

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

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ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਜਨਮ ਅਸਥਾਨ, ਗੁਰੂ ਕਾ ਮਹਿਲ, ਸ੍ਰੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਸਰ
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MEDITATION

As A Sinner I seek your Refuge!



ਜੈਤਸਰੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੯ ॥

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[SGGS: 703]



Translation*

Dear God! Kindly save my Honour:
The fear of Yama is eating into my sinews.
O Bountiful Lord, I come to seek your shelter
An incorrigible sinner, unwise and greedy
I am Truly sick of committing misdeeds -
And am in awe of fear of Death,
Which is searing me indeed. (1)
I made many an effort for SALVATION
And searched around in all Ten Directions.
The Immaculate Lord who dwells in my heart,
His secret I have yet not known. (2)
MERIT, MEDITATION and austerities I've none,
What shall I do now!
Exhausted, Nanak seeks Your Refuge
From fear, let him be SAVED! (3)

* Translation: KS Duggal's "GURUVAK": The Word Divine.
Courtesy: UBS Publisher's Distributors Ltd., 5, Ansari Road, New Delhi. 110002.

Guru Tegh Bahadur ji – Journey from Inter-faith Dialogue to Inter-faith Sacrifice

*PROF. CHARAN SINGH**

Introduction and Brief History

Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621- 1675) became the Ninth Guru succeeding Guru Harkrishan, in 1664. Guru Tegh Bahadur was the youngest of the five sons of sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) and Mata Nanaki. The early years were spent in Amritsar under the tutelage of Baba Budha (1506-1631), contemporary of Guru Nanak Dev Ji and Bhai Gurdas (1551-1637), nephew of Guru Amardas and inscriber of Adi Granth, prepared by Guru Arjan Dev. Hence, the foundation of knowledge of Guru Tegh Bahadur was sterling, and his understanding of religion, society, history, including that of invasion and conquests by Mughals, and contemporary issues, including oppression of the masses by rulers was very deep. Earlier, between 1497 and 1525, Guru Nanak had travelled to most of the pilgrim centres and places of learning of Hindu and Muslims. That knowledge and experience, available in the house of Guru

Nanak was shared with Guru Tegh Bahadur, as part of his early education.

Guru Tegh Bahadur also travelled extensively from 1664 to 1672 in different parts of North India and visited places as far as Dhubri in Assam while journeying through Mathura, Agra, Kanpur, Allahabad, Banaras, Sasaram, Bodh Gaya, Patna, Bhagalpur, Malda, and Dhaka. He would extensively interact with people during his travels while sharing teachings of universalism in spirituality, harmony in relationships with each other, and need to respect all faiths. Guru Tegh Bahadur was also respected by the royals in the country. Illustratively, amongst other interactions, in Dhaka, the Guru helped restore peace between Chakradhvaj, ruler of Ahom and Raja Ram Singh of Amber who had specially been deputed by Aurangzeb to lead an expedition against Ahoms of Assam. Interestingly, in another instance, the piece of land where Anandpur Sahib is built was

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Guru Tegh Bahadur was of contemplative nature with deep spiritual insights and wisdom, which was reflected in his compositions – 59 shabads and 57 slokas in 15 ragas in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. His reputation of a learned practitioner of spirituality spread far and wide with his universal messages in simple Braj language. The main teachings, made easier to understand with daily-life illustrations, were that the world is a transitory abode, human mind should stay focused on meditation, human body is a gift to be utilized as an opportunity for self-realization.

Intolerance to Diversity of Faith by Mughal Authorities and The Sacrifice

In May 1675, a group of Pandits from Kashmir met Guru Tegh Bahadur at Anandpur to explain how the freedom to practice faith was being curtailed and forced conversion of Hindus into Islam was being aggressively implemented. This was a matter of grave concern, as India is a great civilization with thousands of years of recorded history and a place from where many religions/faith had taken birth. Further, it is a land where people of various faiths from many countries took shelter and were accorded protection and dignity. It is a land where freedom of spiritual beliefs was widely practiced. Guru Tegh Bahadur promptly asked the visiting Pandits to convey to the authorities that if the Ninth Guru converts, then the Kashmiri Pandits will convert without any further effort or coercion. Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested immediately, brought to Delhi and tortured for months in full public view, to create a demonstration effect and instill fear in the minds of people against resisting conversion. Finally, he was beheaded, again in full public view at Chandani Chowk, on November 11, 1675.

The effect was salutary. Consequently, forced conversion to Islam stopped, with a clear message to Emperor Aurangzeb that matters of conscience should be left to spiritualists and not dictated by temporal powers. The objective of severe torture in spreading fear in minds of people also did not work, neither before nor after the beheading. To illustrate, three Sikhs -Bhai/s Mati Das, Sati Das, and Dayal Das, were tortured, and sacrificed their lives, but were steadfast on Guru's instructions, before the beheading. Similarly, two Sikhs demonstrated great courage and conviction in ensuring that the severed head of Guru Tegh Bahadur was carried 322 kms to Anandpur Sahib, by Bhai Jaita and the beheaded body was carried about 8 kms away, and respectfully consigned to flames in the house of Lakkhi Shah.

Uniqueness of the Sacrifice

The sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur was unique in the world as no other similar instance is recorded in the history of human race. The uniqueness has to be viewed in the historical context. Guru Nanak had started inter-faith dialogue when he travelled and interacted with spiritualists of different faiths and ideologies. He collected their compositions and along with Guruship, handed over the collection to the successor, Guru Anghad Dev. Guru Arjan Dev, compiled Adi Granth in 1604 with compositions from famous spiritualists like Namdev, Parmanand, Ravidas, Surdas, Trilochan, Jaidev, Ramanand, Dhanna, Farid, Bhikhan, Kabir, Pipa, Ravidas, Sain and Sadhna, coming from different faiths and traditions, mainly Hinduism and Islam. In 1708, Adi Granth was bestowed eternal Guruship and since then Sikhs revere the writings of these spiritualists, as much as composition of their Gurus. This reverence to spiritualists of other faiths was in keeping with the Sikh ethos of acceptance of diversity of belief and practice. It was probably for this reason that Guru Arjan Dev observed in eighth stanza of third ashtpadi of Sukhmani Sahib, that the best religion is meditation and pure deeds. That is the universal message of Sikhism. The Ninth Guru stressed that belief by making the supreme sacrifice for upholding the need to respect plurality in society. Guru Gobind Singh observed in Bachitra Natak that Guru Tegh Bahadur performed a grand deed in these dark times, protected the Tilak and Janeu (of the then oppressed - Hindus); and this sacrifice was for the sake of faith, as also to uphold righteousness.

In the sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur, it is important to understand the role and respect of inter-faith dialogue. It is interesting to note that the Kashmiri Pandits chose to come to Guru Tegh Bahadur, and none else, to complain against forced conversion. Equally interesting is the fact, that the Guru, without hesitation, readily agreed to take up the cause observing that a sacrifice of a worthy head is required. At Delhi, to persuade Guru to convert to Islam, various methods were adopted but neither physical torture nor worldly allurements could shake his belief that people should have the freedom to practice their faith, whatever it may be.

Conclusion

The freedom to practice faith of one's choice is a matter of human rights and freedom of conscience. And, herein our Gurus have established sterling standards repeatedly observing that be sincere in following your faith, whatever that faith is. As followers of

Guru Tegh Bahadur, we Sikhs owe to the society to share these historical facts and pristine values, to make the world, a better place to inhabit. To begin with, in the modern world, United Nations in New York should celebrate the birthday of Guru Tegh Bahadur as the day to uphold freedom to practice any faith without coercion or allurements. Similarly, UNESCO should celebrate the martyrdom day of Guru Tegh Bahadur, as strengthening of Inter-faith dialogue, celebrating diversity and plurality in culture, of which faith/religion is one component. To educate the world, of this unique sacrifice, each Gurudwara should make efforts to educate local population and authorities, in local language about the universal values of Sikhism, emphasizing on freedom to individual to practice faith of their choice. The Sikh sangat can organize inter-faith sessions, seminars and conferences along with University Departments. Finally, and most importantly, to celebrate 400 birth celebration of Guru Tegh Bahadur, an annual international prize of Inter-Faith Harmony can be instituted in the name of Guru Tegh Bahadur, in memory of and as a tribute to the unprecedented sacrifice in the annals of human history. □

SIKHS IN AFRICA, WESTERN ASIA & CENTRAL ASIA

SWARN SINGH KAHLON of Chandigarh has written three books covering Sikh Diaspora in non-English speaking countries titled SIKHS IN LATIN AMERICA, SIKHS IN ASIA PACIFIC and SIKHS IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE.

Now, he is gathering relevant information for his next books on Sikhs in African countries as well as Sikhs in Afghanistan, Bahrain, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Palestine, Qatar, Syria, Saudi Arabia, UAE, Yemen, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan.

If any reader of THE SIKH REVIEW has any information about Sikhs in the above-mentioned countries, then he/she should kindly contact the author.

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Guru Tegh Bahadur's 'Awakening Call' to Humanity

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The following lines (*tuks*) from the composition (*bani*) of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji refers to his proclamation and advice '*Pukar*'/ '*Bhakhian*' for the welfare of humanity. Indeed, there is a lot to learn from his soulful message - jewels of wisdom - in order to make one's life meaningful by renouncing ego (*houmai*) and living an enlightening life in the remembrance of God.

While addressing the mortal being the Guru made the following Proclamation.

ਅਜਹੁ ਸਮਝਿ ਕਛੁ ਬਿਗਰਿਓ ਨਾਹਿਨਿ ਭਜਿ ਲੇ ਨਾਮੁ ਮੁਰਾਰਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਜ ਮਤੁ ਸਾਧਨ ਕਉ ਭਾਖਿਓ ਤੋਹਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥੨॥੮॥
[Raag Sorath M. 9, SGGS: 633]

O Man, understand the reality and purpose of life at the earliest as it is not yet too late! Chant and vibrate the Name of the Lord.

Says Nanak, this is the subtle wisdom of the Holy Saints, which I proclaim out loud to you. [2][8]

ਜਿਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸਿਆ ਸੋ ਸੁਨੁ ਰੇ ਭਾਈ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਤ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ਕੈ ਗਹੁ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਨਾਈ ॥੩॥੩॥
[Raag Tilang M. 9, SGGS. 727]

The way the Guru instructs thee, hearken thou to that, O brother.

Nanak loudly proclaims "Grasp thou the protection of thy Lord". [3][3]

ਬਿਖਿਆ ਬਿਖੁ ਜਿਉ ਬਿਸਾਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੋ ਜਸੁ ਗੀਏ ਧਾਰਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਨ ਕਹਿ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ਅਉਸਰੁ ਬਿਹਾਤੁ ਹੈ ॥੨॥੨॥
[Raag Jaijivantee M.9, SGGS. 1352]

Forget the poisonous sins of corruption, and enshrine the Praises of God in your heart. Nanak humbly proclaims that this opportunity is slipping away. [2][2]

ਘਟ ਘਟ ਮੈ ਹਰਿ ਜੁ ਬਸੈ ਸੰਤਨ ਕਹਿਓ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਿਹ ਭਜੁ ਮਨਾ ਭਉ ਨਿਧਿ ਉਤਰਹਿ ਪਾਰਿ ॥੧੨॥
[Sloak M. 9 SGGS. 1427]

The Dear Lord abides in each and every heart; the Saints proclaim this as true.

Says Nanak, meditate and vibrate upon Him, and you shall cross over the terrifying world-ocean. [12]

ਝੁਠੈ ਮਾਨੁ ਕਹਾ ਕਰੈ ਜਗੁ ਸੁਪਨੇ ਜਿਉ ਜਾਨੁ ॥ ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਤੇਰੋ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਕਹਿਓ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੪੧॥
[Sloak M. 9, SGGS: 1428]

Why do you take such false pride in yourself? You must know that the world is just a dream.

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None of this is yours; Nanak proclaims this truth. [41]

The Guru further advises us through his following jewels of wisdom.

ਬਾਲ ਜੁਆਨੀ ਅਰੁ ਬਿਰਧਿ ਫੁਨਿ ਤੀਨਿ ਅਵਸਥਾ ਜਾਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਭਜਨ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੩੫॥
[Sloak M. 9, SGGS: 1428]

Childhood, youth and old age – know these as the three stages of life.

Says Nanak, without meditating on the Lord, everything is useless; you must appreciate this. [35]

ਜਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਸਿਮਰਨੁ ਰਾਮ ਕੋ ਸੋ ਨਰੁ ਮੁਕਤਾ ਜਾਨੁ ॥ ਤਿਹਿ ਨਰ ਹਰਿ ਅੰਤਰੁ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੩੬॥

That person, who meditates in remembrance on the Lord in his heart, is liberated – know this well.

There is no difference between that person and the Lord: O Nanak, accept this as the Truth. [43]

ਜੋ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਸੋ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਹੈ ਪਰੋ ਆਜੁ ਕੈ ਕਾਲਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਹਰਿ ਗੁਨ ਗਾਇ ਲੇ ਛਾਡਿ ਸਗਲ ਜੰਜਾਲ ॥੫੨॥
[Sloak M. 9, SGGS: 1429]

Whatever has been created shall be destroyed; everyone shall perish, today or tomorrow.

O Nanak, sing the Glorious Praises of the Lord, and give up all other entanglements. [52]

ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮੁ ਉਰ ਮੈ ਗਹਿਓ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਸਮ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਇ ॥ ਜਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਸੰਕਟ ਮਿਟੈ ਦਰਸੁ ਤੁਹਾਰੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੫੭॥੧॥
[Sloak M. 9, SGGS: 1429]

I have enshrined the Lord's Name within my heart; there is nothing equal to it.

Meditating in remembrance on it, my troubles are taken away; I have received the Blessed Vision of Your *Darshan*. [57][1]

True, all the Gurus were great swimmers of the *world-ocean - Sansar Sagar*, who achieved celestial height of spiritual purity in this strife-torn world and inspired many others '*Gursikhs* and *Gurmukhs*' towards enjoying their respective dips by reading and following the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib, which is the light house "*Gurbani eis jag mehi chaanan*" and left their experience '*Anubhav*' for others to follow.

There is a lot more left to be found and discovered in the Gurbani. There is every need to encourage those who are blessed to venture into the realm of the Gurbani irrespective of their background. Who knows what more splendid they might dig out for the benefit of not only the Sikh Community but for the rest of the HUMANITY?

Finally, I would like to conclude with a humble plea to the Sikh Sangat around the world to consider establishing 'Gurmat Libraries,' in their respective regions, in order to promote scholarly research in *Gurbani* and *Sikhi* for the benefits of the new generation Sikhs as well as others.



Holistic Vision of Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji

[PART-I]

DR. DEVINDER PAL SINGH*

Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur, ninth Sikh Guru, fell as a martyr to the freedom of consciousness and belief [1]. The Guru's great sacrifice was to vindicate the people's right to profess and practice their faith. It meant the assertion of the principle of justice for which the ruling Mughal rulers of the day had very scant regard. For this reason, the life, career, and teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur are of immense significance even in contemporary times, when the forces of hate, fanaticism, and tyranny are still very dominant and assertive.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, a multifaceted genius, Guru and martyr, was also a great poet. He authored 57 Salokas, and 59 other compositions (Shabads). These hymns written in 15 *Raagas* (measures), are enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) [2-4], the sacred scripture of the Sikhs.. In his hymns, though he articulates [5] on the unreality of human passions and possessions, yet his hymns have been a source of spiritual succor and solace to millions of people in their hours of personal grief and affliction. Through his hymns, he brightens our awareness of the transience of the material phenomena. However, instead of creating a sense of despair and depression, he elevates the human mind and imbues it with the hope. Thereby he makes it possible for us to rise above the irritants of the immediate problems of existence and keep our attention focused on the everlasting and eternal.

Guru Tegh Bahadur [1-18] inherited his vision or worldview from his predecessor Gurus. He stood [1] for the same system of moral, social, and spiritual values as emphasized by the previous Gurus. Still, his compositions have an identity of their own. As a whole, his hymns present a central, unifying theme: a coherent and dynamic vision of humans, their predicament as a part of nature, the way out of this predicament, and the resultant awareness of the unique spiritual nature that is within them. In this way, the Guru helps humans redefine their relationship with the world and grow spiritually. Guru Tegh Bahadur's poetry seeks to redeem life from meaninglessness and fear, to enlarge and enliven humans' consciousness, and to open their inward eye to the glory of all-redeeming, ever-existent Truth. In this article, a few of his views on the various aspects of life are being reported.

God - The Absolute Truth

In Guru Tegh Bahadur's vision, the central issue [5-8] is the distinction between absolute Truth and relative truth. Absolute Truth is the only reality, the only lasting, permanent

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and eternal existence, which gives substance to everything else. It is the God Almighty, Creator of the universe, Omnipresent, Omniscient and Omnipotent, Most High and Most Gracious. Guru Tegh Bahadur articulates;

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭ ਹੀ ਮਹਿ ਪੂਰਨ ਏਕ ਪੁਰਖ ਭਗਵਾਨੋ ॥

Devotee Nanak says: God, the One Primal Being, is permeating everywhere.

[M. 9, SGGS:1186]

ਸਭ ਸੁਖ ਦਾਤਾ ਰਾਮੁ ਹੈ ਦੂਸਰ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

God is the giver of all peace and comfort. There is no other at all. [M. 9, SGGS:1426]

Creation - The Relative Truth

All things in the universe are God's creation and last for a short period⁹⁻¹⁴. They are like a dream, a wall of sand, or a shadow of a cloud. In contrast with the truth of God's eternity, the universe is false, precisely because it is not everlasting. Guru Tegh Bahadur enunciates;

ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਪੇਖਨਾ ਐਸੇ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ ॥ ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥੨੩॥

One must understand that this world is like a dream or a show. Nanak says, except God, none of this is eternal. [M. 9, SGGS:1427]

The whole life of a person has an air of unreality about it. The wealth one accumulates, the buildings one constructs, one's entire complex of social relations - such as wife, children, parents, relatives, friends, acquaintances, professional colleagues, etc., are all of the temporary characters. A person who is engrossed in them is engaged in the pursuit of unreality. He asserts;

ਦਾਰਾ ਮੀਤ ਪੂਤ ਰਥ ਸੰਪਤਿ ਧਨ ਪੂਰਨ ਸਭ ਮਹੀ ॥ ਅਵਰ ਸਗਲ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਏ ਜਾਨਉ ਭਜਨੁ ਰਾਮੁ ਕੋ ਸਹੀ ॥

Wife, friends, children, carriages, property, total wealth, the entire world - know that all of these things are illusory (unreal). The Lord's meditation alone is eternal (real).

[M. 9, SGGS:631]

But it doesn't mean that because these things are not everlasting, they have no value at all. He has stressed again and again that while chasing them, their real character should never be forgotten. They are not bad in themselves but become bad only when a person gets so inextricably entangled in them that he forgets all about the absolute Truth and begins to think of these very things as the final goal. By this process of thinking, he repeatedly reminds us of the all-important distinction between ephemeral (the relative truth) and everlasting (the Absolute Truth).

Creation and Its Primal cause

Humans have been staring up into space for thousands of generations to have a rational and coherent description [19] for the universe's creation and evolution. Guru Tegh Bahadur offers an elegant explanation of the origin and creation of the universe. His views strongly align with the worldview of his predecessor, Gurus. He articulates:

ਸਾਧੋ ਰਚਨਾ ਰਾਮ ਬਨਾਈ ॥

Holy Ones! God has fashioned the creation.

[M. 9, SGGS: 219]

The Guru proclaims that the Creator is the primal cause for the existence of the creation. It has both the *sargun* (manifested) and *nirgun* (unmanifested) forms. The diversity of species, colours, and other phenomena is its manifested form.

ਅਪਨੀ ਮਾਇਆ ਆਪਿ ਪਸਾਰੀ ਆਪਹਿ ਦੇਖਨਹਾਰਾ ॥ ਨਾਨਾ ਰੂਪੁ ਧਰੇ ਬਹੁ ਰੰਗੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਾ ॥

He spreads out the expanse of his creation (Maya) and beholds it. He assumes so many forms and colours and plays so many games yet remains detached from it all.

[M. 9, SGGS: 537]

Describing the continuous process of production and destruction in the creation, the Guru proclaims;

ਜੈਸੇ ਜਲ ਤੇ ਬੁਦਬੁਦਾ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਨੀਤ ॥ ਜਗ ਰਚਨਾ ਤੈਸੇ ਰਚੀ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਮੀਤ ॥੨੫॥

As the bubbles in the water well up and disappear again, says Nanak, listen, O my friend! so is the universe created;

[M. 9, SGGS: 1427]

Guru Tegh Bahadur asserts that all this is happening under the natural laws (divine will) set by the Creator.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਭਾਵੈ ਸੋ ਹੋਇ ॥੩੯॥

Says Nanak, listen, mind: whatever pleases God comes to pass. [M. 9, SGGS: 1428]

The ultimate fate of the creation is a mind-bogglingly thing to think about. So what's the outcome for it all? Guru Tegh Bahadur dares to predict the end of the creation. He enunciates that in the furthest reaches of time, it will be the end not only of life but everything that's ever existed. No more matter, light, particles, or anything. It's a distressing reality to fathom, but it's one we need to reckon with. Talking about the end of creation, he articulates;

ਜੋ ਉਪਜੈ ਸੋ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਨਾਸੈ ਰਗਨੁ ਨ ਕੋਊ ਪਾਵੈ ॥

Everything that has been created will be destroyed; nothing will remain.

[M. 9, SGGS: 1231]

Human Body

Sikh worldview [15-19] reports that humans and the universe are similar to each other, having common essence and cosmic unity. A profound relation lies between the two. As the universe comprises the five classical elements (air, water, fire, soil, and space), so is the human body. Human is like a microcosm to the macrocosm universe. After a human's life span is over, his/her body merges back into the constituting elements of the universe. Guru Teg Bahadur expresses such a view in his hymns as;

ਪਾਚ ਤਤ ਕੋ ਤਨੁ ਰਚਿਓ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਚਤੁਰ ਸੁਜਾਨ ॥ ਜਿਹ ਤੇ ਉਪਜਿਓ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਲੀਨ ਤਾਹਿ ਮੈ ਮਾਨੁ ॥

O, Wise One! Know it well that your body is a build-up of the five elements. Nanak says: It is a fact that you shall merge again into the same, from whom you had originated. [M. 9, SGGS: 1427]

According to Guru Tegh Bahadur, the human body is impermanent (false) because it is perishable, subject to decay, sickness, and death. He articulates:

ਅਸਥਿਰੁ ਜੋ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਦੇਹ ਸੋ ਤਉ ਤੇਰਉ ਹੋਇ ਹੈ ਖੇਹ ॥

You believed that this body was permanent, but it shall turn to dust. [M. 9, SGGS: 1353]

ਬਿਨਸਤ ਨਹ ਲਗੈ ਬਾਰ ਓਰੇ ਸਮ ਗਾਤੁ ਹੈ ॥

Your body is like a hail-stone; it melts away in no time at all. [M. 9, SGGS: 1352]

In Sikhism, from a spiritual perspective, anything which is perishable and changeable is a projection of Nature and illusory. Whoever craves for impermanent things is bound to suffer from the duality of attraction and aversion. Like all other objects, the human body is also a formation or appearance. Hence, it is not the real self. So are the mind, the senses, and all other parts and aspects of the human body. They constitute the physical self. Identifying with the body and accepting it as the real self is a delusion caused by the mind's impurities. According to Guru Tegh Bahadur, accepting one's mind and body as real is responsible for bondage and rebirth. He cautions us that indulgence in worldly attachments takes us away from our authentic Self (the divine essence within us).

ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਮੋਹ ਬਸਿ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ਹਰਿ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਬਿਸਰਾਈ ॥ ਝੂਠਾ ਤਨੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਰੈਨਾਈ ॥

Having been in the grip of sexual desire, anger, and emotional attachment, mortal beings have forgotten God, the Immortal Being. The body is temporary, but they believe it to be eternal; it is like a dream in the night. [M. 9, SGGS: 219]

The Guru asserts that a person should look beyond the human body to experience oneness with the real Self, or the divine essence (God), which is hidden in all. Thereby, in his hymns, he urges that one must cultivate detachment towards one's body and become established in God, which is real, eternal, and indestructible.

ਸਾਧੋ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ ॥ ਯਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਾਮੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਾਚੇ ਤਾਹਿ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥

O Wise Ones! Know that this body is false. Recognize that the Lord God, who dwells within it, is real, alone. [M. 9, SGGS: 1186]

Purpose of Life

We all need a goal to move forward in life. It is as vital as our need to breathe air to survive. Humans are engaged in an eternal quest to know the "purpose of life" that brings

absolute and everlasting happiness. Many of us think that life's purpose is to accumulate wealth because money can fetch us everything, including happiness. Some people opine that the purpose is to live an intelligent life. Many scientists think that the main motive of life is evolution. Others believe that to live a happy life, a combination of wealth, happiness, intelligent life, and growth, in some proportion, is the purpose of life.

But Guru Tegh Bahadur emphasizes that we should have a sound knowledge of life, and this knowledge should enable us to lead an authentic life on this planet. "Know Thyself" and never forget your innate divinity are encouraged in his hymns. He proclaims;

ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਆਪਾ ਚੀਨੈ ਮਿਟੈ ਨ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਕੀ ਕਾਈ ॥

Devotee Nanak says: Without knowing oneself, the delusion (ignorance) is not removed. [M. 9, SGGS: 684]

The Guru proclaims that though the human body is the false (illusory), it can also be a source of true liberation (*Mukti*). A person who keeps his body and mind under control and engages in desireless actions (in a detached manner) becomes liberated from the bondage of birth and death. By detaching oneself from the self-gratification, by controlling one's mind, by becoming wary of the play of the passions, by continuously fixing one's mind on the real Self (the divine essence of God), and by performing the daily duties with a sense of detachment, one can achieve true liberation and eternal peace. Thereby he encourages us to attain release from the cycle of birth and death. He articulates:

ਮਾਨਸ ਦੇਹ ਬਹੁਰਿ ਨਹ ਪਾਵੈ ਕਛੁ ਉਪਾਉ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕਾ ਕਰੁ ਰੇ ॥

You shall not obtain this human body again; make an effort - try to achieve liberation! [M. 9, SGGS: 220]

To achieve liberation, Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us to seek the sanctuary of God.

ਕਲ ਮੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਾਮ ਤੇ ਪਾਵਤ ਗੁਰੁ ਯਹ ਭੇਦੁ ਬਤਾਵੈ ॥

In this Age, liberation comes from the love of God (Naam). The Guru has revealed this secret. [M. 9, SGGS: 831]

The Guru proclaims that to lead an authentic life, one must imbibe the love of God in one's life.

ਸੁਫਲੁ ਜਨਮੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਤਬ ਹੁਆ ਜਉ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਜਸ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਗਿਓ ॥

Nanak says: A life becomes fruitful only when imbued with God's love (leading a virtuous life). [M. 9, SGGS: 1008]

Human Mind and its Fickleness

The human mind [20] is the most unique, powerful, and complex creation of Nature. It gives us the ability to discern things, know ourselves and the world we live in. It intelligently

acts and reacts to the problems and threats in our environment. It helps us to adapt to our environment or change it to ensure our survival and wellbeing. With our minds, we can fathom the world's mysteries and the universe and make informed decisions.

The human mind is so powerful that it can force a person to do anything varying from best to worst of the worst. Although the human mind is the highest expression of Nature in the mortal world, it is inherently restless [20]. This nature of mind is the source of all the misery one faces in one's life. Many factors contribute to the mind's instability. The restless nature of mind and its cause has been pointed out by Guru Tegh Bahadur in his compositions as;

ਸਾਧੇ ਇਹੁ ਮਨੁ ਗਹਿਓ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਚਚਲ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਸੰਗਿ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਯਾ ਤੇ ਥਿਰੁ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ॥

O, Wise Ones! One's mind cannot be restrained. Fickle desires dwell with it, and so it cannot remain steady. [M. 9, SGGS: 219]

Gurbani defines fickleness of mind as "continuously running after fleeting things, entangled in a dream (illusion, ignorance, absence of Self-knowledge), craftiness, under the sway of the evil passions and which remains unsatisfied, and begs for more." Guru Teg Bahadur points out this fact in his hymns as;

ਮਿਗ ਤ੍ਰਿਸਨਾ ਜਿਉ ਝੁਠੇ ਇਹੁ ਜਗ ਦੇਖਿ ਤਾਸਿ ਉਠਿ ਧਾਵੈ ॥

Like the deer's delusion (mirage), this world is unreal (false), and yet, beholding it, one's mind chase after it. [M. 9, SGGS: 219]

This fickleness of mind pushes away the success to achieve equipoise in our everyday life. It is also the biggest hindrance [21-22] on the path of spiritual attainment. Until restlessness of the mind is not removed, one does not experience peace. Spiritual success is the eradication of the fickleness of the mind. It comes with an honest, regular, and consistent focus in a specific direction. Through concentration and meditation, we change and transform mind. Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us to focus on the love of God, to tame the fickle mind.

ਮਨ ਰੇ ਸਾਚਾ ਰਹੋ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਮਾਨੋ ਸਗਰੋ ਇਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥

O, Mind! Embrace true contemplation. Without the Lord's Name, know that this whole world is false. [M. 9, SGGS: 703]

In his hymns, the Guru enunciates that the human mind is based on two factors: (i) Firstly, the evolutionary past of our species, which is dominated by five inborn urges of lust, anger, avarice, attachment, and narcissism. (ii) Secondly, the realization in a person of his/her finite existence and thereby the aspiration to transcend his/her finitude by relating to the transcendent God. Generally, the urge to God-realization lies submerged in mind, and most of us live an ego-centered life. The ego-centered life is built on a false view of a

world, called '*Maya*' (illusion). Transitory things allures humans towards falsehood. *Maya* deprives them of mind's potentiality to enable them to have a vision of the Eternal Truth (God). Contemplating God (imbibing love of God in one's life) helps restrain the mind and attain everlasting peace. The Guru proclaims;

ਮਾਈ ਮੈ ਧਨੁ ਪਾਇਓ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ॥ ਮਨੁ ਮੇਰੇ ਧਾਵਨ ਤੇ ਛੂਟਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਬੈਠੋ ਬਿਸਰਾਮੁ ॥

O, Mother! I have gathered the wealth of the Lord's Name. My mind has stopped its wanderings, and now, it has come to rest. [M. 9, SGGS: 1186]

Role of Guru

Guru is a Sanskrit term [23] for a "teacher, guide, expert, or master" of specific knowledge or field. In pan-Indian traditions, the Guru is more than a teacher. In Sanskrit, Guru means the one who dispels the darkness (of ignorance) and takes towards the light (of knowledge). Traditionally, Guru is a reverential figure to a disciple, serving as a "counselor, who helps mould values, shares experiential and literal knowledge." He/She is an exemplar in life, an inspirational source, which helps in the spiritual evolution of a student". Guru Tegh Bahadur emphasizes the importance of Guru in one's life as:

ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨਾ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਵੈ ॥ ਭਗਤਿ ਬਿਨਾ ਸਹਸਾ ਨਹ ਚੁਕੈ ਗੁਰੁ ਇਹੁ ਭੇਦੁ ਬਤਾਵੈ ॥

Without imbuing the love of God in one's life, one experiences only disquietude. Without devotional worship (living a virtuous life), duality is not dispelled; the Guru reveals this secret. [M. 9, SGGS: 830]

ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਏਕੋ ਜਾਨਹੁ ਇਹੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਬਤਾਈ ॥

Outside and inside, know that there is only One Lord; the Guru imparts this wisdom. [M. 9, SGGS: 684]

Role of Sadh Sangat

Sadh Sangat [24] means the company of disciplined spiritual people. Sadh comes from Sadhu, a person who does Sadhana. Sadhana [25] means "methodical discipline to attain desired knowledge or goal." Sadhana is also done for attaining detachment from worldly things, which can be a goal of a Sadhu. Sangat means a group of people gathered together for a purpose. The best translation of Sadh Sangat is "the company of people who do Sadhana" or "the company of the holy." When people who do Sadhana come together, the group aura is quite strong, and this stimulates the meditative energy of all and produces an uplifting and inspiring atmosphere. Coming together in a community to do Sadhana, kirtan, and meditation enhances the effects of all, for all. The Sadh Sangat is not exclusive. It includes any person who comes gracefully and sincerely to meditate and

relate to his or her higher consciousness. Guru Tegh Bahadur urges us to join the holy company to enhance our contemplation on God.

ਰੇ ਮਨ ਰਾਮ ਸਿਉ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰੀਤਿ ॥ ਸ੍ਰਵਨ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਗੁਨੁ ਸੁਨਉ ਅਰੁ ਗਾਉ ਰਸਨਾ ਗੀਤਿ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਕਰਿ ਸਾਧਸੰਗਤਿ
ਸਿਮਰੁ ਮਾਧੋ ਹੋਹਿ ਪਤਿਤ ਪੁਨੀਤ ॥

O mind! Love the Lord. Listen to the glorious praises of the Lord and sing His eulogies. Join the holy company and meditate on the Lord; In doing so, even a sinner can become a saint. [M. 9, SGGS: 631]

The Guru proclaims that the company of the holy persons help in dispelling evil-mindedness.

ਜਬ ਹੀ ਸਰਨਿ ਸਾਧ ਕੀ ਆਇਓ ਦੁਰਮਤਿ ਸਗਲ ਬਿਨਾਸੀ ॥ ਤਬ ਨਾਨਕ ਚੇਤਿਓ ਚਿਤਮਨਿ ਕਾਟੀ ਜਮ ਕੀ ਫਾਸੀ ॥

Whenever one comes to the sanctuary of the Holy Saints, one's all evil-mindedness is dispelled. Nanak says then, on remembering the God, the noose of death gets snapped. [M. 9, SGGS: 633]

Social Ethics

The ideology of Guru Tegh Bahadur, like his predecessor Gurus, was based on a recognized sense of social commitment [15-18]. Spiritual development founded on renouncing worldly life and disownment of social responsibility was considered of little merit, and a life lived away from society was not commended. Living amid the community and facing all its challenges bravely was a hallmark of Guru Tegh Bahadur's thinking mode. He proclaims;

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥ ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥

Why do you go looking for Him (God) in the forest? Although He is unattached, He dwells everywhere. He is always with you as your companion. [M. 9, SGGS: 684]

The Guru emphasized that the basis of all social life must be *Dharma* (morality). Whatever activities one may indulge in, the governing principle of one's conduct should always be the moral values based on truthfulness.

ਸਾਚੀ ਰਹਤ ਸਾਚਾ ਮਨਿ ਸੋਈ ॥

Through truthful living, the True Lord comes to dwell in one's mind. [M. 9, SGGS: 831]

In his hymns, Guru Tegh Bahadur emphasized self-discipline and self-reflection. If not mastered, the mind is drawn towards five vices: lust, anger, greed, attachment, and ego. As a person is enslaved by these passions progressively, he/she gets removed away, increasingly from the inner divine consciousness. This gross worldly state of a

person is the condition of spiritual sterility. The Guru enunciated that a person's troubles are due to his/her mental pride and egoistic attitude. The holy (saints) company is a practical tool for cleansing the mind of the vices. So, he rightly exhorts;

ਸਾਧੋ ਮਨ ਕਾ ਮਾਨੁ ਤਿਆਗਉ ॥ ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਦੁਰਜਨ ਕੀ ਤਾ ਤੇ ਅਹਿਨਿਸਿ ਭਾਗਉ ॥

O Wise ones! Forsake the pride of your mind. Persistently avoid vices such as lust, anger, and the company of evil people. [M. 9, SGGS: 219]

The Guru insists on the transformation of consciousness. Man must demolish the barriers of the self-centered ego that separates him from God. For him, to turn toward God is not an external act of ritualistic demonstrations but a psychological act of inwardness, imbibing the virtues of humility and inner purification. He asserts:

ਤੀਰਥ ਬਰਤ ਅਰੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਧਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਜਾਤ ਤਿਹ ਜਿਉ ਕੁੰਚਰ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥

Going on pilgrimages to sacred shrines, observing ritualistic fasts, and making donations to charities, but taking pride (ego) in these activities, Nanak says: one's such actions are useless, like the elephant, who takes a bath and then rolls in the dust.

[M. 9, SGGS: 1428]

ਤੀਰਥ ਕਰੈ ਬ੍ਰਤ ਫੁੰਨਿ ਰਾਖੈ ਨਹ ਮਨੁਆ ਬਸਿ ਜਾ ਕੋ ॥ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਧਰਮੁ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨਹੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਕਹਤ ਮੈ ਯਾ ਕਉ ॥

Bathing at sacred shrines of pilgrimage and adhering to fasts but having no control over one's mind, the fact is such a religion is of no use to the person. [M. 9, SGGS: 831]

Truth (God) is the quintessence of the Guru's teachings. He states that if our worship is rendered in the light of this Truth, it is meaningful. Otherwise, mere ritualistic exercises and sectarian pilgrimages are exercises in self-deception. The way of Truth alone will lead to a life of fullness, love, sympathy, service, humility, and honesty. In the sunshine of this Truth and cultivating the spiritual root, all other essences of humanitarian potential unfold as naturally as buds on a tree. The man endowed with this vision does not turn away from this world. He truly transcends the barriers of caste, color, creed, and the attendant feelings of hatred and aversion. The upholder of Truth would rather lay down his head than compromise with unrighteousness. Thereby, he warns us against wasting our lives in worldly passions.

ਸਾਚ ਛਾਡਿ ਕੈ ਬੁਠਹ ਲਾਗਿਓ ਜਨਮੁ ਅਕਾਰਥ ਖੋਇਓ ॥

By abandoning Truth and clinging to falsehood, one's life is uselessly wasted away.

[M. 9, SGGS: 633]

Recognizing the power of human will, the Guru proclaims that it is within an individual's ability to control his/her lower passions and establish a close relationship with God.

ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਹ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਲੋਹ ਸਮਾਨੇ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਜੋਗੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨੇ ॥

One who does not slander or praise others, who looks upon gold and iron alike, who is free from pleasure and pain - he alone is called a true Yogi. [M. 9, SGGS: 685]

Of course, the Guru is critical of the person who revels in ignorance and overlooks the spiritual will in him. He asserts that one need not run to the forest for spiritual enlightenment. By righteous living and having faith in and devotion to God, one can achieve it, even while living a householder's life.

ਘਟਿ ਹੀ ਮਾਹਿ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਤੇਰੈ ਤੈ ਖੋਜਤ ਉਦਿਆਨਾ ॥

The Immaculate Lord is within your heart, and let you search for Him in the wilderness. [M. 9, SGGS: 632]



- End of Part I
[To be continued]

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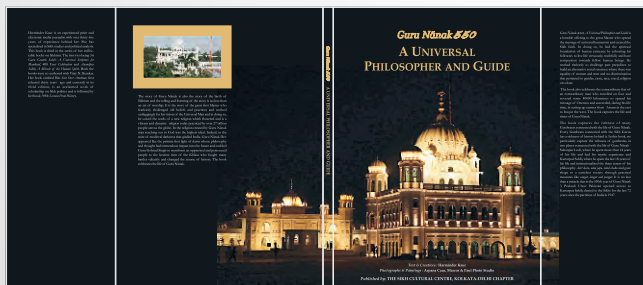
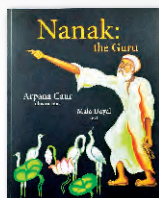
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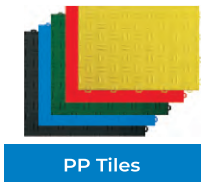
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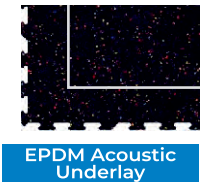
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Guru Tegh Bahadur as a Protector of Human Rights

PROF. HARPREET KAUR*

The life and martyrdom of the Ninth Guru, Guru Tegh Bahadur is an inspiring saga that shows his undying commitment towards Dharma, his endurance in the defence for rights of the people, futuristic vision of plurality and fearlessness in embracing his accomplished destiny in his supreme sacrifice for the sake of human rights of the people.

Principles of Human Rights and Guru Tegh Bahadur's Life and Teachings

The principles of human rights are the basic building blocks of the contemporary state and is a cornerstone of democracy. The **civil** rights includes right to life, liberty, freedom of religion, right against exploitation, cultural and educational rights etc., the **political** rights include the right to vote, to be elected, right to criticise and oppose the government in a legal manner etc. and the **economic** rights comprise freedom in the economic sphere and the cultural rights include the right to retain and further plurality of cultures, languages, religions etc. in the society.

Most if not all human rights are claim rights that impose duties or responsibilities on their duty bearers. Rights focus on a freedom, protection, status, or benefit for the right holders (*Beitz, Charles R., 2009*). The duties associated with human rights often require actions involving respect, protection, facilitation, and provision.

The sense of duty, fairness and justice is visible in the thoughts, words and deeds of the Guru throughout his entire life. He sacrificed his life of the sake of Dharma or righteousness. Rights have corresponding duties and Guru Tegh Bahadur embraced his duty to respect and protect plural faiths and championed the liberty to profess any faith of one's choice. People live in different cultures and follow different traditions, all of these are an integral part of democracies that gives freedom to all and the Ninth Guru at that time upheld protecting varied cultures. The rights regime necessitates protection and security to each person or group and when the state was threatening the rights of a particular cultural group, Guru Tegh Bahadur emerged as a leader to ensure them liberty to profess

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their own religion and stood up as a bulwark against exploitation of the state functionaries. The Kashmiri Pandits were agitating against attack on the right to self-determination and the Guru rather took this onus on himself to protect them against an atrocious regime. Human rights are not negotiable and Aurangzeb was negotiating with the Hindus putting a condition to spare their lives only if they embraced Islam, which was opposed by the Guru steadfastly. Diversity of life emanates from the universal consciousness. This is contained in the Bani of the Gurus and preserving the diversities and giving these diversities its due recognition was the life purpose of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

Guru Tegh Bahadur said, '*Bhai kahu kao det neh neh bhai manat aan*' and stressed on guarantee to the subjects against the repression by the ruling class. He championed the right to profess any faith endorsing religious pluralism. He stood firmly against religious persecution of Kashmiri Pandits and preached for a state where religious diversities flourished.

Voltaire while defending the freedoms of a person especially of speech says, "I wholly disapprove of what you say- and will defend to the death your right to say it". Guru Tegh Bahadur endorsed the liberties and upheld the liberties of people belonging to altogether different religious identities although the rituals they professed had been negated as redundant even by Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

Compassion, duty towards others, empathy etc. were integral part of the life and teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur and 'Guru Sahib traversed from '*Tegh*' to '*Tayag*' (Kaur, Palvinder, 2020), which culminated into his supreme martyrdom'.

Respect for the Property of others

After Makhan Shah Lubana discovered the real successor of the pontificate at Bakala, many devotees from far and near came to listen and benefit from the sermons delivered by Guru Tegh Bahadur. Dhir Mal was highly envious of valuable offerings made to the Guru and he made up his mind to put an end to the life of Guru Sahib. He along with his men shot at the Guru and took away the property of the Guru. Although the Guru remained poised and unaffected during this, Makhan Shah was angered when he heard about it. Makhan Shah along with a few men raided Dhir Mal's house and confiscated the belongings of the Guru including a precious copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib. An accomplice of Dhir Mal was arrested and his hands were tied behind his back and brought before Guru Sahib. Despite the plea of the Sikhs to punish the culprit, Guru Tegh Bahadur forgave him

and allowed the enemy to go away unharmed. The Guru insisted that the Sikhs should return Dhir Mal's property confiscated by his followers. On the insistence of Guru, the Sikhs had to return the property of their dire enemy except the holy scripture which they thought as a precious asset rightfully belonging to them. So, the sense of fairness of one's rightful belonging was very firm in the mind of Guru that was taught to his followers in a steadfast manner. In this episode, the streak of anger in his followers against enemies was visible to Guru Tegh Bahadur and the Guru sermonised to never let anger enter their hearts for a man loses his power to judge what is right and what is wrong and tends to commit the worst sins and foulest crimes. On the contrary, one should be ever kind, merciful and calm. Guru Tegh Bahadur told them not to bear grudge against the enemy or take revenge but practice forgiveness. In due course of time, the Guru decided to proceed to Kiratpur for the enemies were creating a venomous atmosphere while the Guru wanted to avoid their overtures and live in peace. When they reached near river Beas, the Guru happened to see the holy Granth Sahib still in possession of the Sikhs. He firmly asked them to return it. The Sikhs argued that the Granth belonged to the Sikhs but Guru Sahib said, "The sacred Book has been with him for long. Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkrishan never wanted to get it from him. It must be returned to him". The holy scripture was left at a safe place in the dry bed of the river and Dhir Mal was informed who took it away with the help of boatmen after getting over his suspicion regarding the intention of Guru Sahib in handing over the valued property to him. This copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib is still in the possession of Dhir Mal's family at Kartarpur at Jalandhar.

Right to Profess Different Religions and Respect for Diversities

Right to profess different faiths was upheld by Guru Tegh Bahadur to the extent that it culminated into his own martyrdom which was readily chosen by him. Mughal Emperor, Aurangzeb wanted to create a monolithic theocratic state and wanted to actualize *Dar-ul-Islam* for which he issued numerous *Farmans* to demolish temples and schools of the Hindus, declared their scriptures and Gods as false and directed his officials for mass conversions even by force. The Hindus were being persecuted and crushed brutally.

The fanatic policies of Aurangzeb were directed towards abridging the freedom to profess any other religion except Islam and aimed at converting all in his empire as Muslims, which was impacting the populace adversely. Aurangzeb was keen on making Kashmir as a purely Muslim province. Sher Afghan Khan, Governor of Kashmir made a strategy for conversion of Kashmiri Pandits who were erudite and learned and it was assumed that

their conversion into Islam would be followed by easy conversions of the low-castes Hindus. They were ordered to accept conversion or die but they carefully asked for six months' time to ponder the issue.

After deliberations, they decided to go to Anandpur Sahib to seek advice of Guru Tegh Bahadur who they believed was sent by God to protect the Hindu faith. "Why only Pandits had come? About this it has been mentioned in historical records that Aurangzeb had thought that only the Brahmins study and impart religious education, and perform religious acts and get them done. If they are made Muslims, the entire Hindu kingdom will become Muslims" (*Singh, Hardip, 1977*).

Their deputation reached the darbar of the Guru and related the horrific tales of exploitation and atrocities meted upon them. The gross violation of the rights and freedom of Kashmiri Pandits made Guru contemplative and meditative about the volatile situation. He said that inhuman behaviour of the stony-hearted rulers has to be made humane and the problem could be solved if some great and holy man sacrificed himself. This made the young Guru Gobind Singh speak almost instinctively that none could be holier and fitter than Guru Tegh Bahadur himself to make such a sacrifice for the sake of humanity. Guru Tegh Bahadur asked the delegation to return and asked them to say to the Governor that Guru Tegh Bahadur was their leader and he should first make him a Muslim and then they would also follow the same line. He assured them to leave everything on him.

This news was given to Emperor Aurangzeb by the Governor of Kashmir and the Emperor ordered the arrest of the Guru. Meanwhile Guru Sahib started his extensive whirlwind tour passing through Malwa and south-eastern Punjab before allowing the Mughals to arrest him in order to acquaint the masses with the volatile situation and for gearing them up to stand against the exploitation of the rulers. He said that the time had come to protect their faith for Aurangzeb was making all attempts to convert people into Muslims. Aurangzeb's men reached Anandpur Sahib but could not find the Guru. Later, it was at Agra that Guru Tegh Bahadur informed about his whereabouts to the Mughals and got himself arrested offering himself for a brutal execution that followed. Dr. Ganda Singh writes that Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was brought to Delhi on 5 November 1675 (*Singh, Ganda, 1996*).

Guru Tegh Bahadur along with his disciples including Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Dayal Das and Bhai Gurditta were taken captive to Delhi prison (*Kotwali*) situated at

Chandni Chowk. Guarded by armed soldiers posted outside his lock-up, he was tortured severely in prison. Mohd Latif supports this fact that the Guru was tortured in captivity. He writes, "The Sikh being unable to satisfy his majesty one way or the other, was by the King's order, thrown into prison, and on his persistently refusing to become a convert, was subjected to bodily tortures". Aurangzeb offered honours and Jagirs to Guru who remained unruffled. The Guru replied, "O Aurangzeb, hear, you have no power to convert whole world to Islam, nay a single man. To conceal your own crimes, you are committing tyrannies so that the cup of your sins may overflow. You have been blinded by the intoxication of pride and power, but remember, death is laughing over everybody's head, but nobody knows about it. O King, do not forget you too shall assuredly one day. Your pride then shall be extirpated". This angered the Emperor and more ruthless tortures were perpetrated on him. The Emperor was still insistent on forcing Guru Tegh Bahadur to accept Islam. When presented in the darbar before the Emperor he was curious to know that if he was not an idol worshipper, why was he supporting the cause of the Brahmins. The Emperor kept a condition before the Guru to show some miracle (*karamat*) or to come into the fold of Islamic faith.

Guru Tegh Bahadur was kept chained in an iron cage "the interior of which had sharp nails like arrows. A person could neither sit in it nor stand properly. Revered Guru had to stand in a corner. The punishment was so severe that no ordinary man could bear it. For a few days, Lord had to spend time in the cage standing with his waist bent and was starved and had to go thirsty" (*Sital, Sohan Singh, 1975*). This spectacle was unbearable for Bhai Mati Das, one of the Guru's companions and the Guru's torture was agonizing him tremendously. He sought the permission of Guru by saying, "Permit me, I will destroy the so-called mighty Mughal Empire. I can burn the whole of Delhi in moments. I can cut the heads of Maulvis and Qazis if you allow me. I can't bear the sight of holy Guru suffering'. But Guru Tegh Bahadur explained to him that one cannot assume the power of a destroyer. He added that the turmoil that the country was passing through would be solved after a great sacrifice which was the Providential Will. This conversation was heard by a few officials who informed the Emperor about it. The orders of execution of Bhai Mati Das were passed who beamed when he heard this. Bhai Mati Das was tied between two pillars and he was sawn alive like a log of wood and his body was torn into two. Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das were threatened again to face death or to embrace Islam, which they refused. Guru Tegh Bahadur blessed them and said that their acts of bravery will be

remembered and posterity will learn lessons from your fearlessness and supreme sacrifice. The feet and hands of Bhai Dayal Das were tied and mercilessly he was thrown into a cauldron containing boiling oil and he met his end repeating the name of God. "Inhuman Brutality. Sainly Bhai Dayala Ji was made to sit in a deg and boiled. After continuous boiling, his flesh was separated from the bones.... The entire city trembled to see this torture" (*Sital, Sohan Singh, 1975*).

The inhuman torment by the officials terrified all and silent bearing by both the devotees took the onlookers in awe. As a deterrent to the people, their bodies were displayed at public places so that none could dare to speak out for their freedom of worship. On the third day, Bhai Sati Das's face was tied and put on fire. Guru Tegh Bahadur was caged and made to watch his followers meeting their end after brutalities. "In the history of Sikh community, the martyrdom of Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayala Ji gives the message of rising above castes and religions (*Kaur, Harwant Kaur, 2020*)". They are reminisced in the daily Ardas.

William Irvine elaborates on the ceaseless inhuman brutality perpetrated on the Guru for many weeks but he remained resolute on his convictions and refused to accept Islam and so, he was executed. The Persian sources indicate that 'he was tried as an unbeliever. There were many more prisoners of this category in Delhi at that time. The outcome was a sentence to death and he was soon publicly executed (*Tawarikh-i-Sikhan*)'. On the fateful day, the Guru's execution was carried out under the state's warrant. Guru Tegh Bahadur was brought in the iron cage to an open space and the executioner, Jalaludin of Samana fiercely approached with a drawn sword. A large number of onlookers watched with an agonised heart. Then at the orders of Aurangzeb, Guru Tegh Bahadur was martyred on 11 November 1675 A.D. (Maghar Sudi 5, 1732 B.S.) (mentioned by Dr. Trilochan Singh after studying Old recensions of the Adi Granth written during the lifetime of Guru Gobind Singh). Dr. Trilochan Singh also adds, "The martyrdom took place on Thursday, which in Aurangzeb's reign was a half holiday, because it was a day before the Islamic Sabbath".

This is a heinous saga where all human rights norms codified the modern times were flouted. Such an inhuman torture is a punishable offence as per the International Laws. After Nuremberg trials, international jurisprudence have been made for abuses like genocide, crimes against humanity, war crimes etc. The International Humanitarian Law (IHL) endorses the concept of just war and humanitarian treatment to all even in conflicts.

Unlimited physical pain, injury and torture were unleashed upon him in captivity which is a major reason of human rights abuse. The Amnesty International lays conditions against the practice of arbitrary and illegal arrest and detention that cannot be without charge or trial, death in custody, use of torture or mistreatment in custody, application of death penalty, political repression, violence etc. and all these were flouted by the Mughal ruler and his officials in the case of arrest of Guru Sahib and his followers who were subjected to severe trails, torture in custody and a most heinous form of capital punishment was given to them.

Aftermath of the Great Martyrdom

Bhai Jaita and Bhai Gurbax Singh were amongst those people who were eyewitnesses to this extremely horrifying incident that occurred in Delhi (*Singh, Harbans, 1998*). The Guru's head was cut off and it flew into the lap of Bhai Jaita in the blowing storm (*andheri*) and his body was exposed in Delhi streets and was not permitted to be taken away. Bhai Jaita, a devout Ranghreta Sikh, took possession of Guru's head and took it to Anandpur Sahib to Guru Gobind Singh where it was cremated after performing last rites at the place called Sis Ganj Anandpur.

After listening to the news of the cruel execution of Guru Sahib, all the Sikhs of Delhi gathered in the house of Bhai Nanu and discussed the matter of cremation of the holy body of Guru Sahib. Lakhi Shah Vanjara, a Lubana was a part of the gathering who offered to take up this duty and made plans to take possession of the holy body. Lakhi Shah Vanjara and his eight sons who were heading the convoy of the royal contractor consisting of horses, camels, bullocks and carts gushed into the site of execution in the thickening storm but after the storm, the body miraculously disappeared. Mourning crowd as well as Aurangzeb thought it was a miracle of Guru Sahib that the body had disappeared. Lakhi Shah Vanjara and his son Nagahia had taken possession of Guru's headless body and they placed it in a cart and took it to their hut in Raisina village at the outskirts of the city and covered it with a heap of firewood and set fire to his hut showing that his hut was burnt by mistake. The place where advertently he cremated the headless body of the Guru is grand Gurdwara Rakabganj Sahib.

People also have the right to protest against such heinous acts and brutalities in a legal manner. Although many historians express the view that the people of Delhi were a witness to such an inhuman act and they did not protest but there is evidence that there were visible episodes of such resentments. Bhai Jaita and Lakhi Shah Vanjara's

courageous acts are the main examples of it. The silent forbearance of the Guru and his Sikhs in custody and even at the last stages made the people utter, '*Dhan Guru ate Dhan Us de Sikh*', the testimony to this is found in *Guru Kian Sakhian*. Mohammad Latif records a feeling of sympathy and remorse for the heinous act by Aurangzeb which according to him was opposite of what the Emperor had intended for he writes, "The courtiers, tinged with superstition, saw what had occurred, they were struck with horror and surprise. The Emperor himself was disgusted and displeased, and ordered the crowd to be dispersed".

Dr. Trilochan Singh cites that *Maasir-i-Alamgiri* (Bibliotheca Indica, Pg. 94) records two other individual protests. "Maasir-i-Alamgiri: June or July 1676 A.D.: While the Emperor was mounting his horse in the square (*chawk*) before the Hall of Audience, a complainer flung a stick at him. It fell on the other side of His Majesty's umbrella; the man was made over to the Kotwal". He adds, "On Friday, 27th October, 1676 A.D. While the Emperor was returning from the Jama mosque and had alighted from the boat in order to mount the movable chair (*takht-i-rawan*), an ill-fated disciple of Guru Tegh Bahadur threw two bricks, one of which reached the chair. He was seized by the retinue and ordered to be made over to the Kotwal".

Guru Gobind Singh describes the supreme sacrifice of his father for sake of Dharma in words, '*Dharam het Saka*' and continued his efforts on the same lines. Guru Tegh Bahadur's strengthened the revolution to reinstate the rights of the exploited and downtrodden and Guru Gobind Singh furthered it in a unique way by creating Saint-Soldiers as a weapon in this righteous war. The creation of Khalsa and martyrdom of Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Gujri Ji, four grandsons of the Guru Tegh Bahadur and sacrifice of numerous Khalsa reiterates the saga of sacrifice for a noble cause and upholds the protection of human rights. "The brutal and wanton murder of Guru Tegh Bahadur shook the very foundations of the mighty Mughal Empire. The example of silent suffering, without uttering a word, created an everlasting impression on the minds of the people" (*Johar, Surrender Singh, 1975*).

Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur endorses Virtues for a more Humane Order

The 'poetry of deep spiritual insight and wisdom (*Singh, Harbans, 1996*)' pronounced by Guru Tegh Bahadur outlines a path of an individual who is truthful and a society that is more humane. The essential ingredient of how individuals and society can be elevated morally, socially and spiritually is manifested beautifully in the Bani.

“In his Bani, Guru Ji has elaborated both the states of mind, one that is gripped with fear and one that is fearless” (*Singh, Surinder, 2019*). One who attaches the mind and conscience in meditation through constant practice, his mental state rises above the worldly realities and material entanglements and he naturally accepts impermanence of the world and is free from fear of death that becomes a source of celebration for such a person. This is a spiritual transformation that a learned man experiences.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

[SGGS: 1427]

Bhai kahu kao det neh neh bhai manat an. Kaho Nanak sun re mana giani tahi bakhan. [16]

One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else - says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise. [16]

Human liberation was defined as poise in all adversities and understanding that death is imminent. Guru Tegh Bahadur ‘tried to infuse the power of sacrifice in the minds of people’ (*Ghuman, Bikram Singh, 2003*).

ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥ ਸੁਖੁ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ [SGGS: 633]

Jo nar dukh mai dukh nahi manai. Sukh sanehu ar bhai nahi ja kai kanchan mati manai. [1] rahao.

That man, who in the midst of pain, does not feel pain, who is not affected by pleasure, affection or fear, and who looks alike upon gold and dust.[1][Pause]

The Bani of Guru deprecate excessive love for the worldly goods. The pursuit of material possessions had been considered as a major evil leading to one’s degeneration and one should be attached with the Name of God.

ਜਿਹਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਮਤਾ ਤਜੀ ਸਭ ਤੇ ਭਇਓ ਉਦਾਸੁ ॥

[SGGS: 1427]

Jihi maia mamta taji sabh te bhaio udas.

One who renounces Maya and possessiveness and is detached from everything.

And

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੈ ਫਠਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਬਿਸਰਿਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਨਾਮੁ ॥

[SGGS: 1428]

Man maia mai fadh rahio bisrio gobind nam.

The mortal is entangled in Maya; he has forgotten the Name of the Lord of the Universe.

And

ਮਨੁ ਮਾਇਆ ਮੈ ਰਮਿ ਰਹਿਓ ਨਿਕਸਤ ਨਾਹਿਨ ਮੀਤੁ ॥ [SGGS: 1428]

Man maia mai ram rahio niksath nahin mit.

The mind is absorbed in Maya - it cannot escape it, my friend.

So, a life that is not entangled in materialistic pursuits is an ideal life. A person is liberated if he renounces Maya, ego and possessiveness and leads lives detached within attachments.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਵਹੁ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨਰੁ ਇਹ ਮਨ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਨੁ ॥੧੯॥ [SGGS: 1427]

Kaho Nanak vahu mukath nar ih man sachai man. [19]

Says Nanak, that person is liberated; O mind, know this as true. [19]

An Unparalleled Example of Upholding, Respecting and Protecting Rights of Others

Guru Tegh Bahadur can truly be considered as a harbinger of peace and an ardent supporter of the theory of human rights elucidated in the modern times. Peace is not merely absence of war and conflicts but it includes removal of poverty and injustice and presence of human rights, growth and development. Such issues need to be addressed in an impartial manner. Martin Luther King, famous human rights activist aptly says, "True peace is not merely the absence of tension: It is the presence of justice (*Kin, Coretta Scott, 2008*). "So, after a long time it has been accepted that peace is not merely non-presence of war, but protection of human rights and maintaining a just order is included in the concept of justice (Singh, Dr. Daljit, 2019).

The Guru martyrdom is unique for it is an example of respecting and protecting rights of others including freedom of faith, religions, cultures, languages, expression, life and way of life. It is an unparalleled saga in which martyrdom was for the sake of faith of others and it was a struggle to uphold the rights of others. The freedom of conscience and worship of people of other faith was upheld by Guru Tegh Bahadur by choosing willingly to protect it by offering his own arrest and he himself approached Delhi for it. It was respect for plurality and diversity of religions and through his travels he disseminated the same far and wide preparing the masses for impending tumultuous times. Infact, more surprising is

the fact that it was to protect the right to embrace the religion which 'he and his distinguished predecessors had abjured (*Johar, Surrender Singh, 1975*)'. Guru Tegh Bahadur like his predecessors did not believe in idol worship, frontal mark or *tilak, janeu* or other practices endorsed by Brahmanism. The supremacy of Dharma or righteousness against political tyranny, religious bigotry, oppression by power-holders, injustice against the masses and agony of the tormented was manifested. Dr. Trilochan Singh remarks, "The ideal for which Guru Tegh Bahadur, his wife, his son, his grandsons, and the noblest of his disciples laid down their lives, has survived as the most dynamic and vigorous ethical and spiritual humanism, which can bring lasting peace, unity and harmony to our troubled world. Guru Tegh Bahadur looked forward and died for ushering an era, when all countries, all nations, all communities and faiths, and all cultures and societies, would enjoy complete freedom of thought and expression, and of prayer and worship of the Deity. He believed and died for the morally and spiritually civilized future of human society, which, through such suffering and sacrifices like his, was bound to learn reverence for life, reverence for all universal ideals, and human respect for institutions and cultures aspiring for the highest truth and enlightenment. All faiths, all creeds, all philosophical systems exploring the mystery of Life and Existence, and aspiring after an ever more clear vision of Love, Justice, and the highest Good, are bound to meet on message and meaning of Guru Tegh Bahadur's life of self-consecration and unique martyrdom for the cause of freedom of thought and worship. This is the central philosophy of his life of intense silence, and blazing actions, the soul and spirit of which is everlastingly embodied in his divine songs. This was his vision and revelation of the true religion of man. This is what he called Sikhism, in its essence and reality" (*Singh, Dr. Trilochan, 1967*).

"Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji sacrificed his head to protect religion and country. So, he is remembered as '*Dharam-Ki-Chadar*'. He sowed the seed of such freedom in the country, it was a message for the countrymen to rise and save the country from the foreigners" (*Giani, Joginder Singh, 1966*). Gokul Chand Narang writes that the sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur was the greatest deed performed during his life.

So, by upholding values like liberty, justice, equality, impartiality, respect, dignity and human rights for all, the Guru wanted to create a robust and just social and political order. In short, the Bani, life and martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji endorses the concept of peace for the entire humanity and ensures availability of human rights to the flourishing pluralities present in society. □

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**Historical Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib
& Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib (Delhi, India)
where Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was Martyred (beheaded)
and cremated in November 1675**



Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Taraori, Haryana



Bhai Jaita, while carrying Guru's head to Anandpur, rested for a night at this place.

Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib, Anandpur, Punjab



The cremation of the head of Guru Sahib was carried out here on 17th November 1675.

Spiritual Unions of Martyrs for Protecting Religious Plurality and Tolerance

*TEJINDER SINGH MADAN**

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) proclamation of UNO came into existence on December 10, 1948; setting out the fundamental rights of all human beings, including their right to practice their own religion should be universally protected. The foundation of this was laid down much before when the ninth Sikh Guru, Teg Bahadur, sacrificed his life on November 11, 1675 for the cause of the protection of religious freedom. Being a Sikh and a propagator of Guru Nanak's (the first Sikh Guru) philosophy, he gave up his life to protect the Kashmiri Hindu Pandits from the Muslim conversionists under Aurangzeb, who were threatening and forcing the Hindus to convert. It might appear strange that he died protecting the rights of wearing the '*janaeu*' (sacred thread) and '*tilak*' (sacred mark on forehead) by Hindus as these were the very same ritualistic practices that Nanak had repudiated at the age of nine.

The explanation to the above dilemma may be sought in the Sikh philosophy of pluralism, inclusion, and religious tolerance; the very values on which the Human Rights Declaration is based. Guru Nanak preached the doctrine of equality and non-discrimination, which is the fundamental vision of Human Rights.

The fortitude and conviction of Guru Tegh Bahadur can be traced to a life of meditation and austerities for 26 years at Bakala along with his wife, Mata Gujri who accompanied him and fulfilled her call of duty as a wife and a befitting companion. Subsequently, the Divine Spirit of Guru Nanak was transfused into him by his grandnephew, the Eighth Nanak, Guru Har Krishan after which he was anointed the Ninth Nanak in 1665.

The only child of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and Mata Gujri (married on 3 February 1633) Guru Gobind Singh was born at Patna on 22 December 1666 and later settled in Anandpur Sahib, the town built by his father Guru Tegh Bahadur. Right from childhood he showed the signs of a prophet, warrior, humanist and a great commander.

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In 1705, Aananandpur was under heavy siege from the Mughals and the family abandoned the city. Guru Gobind Singh accompanied his two older sons, Sahibzada Ajit Singh, 18 years and Sahibzada Jujhar Singh, 14 years along with other devotees left to fight the Mughals at Chamkaur. His younger sons, Sahibzada Zorawar Singh, 9 years and Sahibzada Fateh Singh, 6 years, accompanied their 81 year old grandmother, Mata Gujri. They were captured and imprisoned by the Mughals in the cold open platform (*Thanda Burj*) of Sirhind without any warm clothes in the very cold month of December.

Mata Gujri Ji was an inspiration to the young grandsons, who inculcated in them the courage and determination to live and die for the cause of human sovereignty like their grandfather and great grandfather. It was because of her dedication, faith and a resilience, similar to Guru Teg Bahadur Ji's conviction of freedom of humans and their right to practice their religion, that the young kids were so staunch in their faith and were able to stand up to the mighty Mughal empire. In spite of their alluring persuasions, the young and brave Sahibzadas defied the Mughals by refusing conversion and preferred to accept the capital punishment of being bricked alive. This is the fulfillment of Guru Nanak's philosophy of prime belief in the Divine Lord and to live as *Nirbhau* and *Nirvair*, without fear and enmity [SGGS: 1].

Mata Gujri Ji was so willed to live to witness the unique martyrdom, supreme and bold sacrifice of her little grandchildren for human sovereignty of expression, faith, belief and thoughts and to practice the religion of their own choice. Only after the loss of her grandsons, she gave up her life and renounced the world without any remorse, singing *Guru ki Bani* in gratitude of the Divine, on the same day as her little grandchildren sacrificed their precious lives but did not give up their Sikh faith.

The ultimate fulfillment of life is beautifully described in Gurbani by Guru Teg Bahadur ji - ਰਾਮੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਇਹੈ ਤੇਰੈ ਕਾਜਿ ਹੈ ॥ ਮਾਇਆ ਕੋ ਸੰਗੁ ਤਿਆਗੁ ਪੁਭ ਜੁ ਕੀ ਸਰਨਿ ਲਾਗੁ ॥ ਜਗਤ ਸੁਖ ਮਾਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਝੂਠੇ ਸਭ ਸਾਜੁ ਹੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ [SGGS: 1352]

Meditate on the Virtues of the Divine Being, renounce the worldly bondages and remain in complete obedience to the Will of Almighty.

The worldly possessions are only illusions while love for the Divine is an Eternal Bliss.

□

A Critical Analysis of Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadurs

*HARDEV SINGH VIRK**

Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib (1 April 1621 – 11 November 1675) was the youngest of the five sons of Guru Hargobind Sahib, the sixth Sikh Guru, and his wife Nanaki. He became the 9th Guru of Sikhs on 20 March 1665. His hymns (Gurbani) were included in Aad Guru Granth Sahib, compiled by Guru Arjan Dev in 1604, by Guru Gobind Singh Jee at Talwandi Sabo (Damdama Sahib) in the Damdami Bir. The total number of his hymns is one hundred and fifteen in fifteen *raagas*.

A Critique of Bani of Guru Tegh Bahadur.

In 1952, when I was a student of 5th class in Govt. Lower Middle School, Bhurthala Mander (Malerkotla Block), my teacher used to listen to poems on Saturdays for amusement and as part of extra-curricular activities of the school students. When the teacher called my name, I recited a *shabad* from the *bani* of Guru Teg Bahadur which was committed to my memory with the help of my mother who used to do her *Nitnem* regularly while I was still sleeping. This *shabad* was my anchor during the days of adversity when my life became rudderless due to manmade calamities during the decade (1955-65).

Even today, I enjoys its recitation. It sums up the Philosophy of Guru Tegh Bahadur and his preaching for the mundane life of the human being living in this world. A person who can inculcate the qualities of life projected through this *shabad* will live a life of equipoise and detachment. A simple translation and transliteration along with the original text is given as follows [6]:

ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਦੁਖ ਮੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਨਹੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥

(*Jo Nar Dhukh Mai Dhukh Nehee Maanai.*)

That man, who in the midst of pain, does not feel pain.

ਸੁਖੁ ਸਨੇਹੁ ਅਰੁ ਭੈ ਨਹੀ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਕੰਚਨ ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਨੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

(*Sukh Sanaeh uAr Bhai Nehee Jaa Kai Kanchan Maattee Maanai [1][Rehaao]*)

Who is not affected by pleasure, affection or fear, and who looks alike upon gold and dust;

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ਨਹ ਨਿੰਦਿਆ ਨਹ ਉਸਤਤਿ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਲੋਭੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਅਭਿਮਾਨਾ ॥

(*Neh Nindhiaa Neh Ousathath Jaa Kai Lobh Mohu Abhimaanaa*)

Who is not swayed by either slander or praise, nor affected by greed, attachment or pride;

ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਆਰਉ ਨਾਹਿ ਮਾਨ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥੧॥

(*Harakh Sog Thae Rehai Niaaro Naahi Maan Apamaanaa*) [1]

Who remains unaffected by joy and sorrow, honour and dishonour; [1]

ਆਸਾ ਮਨਸਾ ਸਗਲ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਜਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਨਿਰਾਸਾ ॥

(*Aasaa Manasaa Sagal Thiaagai Jag Thae Rehai Niraasaa.*)

Who renounces all hopes and desires and remains desireless in the world;

ਕਾਮੁ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਜਿਹ ਪਰਸੈ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਤਿਹ ਘਟਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨਿਵਾਸਾ ॥੨॥

(*Kaam Krodhh Jih Parasai Naahan Thih Ghatt Braham Nivaasaa*) [2]

Who is not touched by sexual desire or anger - within his heart, God dwells. [2]

ਗੁਰ ਕਿਰਪਾ ਜਿਹ ਨਰ ਕਉ ਕੀਨੀ ਤਿਹ ਇਹ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਪਛਾਨੀ ॥

(*Gur Kirapaa Jih Nar Ko Keenee Thih Eih Jugath Pashhaanee.*)

That man, blessed by Guru's Grace, understands this way.

ਨਾਨਕ ਲੀਨ ਭਇਓ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿਉ ਜਿਉ ਪਾਨੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਪਾਨੀ ॥੩॥੧੧॥

(*Naanak Leen Bhaeiou Gobindh Sio Jio Paanee Sang Paanee.*)

O Nanak, he merges with the Lord of the Universe, like water with water. [3][11]

Having a cursory look on the meanings of this *shabad* may give you a wrong impression that Guru Jee pleads for a life of renunciation and other-worldliness. We know from experience, that a normal human being suffers both pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow, hope and desire, anger and sexual desire, etc. He cannot remain unaffected by the vicissitudes of life caused by the polar opposites mentioned in this *shabad*. But a serious study leads to its latent power and juxtaposition of empirical reality of the everyday life with the divine reality to be inculcated while living in this world. In our view, this *shabad* has the seeds of Saint-Soldier concept propagated by Guru Gobind Singh by creating the Khalsa on the Vaisakhi of 1699. The Khalsa is the ultimate realization of mission of Guru Nanak to mould the human nature through universal *Naam* and *shabad*.

Guru Tegh Bahadur understood the plight of the enfeebled and enslaved populace of India during his time and offered hope through his Bani [7]:

ਬਲੁ ਛੁਟਕਿਓ ਬੰਧਨ ਪਰੇ ਕਛੁ ਨ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਅਬ ਓਟ ਹਰਿ ਗਜ ਜਿਉ ਹੋਹੁ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੩॥

The strength is drained and [humanity] is in shackles; there is no solution. Says Nanak, now, the Lord is the Support; He will help, as He did the elephant [in Vedic lore]. [53]

ਬਲੁ ਹੋਆ ਬੰਧਨ ਛੁਟੇ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਹੋਤ ਉਪਾਇ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਤੁਮਰੈ ਹਾਥ ਮੈ ਤੁਮ ਹੀ ਹੋਤ ਸਹਾਇ ॥੫੪॥

The strength [the will to resist oppression] has been restored, and the bonds have been broken; and the means [to liberation] are available. Nanak: everything is in Your hands, Lord; You are the Helper and Support [of all]. [54] (adopted from Gurmukh Singh OBE, UK)

Guru Tegh Bahadur offers hope to those in helpless situations. All Bani of the Guru needs to be understood bearing in mind the pitiful condition of the Indian Society at the time, summed-up in the Gurbani quoted above and recited with such devotion during the "Paatth da Bhog" at Gurdwaras.

The society had lost its direction and its will (inner strength) to resist oppression because it was following the false ways preached by the traditional faiths. People had lost hope. The Guru showed them the way to free themselves through total faith in the Creator Being, by following the Sikh philosophy: to fear none and frighten no-one [8]:

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ ॥

One who does not frighten anyone, and who is not afraid of anyone else

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥

- says Nanak, listen, mind: call him spiritually wise. [16]

The detachment preached in Guru Jee's Bani has to be understood as the pre-condition to a fearless disposition to be able to do one's duty in life. It is not a message of renouncing the society as preached by earlier Indian belief systems. In fact, the Guru shows the futility and falsehood of such life-negating ideologies.

By preaching detachment from the pain and pleasure of the transient human body and worldly possessions, with pursuance of higher spiritual ideals, Guru ji prepared the ordinary people to make ultimate sacrifices for the righteous cause .

ਸਾਧੋ ਇਹੁ ਤਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਜਾਨਉ ॥

Holy Saints, know that this body is false.

ਯਾ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਾਮੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਸਾਚੇ ਤਾਹਿ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

[SGGS: 1186]

The Lord who dwells within it - recognize that He alone is real. [1] [Pause]

He rejected outer holy appearance which deceives:

ਕਹਾ ਭਇਓ ਜਉ ਮੁਝੁ ਮੁਝਾਇਓ ਭਗਵਉ ਕੀਨੋ ਭੇਸੁ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

What is the use of shaving your head, and wearing saffron robes? [1] [Pause]

ਮਨ ਰੇ ਗਹਿਓ ਨ ਗੁਰ ਉਪਦੇਸੁ ॥

O mind, you have not accepted the Guru's Teachings. [SGGS: 633]

He rejected charity given and rituals performed to boost one's ego, as useless:

ਤੀਰਥ ਬਰਤ ਅਰੁ ਦਾਨ ਕਰਿ ਮਨ ਮੈ ਧਰੈ ਗੁਮਾਨੁ ॥

Those who make pilgrimages to sacred shrines, observe ritualistic fasts and make donations to charity while still taking pride in their minds

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਹਫਲ ਜਾਤ ਤਿਹ ਜਿਉ ਕੰਚਰ ਇਸਨਾਨੁ ॥੩੬॥

- O Nanak, their actions are useless, like the elephant, who takes a bath, and then rolls in the dust. ||46|| [SGGS: 1428]

Freedom from pain or pleasure:

ਦੁਖੁ ਸੁਖੁ ਏ ਬਾਧੇ ਜਿਹ ਨਾਹਨਿ ਤਿਹ ਤੁਮ ਜਾਨਉ ਗਿਆਨੀ ॥

They are not bound by pleasure and pain - know that they are truly wise.

ਨਾਨਕ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੁਮ ਮਾਨਉ ਇਹ ਬਿਧਿ ਕੋ ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਾਨੀ ॥੩੭॥ [SGGS: 220]

O Nanak, recognize those mortal beings as liberated, who live this way of life. [3][7]

Guru Tegh Bahadur's *Bani* is sometimes misinterpreted with a bias towards traditional Indian asceticism or renunciation. The false motives are imputed that the Guru's Bani preaches bairag. A closer study shows that the His Message does not preach any opt-out life style of the Indian tradition. Through detachment from the world-play (*jagat tamasha*) as a passing phase, He encourages full commitment to avail the opportunity offered by this human birth, for God-centred activism (*dharam nebhaona, sewa and simran*) which leads to salvation. In fact, Guru Jee specifically preaches to search for God while living in this world [9]:

ਕਾਹੇ ਰੇ ਬਨ ਖੋਜਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

Why do you go looking for Him in the forest?

ਸਰਬ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਸਦਾ ਅਲੇਪਾ ਤੋਹੀ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਮਾਈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

Although he is unattached, he dwells everywhere. He is always with you as your companion.

ਪੁਹਪ ਮਧਿ ਜਿਉ ਬਾਸੁ ਬਸਤੁ ਹੈ ਮੁਕਰ ਮਾਹਿ ਜੈਸੇ ਛਾਈ ॥

Like the fragrance which remains in the flower, and like the reflection in the mirror,

ਤੈਸੇ ਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਬਸੇ ਨਿਰੰਤਰਿ ਘਟ ਹੀ ਖੋਜਹੁ ਭਾਈ ॥੧॥

The Lord dwells deep within; search for Him within your own heart, O Siblings of Destiny.

He introduces the concept of the mar-jeevda – one who first accepts death as a reality and then lives a life of fearless dignity. The ordinary people understood this message and were prepared for the sacrifices which lay ahead. They sang the verse of Keso Bhatt: "Do not betray trust. Give your head but do not fail in your duty to do what is right (*Bah Jinahn di pakariye. Sar dije bah na chhoriye.. Tegh Bahadur bolya. Dhar payae dharam na chhodiye*).

The teachings of Guru Tegh Bahadur have been summed up by Gurmukh Singh in his book [1] reviewed by Hardev Singh Virk [2-3] as follows: "*We need to understand the Guru's contribution to Sikh thought in the context of the same consistent Message of One Nanak Jote in all Guru-persons. They had already established the institutions which served the spiritual and organisational needs of the community. These educational institutions of sangat-pangat (congregation and community kitchen called langar) were not exclusive to the Sikhs but inclusive for all who sat at the same level without any form of distinction. They taught the egalitarian values of non-discrimination, community service, sharing and participation as preconditions for human salvation*". □

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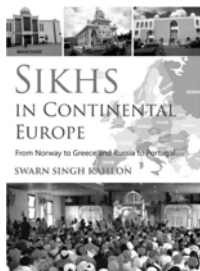
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**FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE,
BOLD COMMENT READ**
The Sikh Review

BOOKS ON SIKH DIASPORA

SIKHS IN CONTINENTAL EUROPE From Norway to Greece and Russia to Portugal

SWARN SINGH KAHLON



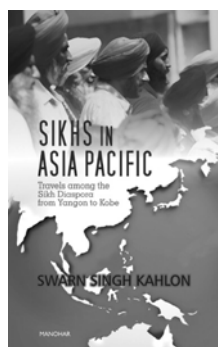
This book is the third in the trilogy of books looking at the comparatively less-known destinations of Sikh migration to non-English speaking countries. Earlier Sikh migration was focused on the British Commonwealth and the USA. Once restrictions were placed on entering the UK, the Sikhs were forced to explore the possibility of migrating to other countries including Continental Europe. The pace of migration picked up in 1970s. The author describes how Sikhs have kept up their traditions through 'Nagar Kirtans', turban, Youth Summer camps, and 'sewa'. There are now almost 140 gurdwaras in Europe.

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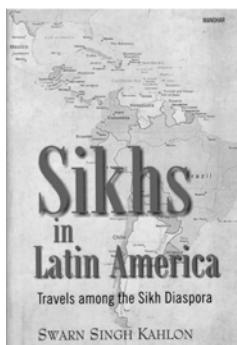


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SWARN SINGH KAHLON



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DATA GALORE : Ask Me No Questions.....

*I J SINGH**

Let me overwhelm you with some factoids, then we'll try moving forward.

I came to this country a generation ago. I could then count on the fingers of one hand the number of recognizable Sikhs on the streets of a city the size of New York and often pined for a familiar face in a sea of strangers. I was young and brash. When curious non-Sikhs asked if we had a place of worship nearby, my ironical response said it all: "Yes we do but it's about 3000 miles away in California or Vancouver, Canada." The years turned my world topsy turvy.

Now close to 20 gurduaras are within commuting range of where I live, and perhaps twice as many if you count the whole state of New York. About 250 gurduaras dot the landscape of United States of America. Surely, a matter of rejoicing and satisfaction, but for one caveat.

With the exception of 2 or 3 that I know very little about, every Sikh place of worship has accumulated a horrible track record. Unbecoming a place of worship, most display a shocking history of ongoing infractions of common sense -- dishonest or non-existent electoral procedures, unresponsive authoritarian management, total absence of transparency, accountability or self-governance. Flouting of all norms of common sense or their own Constitutional framework is the rule. Violent interactions among attendees and management followed by legal recourse are not uncommon or rare sequelae. These shenanigans are the hallmarks of a facility of a religion exemplified by love and service to humanity without discrimination of caste, color or gender that normally fuel disagreements in the public space. Once again, I pine for a familiar face in a sea of strangers. Hence my gut reaction to this paradox.

If a whole community spread over a vast land as the United States exhibits common symptomology then there must be a common etiology. Most gurduaras are beset by

**Editor (Overseas) - The Sikh Review [Email: lj Singh99@gmail.com]*

these problems that have rendered them largely dysfunctional. True that some gurdwaras serve economically challenged neighborhoods with marginally educated congregants existing in dire economic straits. Yet, the same similar picture of fragmented gurduara realities emerges no matter if one is looking at impoverished communities or in posh neighborhoods and historic towns, where Sikhs drive luxury cars, live in palatial homes and gurduara buildings are historic landmarks. Local political bigwigs reside there. Nevertheless, not an iota of difference exists between the two extremes in the viciousness of the disputes. It can't be all the fault of any one person, no matter how vile.

My simple mind was baffled. Inevitably the thought came that if the whole American Sikh community is behaving thus, only two possible explanations remain: One choice is that a fundamental flaw in Sikh teaching surfaced in the diaspora Sikhs in North America. But a careful reading of history, traditions and teachings of Sikhi quickly rubbished the notion. The alternative possibility, equally unacceptable, is that perhaps a new highly contagious virus caught up with us after a few hundred years of latency. And now the infection may have affected the whole body politic of the Sikh nation.

Such examples surface every day; just watch the latest unfolding medical news on public health. Newer bugs enter the body, infecting all systems with unimagined quiet speed and unheard-of urgency, overriding all control systems, even penetrating the DNA of a people. The best microbial hunters, cell biologists and geneticists tell us that such viruses take control of systems, cells and organelles that are vital to functions and survival of organs and organisms. And now the whole community seems to have caught it -- almost like a gene of madness. Have we such an epidemic on our hands?

To my baffled simple mind, only two therapeutic choices hold some hope: Either large scale mandated mass counseling services for every Sikh man and woman as if they have gone nuts, or look to modern interventional cellular and subcellular gene therapy from emerging techniques to put us back on track.

After obsessing a while, a sensible alternative response may be possible, so let us counsel patience, rather than leaping to egregious and hasty judgements.

Keep in mind that most Sikhs are immigrants in this country. Prior to dramatic shifts in American immigration policy in the late 1960's, laws were radically biased against Asians, and there were very few countable, small number of Sikhs in the U.S.A. The

laws changed and a flood of Indians entered. Sikhs, largely from Punjab, make up the northwest territory of India. They enjoy an enviable reputation as warriors dedicated to honest work ethic. They earned for Punjab the coveted recognition as the bread basket of the nation that freed India of its yearly recurring famines. Sikhs are also the backbone of India's muscle – its coveted armed forces. Sikhs are a vigorous and prominent minority of barely two percent in Hindu India and even a smaller statistical presence in contemporary America, or any other part of the world.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Sikh migrants to America are a mix of students, technocrats, and business professionals but often from agrarian farming roots. Some problems of language and culture accosted them as do for most migrants from anywhere.

These first Sikh migrants founded the 200 odd Gurduaras in the United States that primarily cater to the needs – religious, cultural, linguistic and even in music cuisine and ambience –of the Punjabi people and their nostalgia for a home (Punjab) that they had abandoned. The gurduara, by definition the community center of a people, then becomes critical in re-creating the aura and ambience of Punjab to capture the essence, sights, smells and sounds of the home they left behind. But for their progeny, born and brought up in the new country, the home is different as are the sights, sounds and smells. And there lies a disconnect.

Forget not that almost all of our gurduaras are beset by these problems that have rendered them largely dysfunctional. It is almost as if some new highly contagious virus has caught up with us or that an epidemic of madness has hit us. A migrant's heart and soul often long for the home he has abandoned even if he is happy to do so while feverishly slaving away to construct a new home in a new land. Remember that a house is erected in days or months, making a house into a home may take a lifetime. Identity and loyalty may remain split a while and that's an immigrant's reality even if not always in his awareness. To each phase there is a season and an ebb and flow. These are not matters to be condemned but to be valued that deserve respectful patience. There lies a defining hurdle. The Indian cultural milieu, perhaps because of its pervasively defining caste and colonial past as subjects, presents an unusual vertical structure, crudely but aptly seen as that of *Master or Servant; King or Subject*. I hasten to add that Sikhi rejects this baggage entirely but reality prevails.

The migrant brings cultural practices and attitudes best described as habits of the heart. And they prevail despite the best teachings of great religions that speak and

preach of egalitarian societies, self-governance, gender equality and, freedom of expression with accountability. The result is a ménage of good teaching and bad practices that coexist.

So, when a leader ascends the ladder of success his sense of self is defined more by his ancient cultural commandments of a tribal life and less of a life by the values of common good. He becomes not just the leader but sees himself as he king. *To him the king is the law, not that the law is king.* This is the critical difference between the culture that shaped us and the reality in which have come to live. Yet when he goes to work in an office or business that runs by western values he lives as a loyal servant of the new order where he is the migrant and follows all the laws, regulations and practices he should. When he comes home to family or enters a gurduara he often reverts to the ways of his home that his body truly left but not his mind.

I also see that perhaps because of the never-ending turmoil in gurduaras congregations are often overwhelmingly uninvolved; when asked people hardly ever offer honest opinions until the pot boils over into visible conflict. Perhaps the allure of apathy arises from a fervent desire for peace. We need some psychic respite after all the commotions in gurduaras and Sikh institutions in India and pretty much worldwide post 1984. Matters lie dormant today as a volcano, waiting to explode. Remember that Sikhs and Sikhi present since their beginnings, a glorious history of dynamic activism, not fear.

Peace is not just cessation of hostilities; it is a state of mind. To quote the comic strip Pogo, "We have met the enemy and he is us." We may have peace now, but at what price? I am reminded of the Latin aphorism *ignoti nulla cupido* meaning that one does not desire what one does not know.

My reasoning seems both reasonable and possibly correct, and also hypothetical but I wonder where lies the critically needed therapy? I hope to open that box another day.

Our existing conflicts are both inter and intra generational; they lie at the core of our community's dysfunctional reality and our gurduara imbroglio. I am not prescribing gene-analysis or counseling en masse therapy. For now, just some self-reflection might be all that the doctor ordered

I close with a bit of American folk wisdom: Ask me no questions and I'll tell you no lies. □

Guru Tegh Bahadur – an Epitome of a being. His Formative Years

K S AHLUWALIA*

He who discards greed and desires

And gives up lust for wealth:

He who is free from joy and sorrow

And serves not evil passions

Know him verily to be god in flesh

Know such a man, says Nanak

To be living image of God

Who remains undisturbed by sorrow and happiness?

And is free from attachment, pride and avarice. [Guru Granth Sahib: 220. Shalok 13]

Qualities,competencie,characteristics, that an empowering leader needs to have.

Revisiting them:

Storm, Lightening and rainbow – the expanse of a leader:

- Baba Mohan's death – provided him an unforgettable lesson – it requires moral and spiritual courage to abide by the will of God rather than to perform miracles. First step to evolve as a leader is to understand the prevailing environ and then effect a course correction totally – not quick fixes. Apt is to learn the trade rather than spending time to learn the tricks of the trade.
- Battle of Lohgarh happened at the time of 9th Masters Sister's Veeros wedding. The battle with troops, symbolised for him the battle of righteousness, truth, integrity – and what impressed him was of 6th Master- maintaining tranquillity, poise, serenity, fearlessness, fortitude, self – control, calmness, spirit of courage, in the most challenging situation. Not an iota of dejection, stress, confusion, dilemma existed in 6th Master's approach. He was crystal clear in his thought, impeccable in his actions. He had the tenacity, capacity to touch, move and inspire others.

Leadership norm – be responsive not reacting- work on the problem and not in the problem. Be like a lighthouse, lit internally while guiding others. Also need to look in the reality and don't flinch.

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- Death of Bhai Gurdas made 9th Master aware that happiness and sorrow come like a light in one's life and he felt all the strings of his life were turned in for a higher purpose and calling. Each storm, that comes like a whirl wind, bringing death to many, ended in peace, sunshine of a golden dawn. The world outside him, the world inside him, were moving as a visible panorama. Death lingered around him, chased his dearest kith, kin, his most revered teachers, guides, like night crushing the day. Yet the stream of truth flowered undisturbed, through the forest of errors, conflicts, strife, ranged around him. His mind was concentrated on the stream of truth, consequently he was equipped to contemplate, reflect, ponder, examine over his future course with unparalleled vision. And he was merely 10 years old then.

Leadership norm: Be centred. Be clear. Be in the now. Be an astute observer; be eager to rewrite your agenda.

- At 23 years 9th Master was commissioned to lead a contingent of army to fight the onslaught of a mammoth army of establishment troops, wherein he channelled all his energies, to a singular objective of winning with dignity, valour, thereby was christened as Tegh Bahadur - a courageous warrior. He ensured that all he had learnt over the time span was put to an effective use.

Leadership lesson: it's not the size of the dog that matters in a fight; it's the size of the fight that matters in a dog. Join the dots for achieving an integrated diversity.

- 9th Master was directed to be in Bakala, such that he could live in elected solitude away from the storm, stress of political upheavals under the care of his maternal grandparents. He needed to be nurtured for a larger purpose, given the training to be in one with self – to be a man of clear wisdom who knows what, how, where and when he has to act. And his training of self-contemplation was to be arduous, time consuming. To be a man of steel, necessitates a huge investment of time, energy, focus and dedication and in an environ that is conducive. You need to prepare the soldier first, by training him back stage, such that when he goes in the trenches, he is ready, equipped to fire, annihilate the enemy in the now.

He also needed to be aware that the then prevalent techniques of self-mortification, torturing one's body, mind, cruel austerities to purchase birth and heaven, tasting divine tranquilities were basically all smoke and no fire, and were totally divorced from reality. He thus was clear that he need not chastise his body, embrace a life of misery, as the price of eternal happiness.

He did not despise life, show disdain for decencies of civil society. He did not execute any monastic penance of the aesthetic who goes to the forest, desert saying 'full of hindrances is the house holders life'.

He lived in the heart of city with his family and was joined by his wife- Mata Gujri who practiced the same inward journey - like him prayed for the salvation of humanity and participated in all his silent life of devotion to God, while abiding in His will, totally and in totality.

Apt example of team interplay, comradeship, where both pursued a common objective. She exhibited with conviction, that in the Sikh way of life, home ties are never snapped in pursuit of spiritual freedom. The ties of true love between the man and wife helps them to transcend all bonds and develop spirituality of mind, soul which inspires them to identify themselves with the wellbeing of the entire universe. Concept of marriage was re-defined, from merely being biological companions, to being that of intensely evolving, contributory, engaging humans.

- Baba Tegh Bahadur's solitude was not a state of isolation which leaves man at the mercy of self-love and all its miseries. His life was not that of a walled anchorite of romantic legend. His solitude and quite meditative life depended not so much on physical isolation, as on the inner apartness, that bears witness, even in the busiest setting of social life to man 's true communion with the divine spirit.

Through communion with the Perfect Being, Baba Tegh Bahadur, acquired a bond with humanity, which far more from being broken, tended always towards what is the model of true society; the brotherhood of man in the spirit of God. Thus his meditation was not only a perpetual communion with the Supreme Being, but through the realisation of His all-pervading spirit: it was a communion with all mankind.

- He and his devoted wife- Mata Gujri prayed and meditated not only for themselves but for the whole humanity. They also sought from God, the knowledge and inspiration for the task they were waiting to be assigned to them. They both prayed for strength and the power to fulfil it and both responded humbly, sincerely to the inner call.

Baba Tegh Bahadur was intimately in touch with the world outside him consequently was deeply concerned with the fate and freedom of his country, hence watched with keen interest the social, political changes that were taking place, as an artist watches a drama, in which he is to play a hero's part, later.

- During these 20 years, 9th Master, lived in elected solitude amid busy surroundings, holding his head high, self-possessed, serene, self-control, he became a child – innocent,

humble, in poise, living his life at the transcendent level of Reality, which mortals like you and me, who exists in a life of illusion, simply cannot conceive.

- Due to sheer tenacity of his hard work and singular vision, he was aware- became a being. Yet he kept it under self-control and lived in the silence of innocence. His message being –desist posturing.

He knew that he had it in him, yet he carried it with humility and poise of a sage. The more he discovered the secret resources of his own in- communicable personality, the more determined was his preparation to contribute to the redemption of humanity. Whenever he turned his glance inward, he opened the window of his inner silence to the world.

Following footsteps of her husband, Mata Gujri, rose in contemplation, till she stood fully enlightened on the Mount of Vision, in her supreme realisation and burnt away all dross and alloy. Thus she entered the realm of Truth, perceiving the Love, in which all is one. She held within her heart the treasure of divine wisdom and the wondrous knowledge that is Light and peace.

- Baba Tegh Bahadur now lived at the transcendent level of Reality, which we, immersed in the poor life of illusion cannot conceive. He breathed in an atmosphere of abundant life, indicating humanity's claim to the possible and permanent attainment of Reality. His life and achievement testified to the advent of triumphing spiritual power. The deepest, richest levels of his personality had now attained to perfect light and freedom. He was imbued with divine Light and consumed with eternal Love.

In midnight of March 30, 1664 suddenly a resplendent Light blazed within him, his face was radiant with the splendorous beams of illumination. The call had come. He sought, from the Hidden and the Divine, strength to face the problems, his agonising country faced, and to bind the terrors of the time. God had crowned him with spiritual sovereignty of the world. He had become the un-proclaimed, King of the Kingdom of spirit. In utter humility he maintained a veil of silence over it. *Why is need of sun to proclaim the advent of its own light? It blazes, shines, announces his dawn to the humanity, through its burning silence.*

- Guru Tegh Bahadur lived in the majestic silence of his inner illumination. He had experienced blending of the Light of Guru Har Rai and Guru Har Kishan with the light of his soul. He had felt the blessing of inner transformation into a new manifestation of the eternal spirit of Guru Nanak. He had intuitively received a call from in-dwelling God, to carry the torch of Guru Nanak, to the farthest corners of the country. He was blessed, chosen to rewrite history.

Mata Gujri knew, from the spiritual experiences she shared with her husband, that he had now received the Lord's command to shoulder mammoth responsibilities of Guruship of Sikh faith. His mother Nanaki knew that the great day, which she was waiting excitedly for, is near now. A great wish of a pious mother was going to be a reality soon. Yet Guru Tegh Bahadur, remained undisturbed and unmoved by the commotion of the revelation of the Guru at Bakala.

- He who had been blessed would not reveal himself.
- He refused to set up a propaganda booth in the open market of imposters.
- He refused to compete, challenge at the diverse claim of 22 rival pretenders.
- Why should a prophet of truth go to the vanity fair of preachers or falsehood?
- Why should the sun give up its majestic position of shining in solitude of its sovereign splendour and choose to tinkle among the fading stars. Even the blind will be able to see His light.
- Neither the affectionate entreaties of his mother, nor the devout persuasion of his brother in law, relatives, associates, moved Baba Tegh Bahadur to come out of his God like silence of Nirvana, and declare himself as the successor of Guru Harkishan
- When the scions of Bhalla, Trehan families, descendents of Guru Amar Das, Guru Angad Dev, all other eminent Sikhs of Guru Harkishan's durbar like Bhai Daya Das, Mati Das, Sati Das, Bhai Mani Ram, and others bowed reverently in humble adoration to Guru Tegh Bahadur and sought his assent to inform the outside world about the final and irrevocable enthronement of Guru Tegh Bahadur on the throne of Guru Nanak. They begged the Guru to give open audience to the seekers of truth thus preventing any further exploitation by those 22 imposter gurus.

Guru Tegh Bahadur then delivered, what may be termed as his first sermon to his chosen disciples and leading apostles. In utter humility he said 'The moral and spiritual responsibilities attached to be Guru Nanak's Gaddi- throne- are actually too heavy to be shouldered by a humble servant of God like me.

But the call of Almighty God has come as his inexorable will, which cannot be disobeyed. I have given my word to serve in this capacity to my God and to the eternal spirit of Guru Nanak who have assured of their grace and love. I cannot refuse your request as you represent the sangat. Now that you have acknowledged me as your Guru, promise me, that you will obey my first command, which forbids you, setting up any camp, in the vanity fair outside, on my behalf, and not to declare, announce, me as the ninth Guru, to the crowd- that is judging Gurus by material values, and by the amount of wealth they are able to display.

Remember the Sikh Gurus never sought such cheap popularity, and have never adopted ignoble methods to assert their wisdom and light as are adopted by pretenders outside. You all, thus will maintain a dignified silence and will not drag me into competition with them. Do not fear that if we live in silence and faith, the torch of Guru Nanak's ideals may be wrested by some imposters. That light is eternal, the indwelling of divinity, which cannot be acquired the way it's being sought by Dhir Mal and others.

Imposter gurus in the past too have tried to wrest guru ship from true Gurus and have failed. They will go on trying in future, yet shall fail. How long can falsehood pretend to be the bearers of the light, which they have not? How long can false mysticism delude the seekers of truth?

- When Guru Angad hid himself for many months to keep away from the din and noise of the pretenders, did he cease to be the Guru?
- When Dasu and Datu kicked, pushed Guru Amar Das into silence and solitude, did the light of Guru Nanak cease to shine in him, or was any one able to deprive him of the spiritual authority given to him by Guru Angad.
- How long could the pretenders misguide people? It's the law of life that Truth and Light wait patiently to be revealed to the world, through the silence of the seekers agony.
- The law of life -- Truth and Light wait patiently, to be revealed to the world, through the silence of the seeker's agony.

Everyone was silent. A light of understanding was shining on the faces of all the apostles. Now there arrives in Bakala, a rich trader with a large convoy of tents, goods, well-guarded by a number of armed men. His tents were pitched on the outskirts of the town, with splendours, attracting flocks of people. Commoners were intrigued to see this man, whose personality, entourage, splendour surpassed that of all pretenders to the throne of Guru Nanak. People wondered whether he was the new guru, who arrived a bit late, or was he a masand- bishop, who had come with offerings, disciples of his diocese, or was he a princely trader carrying provision for the Lahore court.

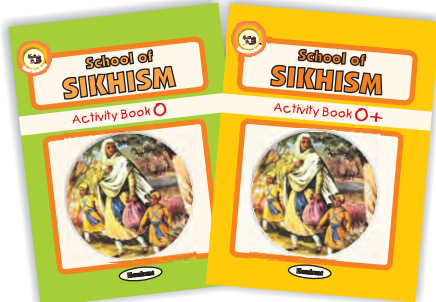
Soon it was revealed that the newcomer was a Labana trader of the flourishing Vanjara tribe named Makhan Shah. He appeared to be a tribal chief and looked like an aristocrat from his princely robes and dress.

This folks is my limited understanding of *Guru Tegh Bahadur – an Epitome of a being. His Formative Years*

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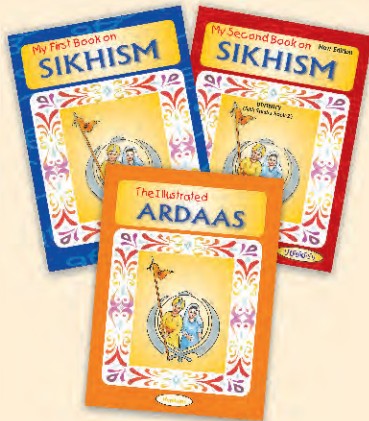
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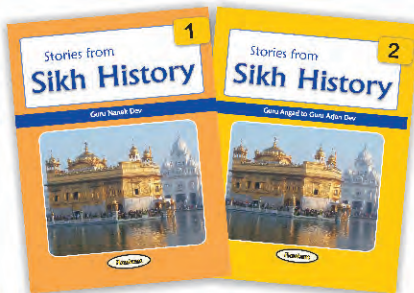
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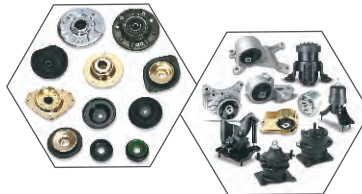
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Guru Tegh Bahadur – Holy Travels to the East

[PART-I]

*JAGMOHAN SINGH GILL**

This article is about the time when Sikhism in East India had already established itself with a strong foot-hold. The visit and teachings of First Master Guru Nanak Dev had created a deep impact among the local people. Successive Gurus were always concerned about their well-being. They were well-connected with the important Sikh centres like Kartarpur Sahib, Khadur Sahib, Goindwal Sahib, and Amritsar Sahib which had emerged on the basis of needs and priorities in different phases. Various missionaries were sent to propagate the message of righteousness. Among them one the earliest and the most prominent names was Bhai Gurdas. The local Sikhs stood by the big house of the Gurus with large offerings as a mark of utmost respect. Guru Tegh Bahadur, like his predecessors, was not a stay-at-home philosopher. According to him, honesty, hard labour, a cultivated brain, and developed social qualities made an individual self-dependent and took him closer to the Almighty like so many Sikhs who led such a life. Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit to the East renewed the old ties and re-established the faith as the path of truthful living. Gurujī's aim was to help the suffering masses and equip them against grief with emotional and spiritual counselling. Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib set out for a long journey to the East in order to set up new preaching centres and develop the old ones in bigger forms. He garnered followers en masse and created a stir wherever he went. It is a very long and interesting topic and can hardly be written in the space of a few pages.

East India, as I am going to present before you, is very large. There was a common terminology for some migrant people in Punjab. I heard from my parents and the elders that six-seven decades before the arrival of migrant labourers who were part of the success story of the Green Revolution, those coming from the Gangetic belt beyond the 'Bangar' area of Punjab (now in Haryana) were called '**Poorbias**'. In Sikh history, we get some such references of the large Gangetic region from Uttar Pradesh to the coasts of the Bay of Bengal. The other term like Bhaiya (it is normally used for brother but now has become

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somewhat derogatory) came much later. My study of Poorab (east) starts with some parts of Awadh, and the Purvanchal and Vindhyaachal regions of Uttar Pradesh, covering Allahabad, Sultanpur, Azamgarh, Banaras, Mirzapur, Jaunpur (all are now divided into many districts) and the entire swathe of Uttar Pradesh bordering Bihar. Then I have covered Bihar (including Jharkhand), Bengal (including Bangladesh), Odisha and States known as the 'Seven Sisters' of the north-east with special focus on Patna Sahib, **one of the earliest Takhts of Sikhs and birthplace of our Tenth Master Guru Gobind Singh Ji.**

Guru Tegh Bahadur's first tour of the East was in 1656-57 before becoming Guru as per references made by Bhatts. These facts though not corroborated by the common sources of Sikh history, seem to be important and cannot be ignored. So, before going to the great travels of Guru Tegh Bahadur, I want to give some details of his earlier connections, based on different scholars and Bhatts. There were two early holy tours by Guru Ji before being anointed as the Ninth Master. This will be enough evidence to prove the sacred bonding of Guru Ji with the Sikh-Sangat of the entire eastern India.

Sarup Singh 'Kaushik', in "Guru Kian Sakhian", written in 1790 AD in Sakhi no. 13 states, "Following the footsteps of Guru Nanak and Guru Amar Das, Tegh Bahadur decided to go on a pilgrimage to the sacred places in the East. His mother Mata Nanaki, wife Mata Gujri, her brother Kripal Chand, Mata Hari, Suraj Mal's wife and five devoted disciples including Dyal Das, elder brother of Bhai Mani Singh and Sadhu Ram Khosla, first went to Kiratpur in June, 1656. From there they visited Kurukshetra where they stayed for a pretty long time. They were at Haridwar on the Baisakhi day, 29 March 1657. They lived there for several months. After attending the fair at Garh Mukteshwar in October, 1657, the entourage returned to Punjab".

The second journey to the East by Guru Tegh Bahadur was in 1660-1664. Shahd Bilas describes the second journey of Guru Tegh Bahadur to the holy places of pilgrimage. His wife Mata Gujri, did not join him. With some family members and a number of disciples Guru Tegh Bahadur left home in 1660 A.D. and visited Kurukshetra, Delhi, Mathura, Agra and Prayag. They were at Prayag on 19 April 1661 and at Banaras on 21 June 1661.

The Bhat Vahi Poorbi Dakhni in 21 June 1661, recorded their visit to Banaras as follows: "*Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji beta Guru Hargobindji Mahal Chhate ka Banaras aye, sal satrah sai atharan Asarh, Sudi Panchami, gail Nanakji ayi Mata Guru Tegh Bahadurji ki, Mata Hariji ay istri Guru Suraj Mal ki, Bhai Kirpal Chand aya beta Lal Chand Subhiki ka, Bawa Dyal Das aya beta Mai Das Jalhane ka, Gawal Das aya beta Chhote Mal Chibber*

Ka, Chaupat Rae aya beta Pera Chibbar ka, Sangat aya beta Binna Uppal ka; Sadhu Ram aya beta Dharme Khosle ka.”

[On 21 June 1661, Banaras was visited by Guru Tegh Bahadur son of Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Guru. He was accompanied by Mata Nanaki, mother of Guru Tegh Bahadur, Mata Hariji wife of Guru Suraj Mal, Bhai Kripal Chand son of Lal Chand Sobhiki, Bawa Dyal Das son of Mai Das Jalhana, Gawal Das son of Chhote Mal Chhibbar, Chaupat (Champat?) Rai son of Pera Chhibbar, Sangat son of Binna Uppal and Sadhu Ram son of Dharma Khosla.]

From Banaras they went to Sasaram and then to Gaya. Afterwards, they came to Patna, and turned back home. They visited Banaras again and then took the road towards Prayag. It was on the way that they heard the news of the death of Guru Har Rai. They prayed for the deceased's soul at Tribeni, the confluence of the Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati.

The Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni recorded: “*Guru Tegh Bahadurji beta Guru Hargobind Ji Mahal Chhae, Guru Har Rae ji ki Parchavni karn Patna se aye; sal satrah sai unnis Shukla pakh Magh mas ki Panchmi ke divas tirath Pragraj Sangam te aye pahunche, Gail Mata Nanakiji aye mahal Guru Hargobindji ke; Mata Hariji aye mahal Guru Suraj Malji ke; Diwan Dargaha Mal aya beta Dwarka Das Chhibbar ka; hor Sikh faqir aye.”*

[On 4 January, 1663, Guru Tegh Bahadur son of Guru Hargobind, the Sixth Guru, came from Patna to Prayag at the confluence of Ganga, Yamuna and Saraswati to pray for peace to the soul of Guru Har Rai (who had died on October 6, 1661). He was accompanied by Mata Hariji, wife of Guru Suraj Mal, Diwan Dargaha Mal, son of Dwarka Das Chhibbar, and other Sikh followers.]

After visiting several notable places Tegh Bahadur reached Delhi on 21 March, 1664, according to Bhat Vahi Purbi Dakhni and Guru Kian Sakhian. Guru Har Krishan was already there. Tegh Bahadur met the young Guru and offered condolences to Mata Sulakhani on Guru Har Rai's death.

After the demise of Guru Har Kishan, Guru Tegh Bahadur was appointed the Guru amidst many unwarranted activities and unreasonable situations created by some people. Guru Ji made a couple of local tours in Punjab. He wished to follow the example of Guru Nanak by visiting holy places. He was desirous of meeting the Sikhs living outside the Punjab at many places in northern and eastern India. He was keen to propagate the true essence of Sikhism and to provide succour to suffering humanity.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's most important tour to Eastern and North-Eastern India

After becoming the Ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahadur undertook organized tours following the footprints of the greatest the great, Guru Nanak. This was to concretize the faith and path of truth propagated earlier by Guru Nanak in this entire region. Guru Tegh Bahadur had received a Divine call from God Almighty to visit the East of India and to preach the Gospel of Truth. This tour of Guru Tegh Bahadur is referred to by every Sikh and non-Sikh historian. This journey was full of activity which most of them recorded. The basic reason for establishing such personal contacts was to create confidence and infuse enthusiasm among the people and to give them moral and spiritual courage. The Sangats all around were anxious to meet their beloved Guru Ji. The curiosity of their waiting anxiously is beautifully described by Bawa Saroop Das Bhalla –

***“Poorab Desh Sangat Sakal At Man Darshan Abhlaakh,
Dur Desh Durgam Sthaan Jaan Pratigya Raakh”***

Guru Tegh Bahadur left Punjab on November 22, 1665 (ref Bhat Vahi Jadobansian, Khata Barthian). He was accompanied by his mother, wife and devoted Sikhs like Kripal Chand, Dayal Das, Mati Das, Sati Das, Gurditta and a few more. He had his own tents, horses, carriages, bullocks, camels and necessary goods to meet his requirements in the journey. Nawab Saif-ud-din of Saifabad presented the Guru a horse, a chariot, a tent, some camels and a few bullock carts. The Guru usually halted in a garden outside a village or town or on the bank of a river or stream. **Most of the civilizations owe their genesis to the rivers as being its lifeline.**

Before entering the eastern part of the country Guru Tegh Bahadur visited Pehowa and Kurukshetra of Bangar region, and then went to Mathura, Brindavan, Agra, Etowah and Kanpur. He preached to the people the values of hard and honest work and charity, thus weaning them away from the scourge of tobacco and other intoxicants, healing the sick and converting (exhorting sinners) to a cleaner and more wholesome way of life. It is certainly a fact to marvel at how a former warrior turned recluse again participated in public life with such zeal and dedication. No wonder, he created a stir wherever he went and gathered a large following. Wherever he went, he distributed all the offerings he received from the devout among the poor and the holy and fed the hungry from his never-failing community kitchen. Spreading the message of Almighty Guru Tegh Bahadur ji entered eastern India after visiting several places of religious interest, as Bawa Saroop Das Bhalla says about the importance of this region called Awadh –

***“Ganga Jamuna Gomti Misrat Aao Nimkhaar,
Sab Tirath Satgur Gaye Kina Bhagat Vihaar”***

Here I intend to discuss Guru Tegh Bahadur’s visit to eastern India with some glimpses of the various important and relevant places of his halt and stay, ranging from Allahabad to Dacca. This is based on the early writers like Bawa Saroop Das Bhalla of Mahima Parkash fame in the eighteenth century, Giani Santokh Singh ‘Churamani’ (author of Suraj Parkash) in the first half of nineteenth century, Giani Gian Singh (author of Twarikh Guru Khalsa) who visited these places in the second half of the nineteenth century and then noted scholars like Dr. Tirlochan Singh, Dr. Fauja Singh, G.B. Singh, Dr Ganda Singh, Hari Ram Gupta, Major Gurmukh Singh, Ved Prakash and others. The adventurous visits to these places in the 1930’s by Giani Dhanna Singh Chahal of ‘Cycle Yatra’ fame have also been incorporated in this research.

From historical materials of the above scholars and my personal visits to most of the places repeatedly I can assume the approximate route of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji while moving eastwards and the return journey to Punjab. This was a long tour spanning about five years, partly by road and partly by river routes.

Guru Ji, along with his entourage moved from Mathura, Agra, and Kanpur and entered an old Hindu place of pilgrimage named Manakpur, on the banks of the river Ganga. From Manakpur Guru Ji went to Allahabad and then to Banares. Some scholars insist on his first going to Mirzapur and then Banares. But my assumption based on my visit and from the geographical angle, it seems that Guru Ji first visited Banares. Then he crossed the river Ganga and entered the town of Mirzapur. Then the entourage moved towards Sasaram via Ahraura and then crossed the river Karamnasa. Then he moved to Gaya and from there to Patna via Rajgir, Nalanda and Bihar Sharif.

At Patna, Guru Ji left Mata Gujri, Mata Nanaki Ji (Guru Ji’s mother) and few important Sikhs under the care of the local Sikhs and started his journey further east along the banks of the river Ganga. This tour might have been on the river route. He passed Phatua, Bakhtiarpur, Barh, Mokama, Bal-Guddar, Lakhi Sarai and then halted at Munger. Through Munger, Bhagalpur, Kahalgaon, Kantnagar or Kuntal Nagar and Rajmahal, Guru Ji entered Bengal and reached Malda. From Malda he moved towards Nalhati and some other places on zig-zag waterways. Throughout the year the main mode of transportation was on the riverine network. Then he went past it on the way to Dacca where he had a long stay. Some researchers claim that Guru Ji went to Dacca through Pabna via Gopalpur and

Godagiri from Malda. They might have touched Maksudabad (present Murshidabad). Making Dacca his base Guru Ji frequently visited many districts of Bengal now in Bangladesh including Chittagong, Sondip, Mymensingh, Sylhet, Do-hazari, Noakhali, Chandpur as well as the Jaintia Hills and Tipperah (Tripura) preaching the message of truth on the path of Guru Nanak. Then Guru Ji went to Kamrup or present-day Assam in his same mission and was instrumental in reducing the prolonged tension between the Mughals and local Ahom Kings. He toured Dhubri, Rangamati, Gouripur and some other places over a period of more than two years and then returned to Dacca.

After a long stay in Dacca, he went to Kolkata which was yet to develop into a full-fledged city and then to Burdwan where the Zamindar-turned-Maharaja was from Lahore and a descendant of Sangam Rai Kapur. From Burdwan Guru Ji went southwards Bishnupur, Medinipur, Contai, Jaleswar, Mayur-Bhanj, and travelling on the old trunk road of Jagannath Puri, touched Bhadrak, Cuttack before reaching Puri. He might have planned to proceed farther southward towards Madras and Sri Lanka, but the tour was shortened owing to the atrocities meted out by Aurangzeb on common people. Then Guru Ji started the return journey which was quite fast and reached Patna, crossing various rivers. The places he passed through would have been Bishnupur, Gomoh, Parasnath, Madhupur, Deoghar, and Gaya. After some time, Guru Ji resumed his journey touching Arrah, Chhapra, Shahpur, Bairiya, Buxar and Ghazipur on either bank of the Ganga. From Ghazipur Guru Ji went to Nizamabad in Azamgarh, either by boat on the river Tamsa or by road. From Nizamabad Guru Ji went by road to Jaunpur and then to Banaras, from where he might have gone to Ayodhya, Lucknow, Farrukhabad, thus completing the great holy travels to east India.

Places visited by Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji - Only few places are discussed very briefly on the basis of the above-mentioned historical documents and my continuous fieldwork for years.

Kare-Manakpur

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji halted at Kare-Manakpur to bless sannyasi Maluk Das who strayed away from the right path. The place of his worship and samadhi is still visited by devotees. Earlier, there was a Sangat but now it stands totally destroyed. It was a place of natural beauty and surrounded by forests. Importance of Kare-Manakpur in Sikh history was first highlighted in Mahima Parkash by Bawa Saroop Das Bhalla while most of researchers have written about this based on Bhai Santokh Singh Churamani's Suraj

Parkash of 19th century. As Mahima Parkash is an 18th century text, my findings are based on Mahima Parkash. Thus, Bawa Saroop Das Bhalla writes –

Chaupai – **“Pun Kare Manakpur Ka Mug Leena, Maluk Das Tahan Saadh Praveena”**.

In its annotation editors had given wrong information of this place being in far off Assam. Here author writes about the place Kare Manakpur. The city still has some architectural remains which tell the history and reflect its glorious past. Manakpur Town is the second oldest town of Uttar Pradesh. This place is on the bank of the river Ganga in between Kanpur and Allahabad. Kare-Manakpur was a subah (province) in medieval India. It consisted of two strongholds: Kare and Manikpur, now located on either side of the Ganga and is now in Uttar Pradesh. These two places have been bifurcated by the river which changed its course. Kare now falls in Kaushambi district, while Manakpur has become a part Pratapgarh district. It is called the "town of kings and saints".

Manikpur and Kare were important seats of government in the early Muslim period. Alauddin Khilji was the governor there before he ascended the throne of Delhi by murdering his uncle on the sands of the river between Manikpur and Kare. The names of kings who inhabited Manakpur are Alauddin Khilji, Jalaluddin Khilji, Balban, Raja Manikchand, and Raja Tassuq Husain (Father in Law of Nawab Wajid Ali Shah of Awadh).

Allahabad

Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji reached Prayag (later Allahabad and now Prayagraj) about February, 1666. He stayed there for two months but historian Dr. Gopal Singh says it was for about six months. This city is also referred to as Triveni since three rivers i.e., Ganga, Jamuna and the legendary Saraswati (fabled subterranean river) become one here. It is a celebrated place of pilgrimage. They stayed at Ahiyapur Mohalla. Mata Gujri conceived for the first time in thirty-three years of her married life. Guru Gobind Singh wrote in Bachitter Natak:

*“Mur pit purab kin payana
Bhant bhant ke tirath nana
Jab he jat Tribaini bhaye
Pun dan karat bataye”*

[My father went to the east, He visited all sorts of places of pilgrimages; When he reached Tribeni (Prayag), He remained busy in alms-giving.)

It was at this sacred place and in the holy atmosphere where Guru Tegh Bahadur was busy giving away his spiritual and material wealth. Guru Ji blessed the people with all the bounties. People of Prayag were much impressed with the simple mission and the charming personality of the Great Guru.

Banares

The city has been blessed by the physical presence of the First, Ninth and Tenth Sikh Guru – Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh. It is the place where saints like Kabir and Ravidas, whose hymns are included in the Guru Granth Sahib, resided. Banaras is the oldest holy place of the Hindus east of Prayag and on the banks of river Ganges. The two main Sikh Gurdwaras located in the periphery of the city – **Nichibagh (Bari Sangat)** and **Gurubagh** (Luxa Road) are of immense historical value. The first one commemorates the visit of Guru Tegh Bahadur and the second one of Guru Nanak Dev. During Guru Tegh Bahadur's visit it was the centre of Sikhism for the entire region of Poorbanchal, i.e., Jaunpur, Gorakhpur, Nizamabad, Mirzapur, Gazipur and such other places. Important Sikh missionaries like Bhai Gurdas stayed for more than two years in the beginning of the 17th century and propagated Sikhism before being recalled by the Sixth Master, Guru Har Gobind Ji. It is also connected with Sikhism - related to Udasi and Nirmala activities. According to Bhai Kahn Singh Nabha, Guru Granth Sahib was installed in at least 40 places belonging to Udasi and Nirmala saints, but now the numbers have come down to very few.

Sasaram

Legend has it that Guru Tegh Bahadur, while going to Patna from Banares, stayed at Sasaram for 21 days. He was accompanied by his mother Nanaki, wife Mata Gujri, Baba Kirpal (brother of Mata Gujari) along with Sadh-Sangat.

One day Baba Phaagu Mal came to know about Guru Ji's impending arrival at Sasaram. He constructed a huge gate so that Guru Ji's entourage would not have any problem entering the house. Guru Ji mounted on his horse entered Baba Phaagu Mal's Kutiya, and called out to him, "Chachaji, I have come". Tears of love and respect started rolling down from the old man's eyes. Thousands of devotees came and participated in the Satsang of Guru Ji. Local zamindars donated valuables as 'daswand', as a tribute to Guru Ji and Sangat. According to folklore, Guru Ji got one 'Beri' from the house of an old lady (devotee, who didn't have anything else to offer due to her poverty). Guru Ji blessed her and accepted gladly and sowed it in front of Chachaji's cottage. Till now, this 350-year-old historical 'Beri' exists as a huge tree. It is said that during the visit of Guru Ji to Sasaram, the number of Sikhs swelled.

It is also said that Guru Ji composed 'Baani' in Raag Jaijawanti at this spot. [Raag Jaijawanti Mahalla 9, "*Raam Simar Raam Simar, Eehe Tere Karaj Hai.....*"]

This part of Gurbani is in clear Bhojpuri dialect. Thus, it not only concretizes the logic of a Sikh era of literature, through the emergence of this faith and the awakening of peripheral lives, but also records the multiplicity of texts that emerged with the travelling of the great Gurus across the country.

Gaya

Gaya is a very important town for the Hindus and the Buddhists. Gaya bears witness to the legacy of more than two thousand years of history of our country's great religious traditions set by famous philosophers and scholars. Guru Nanak visited this place while coming from Banaras on the way to Patna after preaching the people to achieve true liberation by lighting the lamp of knowledge of the divine Name.

Later on, the Ninth Master, Guru Tegh Bahadur, visited this place before the rainy season in 1666. There is a Gurdwara which was earlier controlled by the Udasis, known as Gurdwara Deo Ghat or Nanak-Shahi to commemorate the famous visit of both the Gurus to this place. The building of this shrine was built by a very prominent Udasi Pracharak, Baba Almast. He was the head preacher of one of the main Dhuan established by Baba Gurdita, the eldest son of the Sixth Master, Sri Guru Hargobind Ji, successor of Baba Sri Chand, the founder of the Udasi order. Some early and renowned Khatri settlers helped it to function and a trust was created for this purpose. Sikhs across the globe including our supreme bodies should look into this matter with the seriousness it deserves. For the Sikhs this place is very important historically, because after Takht Sri Harmandir Ji, Patna Sahib, about a hundred kilometers from Gaya, is the next most sacred seat of Sikhism. The Gaya Gurdwara is now in a very dilapidated condition with no maintenance, and even without any caretaker.

Rajgir

This old historical town is placed in the laps of the colourful hills. This is a very important place from the religious point of view. Rajgir is associated with Jainism, Hinduism and Buddhism from the very early times. It is famous for hot springs. Just opposite to the famous hot spring, called Brahmkund, there is Gurdwara and the reservoir of cold water is called 'Sheetal-kund' or 'Nanak-kund'. This place is said to have been visited by Guru Nanak and Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji.



- End of Part I
[To be continued]



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Guru Tegh Bahadur: The Universal Shield

COL. DR. DALVINDER SINGH GREWAL*

The period of later Mughals in India was of great turmoil and turbulence. The religious fanaticism of Aurangzeb had started a reign of terror over the Hindus. As the physical subjugation of the Indians to the foreign invaders was complete; the psychological subjugation was the next step which had started with Islamisation of India. This process was adopted by Aurangzeb with greater zeal without caring for the feelings of the poor public. He wanted India to be Dar-ul-Islam. In April 1669, he had 'ordered the governors of all provinces to demolish all the schools and temples of the infidels and strongly put down their teachings and religious practices.' (*Maasar-I-Alamgiri*, 81). 'Every idol-house built during the last 10-12 years, whether with brick or clay, should be demolished without delay, and the Governor should not allow the cursed Hindus and the despicable infidels to repair their old temples.' (*Muraqa'at-I-Abul-Hassan*, 202), He appointed officers in all subdivisions and the cities to the Empire to enforce the order on destruction of Hindu temples this being their main duty. The number of the officers was so large that a director-general was appointed to guide their activity. Side by side with destruction of temples, Aurangzeb was busy converting Hindus to Islam. (*Sarkar J.N., History of Aurangzeb*, 267).

No one could afford to speak out as his mouth was sure to be shut and tongue cut off. None dared to point out to the atrocities of the invaders, thus these activities of conversions of Hindus into Islam not only went on unchecked but increased progressively. This algebraic increase was sure to convert the entire Hindu community of India into Islam within the next few years. This was certainly a cause of worry for those who loved Hinduism from their core of hearts. However, there was no one to lead them. It was this situation in which Guru Tegh Bahadur (1621-1675) not only offered to give voice to the feelings of the Hindus but also accepted to lead them to stop this carnage and conversion regime.

Born on 1 April 1621 in Punjab, at Amritsar, in Guru ke Mahal, to Mata Nanaki, Tegh Bahadur was more inclined to meditation from the very childhood. However when desired by his father of Sri Guru Hargobind, the sixth Guru of Sikhs, he took up sword and showed

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his mental in the battlefield of Kartarpur and mowed down the Mughal attackers. He was declared Ninth Guru of Sikhs at Baba Bakala in March 1665.

This declaration has an interesting background. Bhai Makhan Shah Lubana (Vanjara), a trader had a serious problem when his ship got stuck in sea. He prayed to the Guru that if his ship got saved with Guru's blessings he would offer 1000/- Gold coins to the Guru. Just before, on 30 March 1664, Guru Harkishen had left for heavenly abode and had uttered the word 'Baba Bakale' indicating that his successor was his grand elder in lineage stationed at Bakala. As Makhan Shah's ship got saved, he reached Bakala to pray and pay the prayed amount to the Guru. Tegh Bahadur was not declared Guru till then and number of Guru Harkishan's relatives claimed themselves as Guru. Not sure as to who was Guru, he offered a gold coin each in front all one by one. As he offered the gold coin to TeghBahadur, pat came the question, "Is your ship safe?" Makhan Shah was quick to realise. **He declared openly, "Guru ladho re" (The guru has been found.)** Tegh Bahadur was then installed as the Ninth Guru by the sangat.

Guru Tegh Bahadur, established village Makhawal and named it *Chakk Nanaki* after his mother, on the land purchased from Rani Champa, widow of Raja Dip Chand of Bilaspur State, who had high regard for the Guru Sahib. There after he left for preaching the mission of Guru Nanak in Malwa and later moved to UP, Bihar, Bengal and Assam. He found the people being oppressed and victimised by the ruling class. He raised voice against the oppression through his writings and declared: *ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ . "Bhai kahu ko det(i) nah(i), nah(i) bhai manat aan(i)".* "Neither I cause fear unto others nor I accept any fear." [SGGS:1427]

He travelled wide to convey the true message of the Lord. Wherever he went, he instilled confidence in the Public. He also helped in stopping the expansion of the Mughals and subjugation of Hindus by helping Raja Ram Singh the General of Aurangzeb and the King of Assam to come to terms and enter into a respectable treaty where the latter's kingdom was not to be disturbed. He had provided a leading light to the flickering hope of the Indians who found a hope in him as their saviour at this crucial juncture when either their annihilation or conversion was sure.

Iftikhar Khan (1671-1675), the Governor of Kashmir (Bamzai, PNK, History of Kashmir, p.371) had taken the orders of Aurangzeb very seriously. He tortured the

pundits of Kashmir and attempted forcible conversion. The leading pundits of Kashmir under Pundit Kirpa Ram of Mutton, came to Guru Tegh Bahadur with a delegation of 16 Pandits, explaining him the terrorised conversions of Hindus by the ruler of Kashmir. (*Bhatt Wahi Multani Sindhi, Khata Balaonton ka*). He knew that the Islamic zealots will not stop until some special event occurred. Some great personality has to raise his voice against this and accept his own sacrifice as a result. Finding no one else ready to take on this cause where martyrdom was sure, Guru Tegh Bahadur took upon himself to raise the voice against oppressive conversions. He asked the *pandits* to convey to the Kashmir ruler that if their Guru Tegh Bahadur accepted Islam they would also accept conversion.

The message was conveyed and the expected reaction came too fast. Mughals saw this as a fit case for fast conversion. The Emperor sent an order from Hassan Abdal for the arrest of Guru Tegh Bahadur. (*Ghulam Hussain, Siar-ul-Mutakharin*). Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested along with his three devoted disciples, Bhai Diala, Bhai Mati Dass and Bhai Sati Dass. and brought them to Delhi for enforcing conversion so that all the Kashmiris could convert thereafter.

The courtiers and Qazis tried to convince first and then lure them into conversion. But soon they found that this task of conversion was not so easy as they had thought. The King was regularly informed of the events. Having failed to convince or lure they thought of force and if need be the ultimate elimination. Execution of the Guru would have sent a wrong message to the public, not to yield to the oppression. This in turn would have turned the waves of forcible conversion in the opposite direction. Guru Tegh Bahadur's execution was considered as the last choice. They thought it a better way to torture his disciples and create fear in Guru's mind so that he ultimately yielded to their will.

There started the most horrifying tale of torture and the great story of the resistance and fearlessness. The words "*Bhai kahu ko det(i) nah(i), nah(i) bhai manat aan(i)*" was actually converted into deeds of great valour and the greatest martyrs of India did what is now being written in golden letters of Indian history. Neither the Guru nor his disciples bowed before the torture. The order, "put Tegh Bahadur to sword and display parts of his body on the gates of the city" was soon received from Aurangzeb. (*Ghulam Hussain, Siar-ul-Mutakharin*).

This history was created on 10 November 1675. First disciple of Guru Tegh Bahadur to be put to the death by torture was Bhai Mati Dass. Bhai Mati Dass was not only the

most devoted Sikh of the Guru, but was also the Diwan and the Home-Minister (Gharbari) of the Guru.[1] He was to be put to death in front of the Guru by sawing his body into two parts. Bhai Mati Dass was bound between two planks and sawing started from his head. Bhai Mati Dass remained totally calm and started reciting Gurbani facing the Guru, His recitation continued through the entire process of sawing. Even when his body was cut into two pieces the name of the Lord could be heard emerging out of both the parts. (ardho ardh chirai su dara. *Paryo pirthi par hoi dofara. Donhun tan te Japuji padai. Horat sabh ke achraj badhai.*) [2] According to Metcalffe "It is said that even when his body was divided in two, he continued to repeat the great morning-prayer of the Sikhs, and only became silent when its recitation was complete." [3]

Guru Tegh Bahadur was being asked continuously either to accept Islam to save himself and his disciples or to show any miracle, which the Guru refused blandly. There was silence of graves around at such a fearful occurrence but this silence was broken by Bhai Diala's forceful words. He said, "It is not that you have got a guiltless Sikh sawed into two pieces, but you have sawed the Baber's dynasty." [4]

Hearing this Qazi and other courtiers became ferocious. Bhai Diala was caught hold, tied with ropes and thrown into the boiling water. Bhai Diala kept cool and recited the Gurbani till he did not breathe his last. The Guru was again asked for accepting Islam or to show miracle which the guru again refused. Then came the turn of Bhai Sati Dass brother of Bhai Mati Dass. Cotton was tied around him and he was put to fire. Bhai Mati Dass too continued with the morning prayer till his part was detached.

The Qazi Abul Wahab Bohra and the courtiers were extremely irritated at the kind of peace on the faces of the martyrs; there being no sign of fear on anyone's face and not caring for punishment but for the recitation of gurbani. Bohra repeatedly asked Guru Tegh Bahadur to accept Islam or show miracle but Guru said, "I can go into the ground but I will not leave my religion. ***Guru Tegh Bahadur bolia, Dhar payeeye dharam na chhodiye.***" The irritated Qazi ordered the Guru to be put to sword. Guru Tegh Bahadur was thus achieved martyrdom saving Hinduism. Guru Tegh Bahadur's body could not be displayed on the gates as it was taken away by his disciples. Lakhi Shah Vanjara along with other disciples brought a convoy of carts on the route where Guru's body was lying and in the dust, he picked up the body from the ground and brought it to his house. Immediately he put the body on pyre inside his house and put his house on fire. Guru's head was taken away by Bhai Jaita to Anandpur Sahib.

Guru Tegh Bahadur's sacrifice for saving religion is unparalleled. Guru Gobind Singh later wrote in his verses, "*tilak janjhu rakha prabh taka. Keeno badu kalu mahi saka. Dharam het saka jin kia. Sees dia par sirar na diya.* (He was the protector of *Tilak* (vermilion) and *janjhu* (sacred thread). He did a great deed in this *Kalyug*. He laid down his life for the religion. He gave his life but did not back away from the word." Soon this news spread around and the true Muslims felt this was a great atrocity done on a religious man. The forcible conversions were soon to stop, as Guru Gobind Singh raised a formidable force of Sikhs to save the nation. Thus Guru Tegh Bahadur became the shield of Hinduism at a crucial juncture. A writer rightly observed, 'If Guru Tegh Bahadur had not laid his life, 'every Indian would have been circumcised.'



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- 1] Kahan Singh Nabha Bhai, Gurshabad Ratnakar Mahan Kosh, Patiala, 1930, p.
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“Ik Onkar Satgur Prasad”

There is only one God. Only the grace of true Guru can guide us to Him

Guru Granth Sahib is forever true:

- ◆ For it contains the message of one God
- ◆ It is for all times Guru of the Sikhs
- ◆ It was compiled by Guru Arjun, the fifth Guru
- ◆ It contains verses by six Gurus as well as saints like, Kabir, Farid, Namdev, Trilochan, Ravidas, Ramanand, Dhana, Jaidev and Surdas.
- ◆ The verses are set in 31 musical raagas (melodies)
- ◆ Most verses are easy to understand
- ◆ God has been addressed by different names, like Ishwar Gobind, Ram, Rahim, Karim and Allah.

Ninth Guru's 400th Birth Anniversary 'Celebration Committee Meeting'

S. Tarlochan Singh, former MP (Rajya Sabha) and Chairman Minority Commission, has always been in the forefront, as a parliamentarian and as a speaker in major world forums, to raise his voice and to work with zeal for the betterment of the Sikh community as a whole. To achieve the socio-political and religious objectives of the community he has - time to time - formulated visionary plans and have raised the issues of the community at different stages across the world.

In a Zoom meeting held on 8th April 2021, in Delhi, between Prime Minister, Narendra Modi and a delegation of the prominent Sikhs personalities/ others with regard to the Celebration of the 400th Birth Anniversary of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, he made a powerful presentation about the overall image of the community.

Taking advantage of this significant meeting he thoughtfully brought out, along with many other important issues, the Historic facts about the First War of Independence. He sought to set the historical records straight that the First war of Independence, the year 1857, as claimed by the Govt. of India, should be re-written in the context of the socio-religious revolution brought by Guru Nanak in the 15th century who confronted BABAR and later the first sovereign rule in Punjab [1710 to 1716] by Banda Bahadur Singh under the Holy guidance of Guru Gobind Singh Ji, which eventually resulted the end of 500 years of Mughal's rule from India.

This is perhaps the first time that a leader from the community, in free India, had exhibited the courage (and wisdom) to put on discussion such an important historical facts for the consideration of the country's Prime Minister to re-write the history in correct perspectives.

We look forward to a positive outcome from the concerned authorities

Note: *This year, on 26th Jan 2021, Sardar Tarlochan Singh has been awarded the prestigious Padma Bhusan for his outstanding services to the Nation and to the Community. "*

Ed - The Sikh Review

*Email: partapsingh011@gmail.com

Synopsis of S. Tarlochan Singh's Speech in the 'ZOOM' meeting

Dear Sir,

We are all thankful to our Hon'ble Prime Minister Sh. Narendra Modi ji for presiding over the 'Celebration Committee Meeting' and we are so impressed to listen to his devotional comments and observation. I am thankful to Sh. Amit Shah, Union Home Minister, for providing me an opportunity to express my views.

I am submitting the points which I raised in the above meeting. My opening remarks were praising the action taken by the Government on two previous *Shatabdis* of Guru Gobind Singh Ji and Guru Nanak Dev Ji.

1) There are two DOHAS written by Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji which have already been adopted by Central Government.

a) Relating to *Shakti* (Military Strength) "*Baal hua bandhan Chute*"...

b) and the second neither to have fear from anyone and nor to frighten anyone "*Bhai kahu ko det nahi na bhai manat aan*" These two DOHAS are to be popularising through all government agencies.

2) I also raised a strong objection to the written history of India's freedom movement. Previous Governments have never mentioned freedom from 500 years rule of invaders. They adopted the beginning of the freedom struggle from the year 857. Whereas, Guru Nanak was the first who revolted against invarient of Babar and was arrested and remained in Jail. The writings of Guru Nanak about atrocities of Babar is recorded in the Sikh scripture 'Sri Guru Granth Sahib' and should be studied by all. The 230 years of Sikh Guru period was a continues battle for freedom from Mughal rule. *Zafarnama* in Persian written by Guru Gobind Singh to Emperor Aurangzeb should be part of our educational curriculum. Government should get the history properly recorded and accept the Sikh Gurus' invaluable contribution in the Independence of the country from the tyrannical rules of the Mughals. I mentioned the statements of Dr. Radha Krishan and Sh. Mohan Bhagwat supporting the above facts.

3) In Delhi, there are dozen of monuments which are tourist attractions and all these belong to the Mughal rulers. The Indian capital is glorifying the invaders. I demand that a Martyr's museum be setup where we should have complete story of Martyrdom of Guru Arjun Dev, Guru Tegh Bahadur & Guru Gobind Singh's family. Baba Banda Singh Bahadur and his family with 746 Soldier who were butchered in Chandani Chowk Area in 1716 AD.

4) As per historical record a group of Kashmiri Pandits led by Padit Kirpa Ram met Guru Tegh Bahadur Sahib on 25 May 1675 at Shri Anandpur Sahib. It was there that

Guru announced that he will go to Delhi to fight for the religious freedom and challenge Aurangzeb who was forcibly converting Hindus to Islam. I demand that all Kashmiri Pandits of J&K should hold a function on May 25, 2021 to pay homage to the sacrifice of Guru for their cause. Government should announce a suitable memorial at Jammu.

5) In Chandani Chowk Government should put-up memorial Minars for Bhai Sati Das, Bhai Mati Das and Bhai Dayala who were martyred there, and also in the memory of Bhai Jaita Ji who lifted the head of Guru Tegh Bahadur and Bhai Lakhi Shah who cremated the headless body in his home - where Gurdwara Rakabganj stood witness to the supreme sacrifice of the great Guru.

6) A bravery award should be established in the name of Bhai Jaita and Bhai Lakhi Shah for their exemplary courage to lift Guru's body in spite of strict vigilance of the Mughal Army.

7) At Agra there is a Gurdwara where Guru Tegh Bahadur was arrested and taken to Delhi. This road Agra to Delhi be named as Guru Tegh Bahadur Marg having artistic descriptions on the life of Guru at various places.

8) A central University be named after the great Guru having full department for research on Guru's life and Gurbani.

9) The travels of Guru in India be published with special emphasis of his visit to Assam to settle the dispute among Ahom Tribes.

10) The scriptures of Guru be translated in all Indian languages and Guru's life should be included in the syllabus of Schools, Universities and Institutions.

I request that Government may adopt all these humble proposals, in the honour of supreme sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji and issue necessary instructions accordingly.

□

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Supreme Sacrifice of Guru Tegh Bahadur

*PRINCIPAL S. S. PRINCE**

Pandit Kirpa Ram of Kashmir led a delegation,
To apprise Guru Tegh Bahadur of their miserable plight
Hence Anandpur in Punjab was their destination
Where their helplessness could be set right.

They told the Guru about the aim of cruel king,
Who was bent upon changing their religious belief
This idea of conversion a panic bell did ring,
They sought from Guru some consolation and relief.

Guru was an apostle of love, peace and compassion,
He calmly listened to their touching woeful tale
He wanted to pull them out of pain and depression
Which was an unimaginable, heart-rending scale.

“A greatman’s sacrifice, your faith can save”,
Said Guru with a smile rippling on his face,
“Who can be greater than thou art so brave”
Quoth Guru’s son Gobind, who was present at the place.

The Guru advised the Pandits to return to their root.
And tell Aurangzeb what Guru had daringly desired,
If he succeeds to convert him, they will all follow suit
This assurance consoled the victims, to Guru they admired.

Reaching back Kashmir they conveyed verdict of Guru
This enraged the ruthless ruler who only wanted blood
Guru’s offer was frank, fearless and true,
How could the bigot ruler face the furious flood.

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Guru went to Delhi obeying ruler's command,
 Guru would embrace Islam, it was ruler's whim,
 Guru and his disciples daringly defied his demand
 Guru was not afraid of death, death was afraid of him

The Guru was savior of universal human right
 For his courage and conviction he paid heavy price,
 The Guru was beheaded, it was indeed a tragic sight,
 The world remembers till today Guru's supreme sacrifice.



**The Seeker's Path: An Interpretation of
 Guru Nanak's Japji, by Sohan Singh**

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The above landmark publications brought out by Orient Longman at the initiative of the Sikh Cultural Centre, Kolkata, are **available at a special discounted price (incl. postal & handling charges) to the readers of *The Sikh Review* in India/abroad.**

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- Publisher, ***The Sikh Review***

Penang proposes museum dedicated to the Sikh community

PENANG has suggested that a first of its kind museum for the Sikh community be established there to complement what is believed to be the country's oldest Sikh Gurdwara temple at 120-years-old.

State executive councillor Jagdeep Singh Deo who mooted the concept, said the museum would attract the Sikh and the broader community of Punjabis the world over, and it ties in with the present conservation and restoration efforts of what is presumed to be Malaysia's oldest Gurdwara place of worship on Jalan Gurdwara.

Speaking to journalists in conjunction with the annual Vaisakhi Sikh New Year celebrations in Penang, Jagdeep said that the museum will showcase the historical achievements and deeds of the community.

"Like what the Sultan of Perak (Sultan Nazrin Muizzuddin Shah) had decreed that the Sikhs made up only 2.5% of the population, but they had always stood out and made their presence known in contributions."

Jagdeep said that he will discuss with the state government on where best to site the facility, which will also add colour to Penang's rich and diverse background of people.

Earlier, Jagdeep revealed that the restoration of the Sikh temple here is expected to take up to another two years due to the delicate construction material and variations of bricks and mortar in its structure.

The cost is now close to RM5 million – up from an initial RM1.4 million – due to the impact from Covid-19, with delicate mapping and the high costs involved in restoring the place to its original splendour.

Jagdeep revealed that the temple restoration committee chairman is Datuk Mahinder Singh Dulku, the secretary is Datuk Malkit Singh, while the patron is his mother Datin Seri Gurmit Kaur Deo.

The committee has also engaged the help of conservationist Gwynn Jenkins to assist in applying for the temple to be gazetted as a National Heritage Site as it would help in the long-term conservation and preservation of it.

Jenkins said that she has found that the temple here has a dome based on the hundreds of old receipts she had uncovered in her task to restore the structure.

There is also the fact that this building has zero-carbon emissions and it was constructed with the help of Sikh soldiers who were among the earliest military detachments based at the heritage treasure of Fort Cornwallis. – The Vibes, April 18, 2021.

Courtesy: Ian McIntyre [www.thevibes.com]

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

4 Sikhs dead in US shootout

Four Sikhs, including three women, were among eight people killed in a mass shooting at a FedEx facility in Indianapolis in Indiana. This was the worst attack on Indian-origin people in the US since the Oak Creek Gurdwara shooting in Wisconsin on August 5, 2012.

The victims were identified as Amarjeet Johal (66), Jaswinder Kaur (64), Amarjit Sekhon (48), Jaswinder Singh (68), Karlie Smith, 19; John Weisert, 74; Matthew R. Alexander, 32; and Samaria Blackwell, 19. Five Indian-Americans were injured, one of them seriously with a bullet in the eye. US flag at half-mast on federal buildings.

This is the worst attack on Sikh community members in the US since Oak Creek Gurdwara shooting of 2012

While the FBI claimed the accused possessed no 'racially motivated ideology', rights groups think otherwise

About 90 per cent of the workers at FedEx delivery service facility said to be mostly from the Sikh community

The gunman -- 19-year-old Brandon Scott Hole -- was a former employee, who allegedly died by suicide after the shooting on Thursday night. He was last employed by FedEx in 2020.

Courtesy: The Tribune

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

[The SIKH REVIEW sends its deepest condolences to the families of victims of the mass shooting in Indianapolis and joins in the prayers for the peace of the departed souls. Ed. TSR]

*The Sikh Review wishes its readers
A Very Happy Gurburb*



**400th Birth Anniversary
of Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji**



Title of the Books : • Understanding Nitnem: Jup, Sodar, and Sohela. 308 pages.
 • Understanding Sidh Goshat. 271 pages. • Understanding Anand. 162 pages.
 • Understanding Asa Di Vaar. 289 pages. • The Hijacking of Sikhi. 420 pages.

Authored by : Karminder Singh Dhillon, PhD.

The books are available as a complete set for purchase from
<https://sikhivicharforum.org/store/>

A Review by Prof Emeritus Harbans Lal, Ph.D.; D.Litt.*

Any review of the new books that translate the verses of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) must describe what existing vacuum the new book would fill.

An in-depth look at the most Gurbani translations till recently gives rise to several concerns, issues, and approaches. The most translations render Guru Nanak's messages as regurgitations of the missives already in vogue in India's religious traditions and teachings. Most old concepts mentioned in Gurbani remained intact in most translations to date. The examples are:—mantras, heavens, hell, lives after death, transmigration of the soul, angels of death, *dharma raj*, place of ancestors, *dasam duar*, and dozens of other concepts, stories, and rituals concocted by clerics or priests.

However, a few scholars did realize that if Gurbani merely meant to regurgitate what was already in the existing religious texts, then what was the real need of Guru's spending years of work to compose Gurbani? Or what was the absolute necessity for Gurus to take birth or their promoting the path of *Sikhi*?

Some recent scholars started looking for the answers to the above questions. They believed in Sikhi and Guru Nanak's uniqueness and that of his successors and thus the message of the Gurbani hymns or Sabd. They realized that there are definite approaches, methods, and manners in which Guru's teachings must be unique and so understood. Their research, then, discovered the newness in Gurbani.

**Emeritus Professor and Chairman, Dept of Pharmacology & Neuroscience, U. North Texas Health Science Center. President, Academy of Guru Granth Studies. [Email: jajji2050@gmail.com]*

The purpose of this book review is to write a tribute to one of today's true Gurbani translation luminaries, Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon. Dr. Dhillon writes and regularly speaks on Gurbani matters. He is currently the Joint Editor of The Sikh Bulletin and a Board member of Sikhi Vichar Forum. This review of mine is a composite review; the book titles are explicit about what is specified in each book.

Dr. Dhillon took the challenge of Gurbani translation with several highly desired and revolutionary tributes. He recently published five books that translate certain sections of SGGS. They are *Understanding Nitnem: Jup, Sodar, and Sohela; understanding Sidh Goshat; Understanding Anand; Under-standing Asa Di Vaar; and The Hijacking of Sikhi.*

Gurbani translations by Karminder will open your eyes to the principles, the methods, the processes, and the intricacies of translating the Gurbani into language that communicates clearly, accurately, and powerfully to readers of many countries and many cultures. It will deepen your understanding of and appreciation for the priceless gift of Guru's written Word. The books are in English - a language of the great majority of the current world population and indeed the educated Sikhs.

Dr. Dillon employed the following approaches extensively to accomplish the translations under review.

Gurbani Grammar

I remember my student days when I used to listen to Bhai Jodh Singh's lectures and Prof. Sahib Singh in Khalsa College Amritsar that harped on the use of Gurbani grammar while translating Gurbani. It is their motivation that I took college courses in Sanskrit Grammar, which is extensively used in Gurbani.

Even when Prof Sahib Singh published his ten volumes of Gurbani translation, the English translations were not yet based on the same guidelines. The proof on hand is Dr. Sant Singh's translation, which most diligently derived his translation from the then existing non-grammar based English translations of SGGS. Not knowing Gurbani Grammar himself, he could not take advantage of the newer approaches.

From Literal to Spiritual

Dr. Dhillon successfully crossed over from the literal translation to the spiritual translation in his recent books. He argues that the spirituality of Gurbani does not have a language intrinsic and inherent to it. The objective and focus of the messages of Gurbani are to bring about a realization of the Creator within the human conscience. The language of our daily usage may not have the required vocabulary for the core Gurmat concepts, for its process, outcome, and objectives. This objective, then, is the challenge that Dr. Dhillon accepted.

He crossed over from the literal and to the domain of spiritual messages. It necessitated a substantial intellectual leap from the little pond's banks to the other side where the vibrant

and intended spiritual messages lied. Such is a task that is arduous and challenging, but the composers of Gurbani were aware of those difficulties. Thus, they provided necessary milestones and signboards along our spiritual journeys within Gurbani to ensure we get to the envisioned messages' intended destinations. Our task is to look for them to assist us in our understanding. Dr. Dhillon successfully took that into account.

The Rahao Principle

The second principle that Karminder used in his translations of Gurbani is the Rahao Principle. The basic premise here is that the Rahao verse or its equivalent is critical in interpreting or attempting to understand Gurbani.

Translated literally, Rahao means pause. But such a translation begs the question: Pause for what purpose? The attempted answer is to pause to allow contemplation and research to get to the central message of the Sabd and transform the literal message into the spiritual message. Rahao also may serve as the title of the subject of the SABD.

First Person Interpretation

Most Gurbani is composed in first-person terms and is thus, in essence, a narrative of the experiences, processes, choices, consequences, and outcomes for the writers themselves. Guru Nanak walked the journey of realization and gave us the path of Sikhi. Thus, Gurbani translations must be interpreted in the terms, the messages referring to me as the reader, for me as a Sikh of Gurbani, and not for someone out there. Our failure to grasp this principle has led to defective translations.

Using Gurbani to Translate Gurbani

The SGGS is a voluminous text. Its subject matter is devoted to revolutionizing humankind's spiritual quest. Such a volume will require the extensive use of spiritual concepts, beliefs, idioms, metaphors, etc., that were already within the use and within the psyche of spiritual seekers of the time. They had to be used but explicitly with new meanings and understanding to fit the new spiritual paradigms of Sikhi and Gurmat. Thus, the redefining of the existing concept must be made available within the voluminous text that is the SGGS, not outside. Our gurus so did it. Thus, the spirituality of the SGGS was not permitted to revert to the old meanings of the concepts and beliefs. Dr. Dhillon strictly adhered to translating Gurbani with the definitions and concepts as detailed and expounded within SGGS.

Recommendation

These remarkable volumes under review marshal the understanding of the Gurus' teachings. These books shed so much light on Gurbani translation in so accessible a fashion. This compendium gives scholars, students, and interested readers an unprecedented grasp for a new respect for the diligence, knowledge, and care required to produce a meaningful, beneficial and accurate translation. Gurbani and the Gurbani researchers' readers will find a rich and hitherto unavailable treasure of knowledge about their interests.

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