

## **Current Sikh Issues-Sikh historical perspective**

### **chapter 4-3**

#### **Sikh concept of Guru Granth and Guru Panth needs to be revived**

The first and foremost current Sikh issue is that the concept of Guru Granth and Guru Panth should be revived without any further delay, which stands overlooked by the Sikhs for the last several decades, disabling the Sikhs to take the decisions on panthic issues. This concept was created by Guru Gobind Singh at the final stage of the completion of Sikh religion.

Guru Gobind Singh, tenth Sikh Guru completed the final phase of Sikh religion, which had been founded by Guru Nanak Dev and developed by the second to ninth Sikh Gurus. All the Sikh Gurus had the same Divine Spirit and their Divine teachings are to be obeyed by the Sikhs without any reservations.

Two very important injunctions were issued by the tenth Sikh Guru to complete the final phase of Sikh religion, which made Sikh religion to be an independent world religion, to be so soon included in the list of the first five religions of the world and the Sikhs to be a separate nation, by setting up its own Sikh empire throughout north

India, with whom Britishers had to come in to agreement, after establishing their rule in rest of India, not to interfere in the territories of each other.

The first was to prescribe the Sikh initiation of Amrit-khande de pahul and Sikh emblems and the Sikh code of conduct in that respect, on Baisakhi of 1699, which provided the separate Sikh identity and the procedure to become and act as Sikhs. The tenth Sikh Guru prepared the Amrit himself and administered it to panj piaras-five beloved ones, with five Sikh emblems, and their names suffixed with Singhs, who were prepared for the supreme sacrifices and who were made the Sikh leaders. Then the Guru himself took the Amrit from them in that very manner and gave the authority to five such Sikhs to administer it to other Sikhs. History records that over twenty thousand Sikhs took the Amrit on that day, which is more than sufficient to establish that it was made mandatory for all the Sikhs to become and act as Sikhs.

The second was to make Guru Granth Sahib as the eternal Sikh Guru in perpetuity, being the Divine Spirit of Sikh Gurus and to always remain under its Divine guidance. The tenth Guru just before his heavenly abode made Guru Granth Sahib as his successor, instead of any other living Guru, and commanded the Sikhs that Sikh panth was established as directed by Akal purakh and they should accept Guru Granth Sahib as their Guru and take its Divine guidance with purity of heart.

The concept of Guru Granth and Guru panth was provided by the tenth Guru, that all the Sikhs having taken the Sikh initiation and observing the uniform Sikh code of conduct as prescribed by him, called Guru panth, should take the Sikh panth decisions themselves through their own representatives in the presence of and under the guidance of Guru Granth Sahib, which should be acceptable to all the Sikhs and binding upon them. This was the only way to keep the entire Sikh panth united.

In the post ten Sikh Guru's period, the Sikhs remained in struggle against the mughal empire and Afgan invaders, for their sovereignty and freedom of religion, for about a century and they followed the Sikh concept of Guru Granth and Guru Panth. They took Sikh initiation and observed Sikh emblems and code of conduct as prescribed. They took the Sikh panth decisions through their representatives acting as Guru panth, in the presence of and under the Divine guidance of Guru Granth Sahib, mostly at Akal Takhat Sahib, which remained acceptable to them and binding upon them. They established their Sikh empire by ousting the mighty mughals and Afgans.

Even in Singh Sabha movement and Akali movement Sikhs had been taking some decisions on Sikh panthic issues through their representatives. The decision to set up Shiromani Gurdawara Parbandhik Committee in 1920 for the management of Sikh Gurdawaras was taken at Akal Takhat by the representatives of the Sikhs as Guru panth, for whom the pre-requisite was the Sikh initiation and strict observance of Sikh code of conduct. They were successful to get the enactment of Sikh Gurdawaras act 1925 from British administration.

However this concept of Guru Granth and Guru Panth stands over looked for several decades, which has incapacitated the Sikh to take decisions over the Sikh panth issues. which needs to be revived without any further delay. Sikhs are now spread over through out the world and their representative body to act as Guru Panth needs to be formed, so as to involve them all for such decisions on Sikh issues.

Some persons hold the views that Sgpc should be elected by the Sikhs world over. It can not be so done under law relating to it. Sgpc is elected under the provisions of Sikh Gurdawaras act 1925 and only those Sikhs who reside in punjab can contest the elections to be its members and become the voters as well to elect them. It is

for the management of historical Sikh Gurdawaras in punjab. In 1947 west punjab went to pakistan and so its jurisdiction was curtailed to east punjab which is in India. The Sikhs world over have to form their representative organization, being the need of the day, which should consist of the Sikhs of high standard of commitment and of honesty, integrity, capability and dedication to Sikh religion and Sikh cause.

The concept of Guru Granth-Guru panth, as ordained by Guru Gobind Singh, be revived, the over looking, of which for a long time has incapacitated the Sikhs to take the correct and the collective decisions as to the Sikh panthic affairs. It has been reiterated in Sikh rehat maryada as well, that all the decisions affecting the Sikh panth should be taken by the panthic committee and the accredited representatives of the panth, form a meeting of the panth, and their decision is called Gurmatta, to be taken in the presence and Divine guidance of Guru Granth Sahib, on the subjects which are calculated to clarify and support the fundamental principles of Sikh religion, such as safeguarding the position of Sikh Gurus and the holy Guru Granth Sahib, the purity of the ritual and the panthic organization. The decisions of the panth are to be inviolable and binding on all Sikhs.

These should not violate the Divine teachings of Sikh Gurus and the Divine thought of Guru Granth Sahib and the established Sikh traditions of Sikh religion, which are binding upon Sikhs. The Sikh panthic decisions were taken in this manner at Akal Takhat by the Sikhs during the Sikh struggle in 18th century and they became victorious to wipe out the mughals and Afgan invaders and to establish Sikh empire.

Sikhs are now spread world over and there is now the need of a world Sikh representation of Sikhs, may be named as, Sharomani Sikh panth council, as the Sikh interests are the same every where. It can effectively solve the problems of the Sikhs world over. It can preach Sikh religion in the world, with the co-ordination of all the Sikhs and Sikh organizations, for which Sikhs are being accused not to have discharged their duty to bring the message of Sikh religion, of love and peace, to the notice of the world, needed today. It can make the Sikhs to live in Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life, from which they are now drifting away, particularly the Sikh younger generation. It can take the decisions on Sikh affairs unitedly as the involvement of all the Sikh is a must to make the decisions to be acceptable to all Sikhs, in accordance with the Sikh concept of Guru Granth-Guru panth, which are being brought under disputes, day by day. SGPC, is the creation of Sikh Gurdawaras act 1925, to manage historical Sikh Gurdawaras in punjab, and to preach Sikh religion. It has to function under the provisions of that law. No one can contest its election, who is not a resident of punjab, under the act. Its representation in the world panthic council will be very effective, being the main Sikh representative body, to do the constructive work for the solution of the Sikh problems and to preach Sikh religion in Sikhs and in the world.

Akali Dal, which was the exclusive punjab Sikh political party, has now virtually become the punjab regional political party, with the Hindus and muslims, as its members, to give it a secular out look, to meet the requirements of election laws, to contest the assembly and parliamentary elections .It may do so with the Sikh support, as the political Sikh power is only concerned with punjab, where the Sikhs are in majority and that too with the tinge of secularism, as the election laws demand.

Thus there has to be a world Sikh representative panthic council ,which will be of great help also to the political Sikh power in punjab, to deal with their issues with the needed courage, capability and honesty of purpose, to achieve Sikh religious and political aims. Delhi Gurdawaras management committee is for historical Gurdawaras at Delhi. Similarly, are the management committees of Takhats, Hazur Sahib and patna Sahib for those Takhts. These Sikh organizations should take active part in setting up of the world Sikh panth council, without any fear psychosis, which will be of no interference in their functions.

The blue print of the world Sikh panth council, at present, may be, to take the representatives of the organizations, elected by the Sikhs, just as SGPC, management committees of, Delhi Sikh Gurdawaras, Sikh Takhats at Hazoor Sahib, Patna Sahib, other traditional Sikh organizations, world Sikh Gurdawaras management committees, to be divided in, 6 or 7 zones, world over, to represent on the basis of population and any other such Sikh organization elected by the Sikhs. The number of representatives of these organizations may be fixed according to the number of Sikhs, they represent. These representatives may co-opt the distinguished Sikhs known for their services to Sikh panth as fixed, world over, to make it truly representative. This panthic representative council of the Sikhs world over should hold its, periodic meetings, Sikh congregations and other functions at Akal Takhat , Amritsar and have its secretariate in that complex, while some sub offices in other coutries as deemed proper. The Akal Takhat Jathedar, should be its spokesman and to ensure the compliance of its decisions, to be nominated by it. The authority of Akal Takhat, which is now being eroded, will be restored and its sanctity maintained. It may make the rules and regulations for the appointment, qualifications and powers of jathedar Akal Takhat and of the jathedars of other Sikh Takhats for their smooth working without any overlapping of their functions interse without any dispute between them, which surfaced in the recent past, being not in Sikh interests.

A commission consisting of some retired Sikh judges and Sikh scholars, may be set up to sort out the procedural matters and to draft the constitution and to accordingly select the world Sikh panth committee, after taking the views of the Sikhs and Sikh organisations world over, to make it acceptable to them.

It is then only that the current Sikh issues can be decided by the Sikhs through their representatives in the right Sikh perspective in accordance with established Sikh tradition, to be binding on all the Sikhs.