and punish the evil-doers; this is how, I discharge the duties of the keepers of God's peace.

ਸੰਤਾ ਮਾਨਉ ਦੂਤਾ ਡਾਨਉ ਇਹ ਕੁਟਵਾਰੀ ਮੇਰੀ ॥

The very sight of the sword with the Sikhs has caused jitters in certain minds and quarters. The flash of the sword has dazzled their visions. But it is a temporary blindness which can be cured if reality is understood. The Sikh sword is not meant to be brandish right and left to be struck at whosoever comes in its way. The Sikh sword is, in fact, like a surgeon's lancet meant to remove soiled parts and amputate gangrenous organs. It is a symbol of will and power and determination of a Sikh to live a Sikh life.

The Sikh sword is not meant to be a butcher's knife and neither to be a mere showpiece. It has got to be wielded and effectively used when needed. The tenth Satguru in *Zafarnama*

has very clearly and definitely laid down :

When all other remedies have failed;

ਦੂੰ ਕਾਰ ਅਜ ਹਮਾ ਹੀਲਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੁਜ਼ਸਤ ।

It is justified to have recourse to the Sword.

ਹਲਾਲ ਅਸਤ ਬੁਰਦਨ ਬ ਸਮਸੀਰ ਦਸਤ ।

So it has got to be judiciously used, and only when all other means of persuasion, diplomacy, reasoning, etc., have failed. The Sikhs have recently again given a practical proof of this judiciousness in the spring of 1966, when their religion and religious places were attacked by the fanatic anti-Punjabi Suba demonstrators. The bigotted communalist elements among the Hindus forgot the sacrifice and martyrdom of their saviour, Guru Teg Bahadur, and threw stones at his memorial gurdwara, Sis-Ganj, in Delhi. The shining steel hanging by their sides ready at hand was not even once touched and flashed. History tells us that the tenth Guru fought only when first attacked. All the battles were fought in self-defence or to help in a deserving cause. In *Bachittar Natak*, about the attack of the Hill *Rajas*, he says :

He attacked me without any cause

ਲੋਹ ਪੜਾ ਹਮ ਸੋ ਬਿਨ ਕਾਜਾ ।

Sword is an allegorical reference to force. For a Sikh, therefore, legitimate use of force in defence of human values is not only right but becomes incumbent when an occasion arises, because he refuses to submit to brute force. When the sword is brought to bear, it must be effective and decisive. The tenth Master has invoked the sword in these words :

Thou art the subduer of countries, the destroyer of the armies of the wicked, in the battlefield thou greatly adornest the brave.

ਖਗ ਖੰਡ ਬਿਹੰਡ ਖਲ ਦਲ ਖੰਡ ਅਤਿ ਰਣ ਖੰਡ ਬਰਬੰਡ ।

Thine arm is infrangible, thy brightness refulgent, thy radiance and splendour dazzle like the sun.

ਭੁਜੁ ਦੰਡ ਅਖੰਡ ਤੇਜ ਪ੍ਰਚੰਡ ਜੋਤ ਅਮੰਡ ਭਾਨ ਪ੍ਰਭੰ ।

Thou bestowest happiness on the good, thou terrifiest the evil, thou scatterest sinners; I seek thy protection.

ਸੁਖ ਸੰਤਹ ਕਰਣੰ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਦਰਣੰ ਕਿਲਬਿਖ ਹਰਣੰ ਅਸਿ ਸਰਣੰ ।

Hail ! Hail to the Creator of the world, the Saviour of
creation, My cherisher, Hail to thee, O sword !

ਜੈ ਜੈ ਜਗ ਕਾਰਣ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਉਬਾਰਣ ਮਮ ਪ੍ਰਤਿ ਪਾਰਣ ਜੈ ਤੇਗੰ ।

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