

Current Sikh Issues-Sikh Historical Perspective

Chapter 4 -4

Sikh religion - independent revealed religion - not part of Hinduism - Sikhs are separate nation

Some of the Hindu fundamentalists make the false allegations that Sikhs are part of Hinduism and whosoever lives in India is Hindu. False misrepresentations are also made that Khalsa was the armed wing of Hindu society formed to fight the Mughals. These statements are totally false, irresponsible and provocative and rather counterproductive to create unnecessary conflict between Hindus and Sikhs and the followers of other religions, besides being unconstitutional.

History is the witness to the facts that Hindu hill chiefs, in connivance with the Mughals, were in battles against the Khalsa, while Hindus from the entire Indian territories in the British army, took part in the battles against Khalsa. Sikhs had formed their Sikh empire in the entire north India, with which the British had entered in to agreement, not to interfere in to the territories of each other, after the entire Hindu society had submitted to them. Still to say that Khalsa was armed wing of Hindu society is to cross all the limits of falsehood. However it can be said that most of the Sikhs were converts from Hindus.

Sikh religion is an independent revealed religion and is included in the list of first five religions of the world and

not a part of Hinduism. It has its own Divine thought, doctrines and religious practices, most of which are in contradiction to that of Hinduism. Sikhs form a separate nation and they had their own empire.

Still some Hindu fundamentalists and their groups misrepresent Sikh religion and Sikhs by false assertions,

just as---

1. Sikhs are part of Hinduism and not a separate distinct community
2. Sikh Gurus had preached that Sikhs were part of Hindus
3. The recitation of Gurbani from the holy Dasam Granth at Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib, two of the Takhts of Sikhs every day has proved beyond doubt that Sikhs are part of Hindus
4. Sikhs had asked the census authorities in British regime in the first census of the country to record them as "Hindus and Sikhs" both, but still they were recorded as Sikhs alone as British had created a chasm between Hindus and Sikhs for their vested interest
5. Hindu dharma is a way of life that should be accepted by every one residing in India and then the followers of other religions can worship their religions at their religious places, and that there are no minorities in India as all are sons of the soil as Hindus.

These assertions to misrepresent Sikhs as Hindus are not new. Max Arthur Macauliff, author of, "The Sikh religion", published by the oxford university, in 1909 had denounced it, stating at page xxiii of his preface that=97

" A movement to declare the Sikhs as Hindus, in direct opposition to the teachings of the Gurus, is wide spread and of long duration."

Swami Daya Nand, and Arya Samaj, were active in this regard in the 19th century while RSS and its sub groups in the 20th century. These misrepresentations have been repeated time and again by making false assertions according to the situation prevailing but stopping for some time when Sikhs untidily reacted to have felt offended to it. In fact some Hindu fundamentalists are very crazy to declare every religion of India to be a

part of Hinduism and every nation to be a sect of Hindus. It had its reaction.

Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha wrote a book to rebut it, "Sikhs are not Hindus-Hum Hindu Nahin", while Sikh scholars like Giani Ditt Singh and others challenged the Swami to hold open debates, describing such assertions to be false and emphasizing that Sikh religion is an independent revealed religion, nothing to do with

Hinduism or any other religion. The Arya Samaj leader left Punjab not to come back, realizing that he had no material in support of his assertions and that Sikhs felt offended over such propaganda.

Sikhs had to rebut the misrepresentations, whenever made against them, as otherwise there can be no need to

make negative assertions that one religion is not part of any other religion, which is itself obvious, as no religion can ever be a part of any other religion. All the religions have their own doctrines, ideologies and religious practices with some similarities and dissimilarities as well. Every one must show respect and regard for all the

religions and the Divine teachings of Sikh religion lay particular stress on this aspect.

Hindu dharma is being wrongly equated with India, which is a country. A country and a religion or dharma (to be termed as a way of life) are totally distinct and separate entities and work all together in different domains. A country is bounded by territorial limits with its jurisdiction in those very boundaries. The people of the country set up and operate the secular and democratic regime, which has been adopted in India and all the

civilized countries of the world. It is the government of the people, by the people, and for the people of that country.

The religion or dharma of some of the people in whatever majority they might be is all together irrelevant. All the religions in that country enjoy equal status and power irrespective of their numerical strength and full freedom of faith and worship in accordance with their religion. All the persons living in that country are its citizens, governed by the laws of the country. The minorities have to be given special protection to safeguard

their rights to insure the smooth and just working of the system and unity of the people of the country. On the

other hand, the religion has got no boundaries and limits. Any person, any where in any country may follow his own religion and way of life prescribed by his religion with full freedom. Every religion and nation is represented in each country in the world what ever its numerical strength might be; of course every one has to abide by the laws of the country in which they are living. Millions of Hindus are living outside India, practically in every country throughout the world and following their own religion. Millions of Sikhs are living outside India also and following their religion. Similarly millions of Christians and Muslims and Jews and people of other religions are living in various parts of the world and following their religion.

There is no restriction on freedom of practicing one's religion in any civilized country in the world. In all the advanced secular countries in the world there is no sense of domination by the majority religion over others.

All the religions enjoy equal rights without which unity of people is impossible. Whenever such thoughts of communal aggression have entered the minds of the majority community of a country it has led to the downfall of that country, as it failed to maintain the unity of its people.

History of India itself is a witness to the fact that when the majority by the sense of its domination and superiority created a rift in its people, it leads to the country suffering in slavery for centuries. Lessons from the past must be learnt. India boasts to be the biggest democracy in the world but it stills lags behind on unity of people due to communal strife and fundamentalist approach of some of the majority community sections in the name of Hindu Dharma. Even some national secular parties while denouncing the communalism of the Hindu

fundamentalists, themselves played such a card behind the curtain to get Hindu vote bank. To briefly discuss the assertions mentioned above;

1. Sikhs are part of Hinduism and not a separate distinct community

It is absolutely incorrect that Sikhs are part of Hinduism and not a separate distinct community. Sikh religion is a separate religion like all other religions of the world, while Sikhs are a separate nation, and, Sikhs have already asserted this in clear terms. It is for the Sikhs alone to take a decision in Sikh affairs and no outsider has got any right to meddle in the Sikh affairs. How are totally false assertions by some Hindu fundamentalists

that Khalsa was the armed wing of Hindu society formed to fight the Mughals. Every one who has studied the Sikh religion deeply has come to the conclusion that Sikh religion is a separate religion as practically all the basic aspects of Sikhism and Hinduism are contradictory. The doctrines, the ideology, religious practices and way of life of Sikhism are totally different from Hinduism.

Sikhism out rightly rejects the concepts of multiple Gods and Goddesses and their incarnations. In Sikhism there is only one God-formless, unborn, self-illuminated, and only His Name to be meditated.

Sikhism out rightly rejects the caste and creed discriminations of Hinduism between man and man.

Sikhism advocates the human race as one, with equality of mankind and individual dignity. Sikhism rejects all the religious scriptures of Hinduism-Vedas, Shastras and Purans etc., and proclaims that these

neither preach nor reach God and that they only speak of the three qualities of Maya, Mamon, and Materialism, leading the man to blind deeds and not to emancipation in the fourth stage of grace of God.

Sikhism totally rejects all the rites and rituals of Hinduism, the pilgrims to Hindu holy places, the ritual baths in

rivers, giving the gracious feasts to Brahmins, making offering to the fire, performing penance and worship, enduring bodily pain, self torture, yogic symbolism and all other such methodologies followed in Hinduism to wipe out sins and get salvation.

Sikhism presents its own distinct divine thought that the meditation of the name of God wipes out the impurities that flourish in the mind.

Sikhism rejects the outside exercises to get emancipation as futile and the wearing of the sacred thread; forehead marks, cutting the hair and such other symbolisms. Instead it prescribes its own procedure to become a Sikh by taking Amrit of the double edged sword, possessing its distinct five emblems, including unshorn hair, turban on the head, and a Kirpan on the body and presents a totally unique physical appearance of a Sikh. Thus how can Sikhism be said to be a part of Hinduism in view of the above contradictions.

Sikhism has been placed in the list of first five main religions of the world on the basis of analytical study of religious philosophy and statistical numerical strength of their followers. The five religions in the order of their

numerical strength are Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism.

Sikhs are a separate nation with all the ingredients of a nation- a separate religion, separate Gurus, separate

scripture the Guru Granth Sahib to be revered as the eternal Guru of Sikhs containing the word of God, separate identity to be attained by Amrit of the Double Edged Sword. Sikhs have separate political aspirations, a separate way of life and a separate culture.

Sikhs had their own political power and a sovereign Sikh State in North India with borders adjoining Afghanistan and China. The government was named Sarkar-e-Khalsa and the Currency was Nanak Shahi in the name of Guru Nanak the founder of Sikh religion, the army was mainly of baptized Sikhs under the leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Sikhs had established their empire by ousting the Mogul rulers of India and the Afghan invaders after a struggle of about a century. So powerful was the Sikh state in so vast an area

that the British Empire had to enter in to an agreement with the Sikh State to respect its sovereignty. Sikhs were considered to be a mighty nation by each and everyone.

JD Cunningham, the eminent British historian stated, "Sikhs are wholly different from other Indians in religious

faith and worldly aspirations. Guru Gobind Singh formed such a nation which elevated every one politically and

religiously after doing away with class system" {History of Sikhs, London, 1849}

Charles Elliot, an eminent British scholar stated, "Sikh religion is a religion of special interest to mankind, since it has created not only a political society but also customs so distinctive, that those who possess it rank in common esteem as a separate race. Guru Gobind Singh's ordinances were successful in creating a nation" {Hinduism and Buddhism, London 1921 Vol II page 267}

Dorothy Fields, an eminent scholar stated, "Of no other religion (than Sikh religion) it can be said that it has made a nation in so short a time. {Religion of Sikhs, London 1914 page 343}

Prof. Puran Singh, an eminent Sikh scholar stated, "Guru Gobind Singh cut the moorings of Sikh nation from its

racial past and a nation wholly modern in spirit and mind sprang up. It was a nation that was set on voyaging into the ocean of its future. The Hindu and the Muslim past was abolished for the Sikh, "I am neither Muslim nor Hindu" said the Sikh" {Spirit of the Sikh}

The Russian official newspaper 'Pervade' commented, "In this world there are two communities who possess all the ingredients of being a nation but have no home land of their own. These communities are the Jews and the Sikhs." The Jews got their homeland but unfortunately Sikhs have no homeland of their own so far." {Autobiography of Master Tara Singh, page 197} On March 25th 1981, SGPC, the elected representative body

of Sikhs under Sikh Gurudwara Act 1925 passed the unanimous resolution that 'Sikhs are a Nation'. On November 5th 1981, Sharomani Akali Dal political party of the Sikhs passed a unanimous resolution that 'Sikhs are a nation'. If still someone dares to assert that Sikhs are a sect of Hindus, instead of a separate nation, then there can be no limit to misrepresentations.

2. Sikh Gurus had preached that Sikhs were part of Hindus. It is altogether false that Sikh Gurus preached that Sikhs were part of Hindus. Rather to the contrary Sikh Gurus declared themselves and the Sikhs to be not part of Hindus. Guru Nanak Dev, founder of Sikh religion in the very beginning proclaimed, "there is no Hindu and there is no Musalman". The divine revelations of the Guru are beyond these religions. Guru Nanak declared that whatever God the almighty commands him to reveal he reveals, and so was declared by the other Sikh Gurus in their divine hymns that they say nothing of their own but what God commands them to say. The Sikh Gurus were direct messengers of God to enlighten and uplift humanity and had nothing to do with Hinduism. Guru Arjan Dev, the 5th Guru declared "I am neither a Hindu nor a Musalman; my body belongs to the God almighty".

Sikh Gurus totally rejected the main Gods of Hinduism and incarnation of these Gods. Guru Nanak proclaimed "Brahma indulged in ego and he understood not the God" {GGS 224},

And, "Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are debase afflicted, as is afflicted the whole world; they only who realize God and reflect on Gurus' word are emancipated" {GGS 1127}.

Guru Nanak rejected and condemned the mode of worship of Hindus- "The Hindus have forgotten the God and are going the wrong way; as Narod instructed, so they worship the idols; they are blind, dumb,

and the ignorant without any understanding, take stones and worship them; these stones, when they themselves sink how can

they afloat them across" {GGS 506}; And,

" The Hindus bath, wash and worship stones, without being imbued with God; they remain filthy" {GGS 904}

Sikh Gurus rejected all the scriptures of Hinduism and said that they do not preach or reach the reality of God. Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism proclaimed- "Vedas speak of and interpret God but know not his limit; Six are the creeds of Shastras but no one merges in God through them" {GGS 148}, And,

"Eighteen Purans and four Vedas do not know God's secrets" {GGS 355}, And,

"Shastras and Vedas keep man bound to three modes of materialism, and he does the blind deeds" {GGS 1126}.

Guru Amar Das, the third Sikh Guru rejected the religious scriptures of Hindus remarking "Hindus recite Simirties, Shastras and Vedas but deluded by doubt they understand not the truth and reality; without

following the divine thought of Gurbani, man understands not reality and obtains no peace, misery after misery he earns." {GGS 113}

Guru Arjan Dev, 5th Sikh Guru rejected the Hindu Scriptures "There are many Samirites and Shastras which I

have thoroughly studied; but none of them reaches or preaches the invaluable name of God" {Sukhmani Sahib}

Guru Gobind Singh, 10th Sikh guru, rejected all the Hindu Gods and their incarnations and the religious scriptures- "Ram, Rahim, Puran and Quran have put several thoughts but I accept none of them; Samirities, Shastras and Vedas describe several secrets but I recognize none of them" {Sawayas} These divine proclamations of Sikh Gurus obviously establish that they had no belief in Hinduism and that their religion is independent of Hinduism. Sikh Gurus had out rightly rejected the Hindu Gods and their incarnations, the Hindu religious scriptures, the Hindu rites and rituals, and the Hindu caste and creed system. Sikh Gurus rather presented their independent and separate universally revealed religion for the entire mankind of the present age, which satisfies the developed scientific and juristic mind of today.

The eminent American scholar of world religion, HL Bradshaw rightly commented, "The Sikh faith is the universal religion of the present space age. The Sikh religion is truly the answer to the problems of the modern

man" {Sikhism-Sikh Review, Calcutta}.

The eminent British Scholar Max Arthur McAuliffe stated, "It would be difficult to point to a religion of greater originality or to a more comprehensive ethical system than Sikh religion"

Duncan Greenles, the eminent scholar stated, "Sikhism is no disguised Hindu sect. It is distinct religion like other great religions of the world." {Gospel of Guru Granth Sahib, page 216}

Dorothy Field, the eminent scholar, stated, "Sikhism is a new world separate religion and not reformed sect of

Hinduism." {Religion of Sikhs, page 34}

3. The recitation of Gurbani from the holy Dasam Granth at Patna Sahib and Hazoor Sahib, two of the Takhts of Sikhs every day has proved beyond doubt that Sikhs are part of Hindus. There is no logic at all in the assertion that the recitation of Gurbani, every day, from the Dasam Granth at Patna

Sahib and Hazoor Sahib, two of the Takhts of the Sikhs, has proved beyond doubt that Sikhs are part of Hindus. It is a ridiculous assumption as from the very beginning Sikhs have not accepted all the compositions of the Dasam Granth to be of Guru Gobind Singh. It contains some compositions of legends of Hinduism and translations of Markande Puran, which are in total contradiction to Sikh thought and the divine hymns of Guru Gobind Singh himself. These compositions are of some Hindu poets, which were interpolated by Brahmanical cult in Dasam Granth to create confusion. Guru Gobind Singh had admittedly not compiled Dasam Granth. It was brought forth after over Two decades of the heavenly abode of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708 Ad. It is not known with certainty that from whose custody these compositions were obtained. Sikhs were in armed conflict with Moguls at that period and there was thus enough time for such interpolations by the adversaries of Sikhism. Chandi Charitar and Chandi Diwar are the translations of Chapters 81-94 of Markande Puran written in Sanskrit by a Hindu Rishi Markande in praise of Goddess Durga. This falsifies the attribution of such

compositions to Guru Gobind Singh. Some other compositions are in total contradiction to ideology of Sikhism and of Guru Gobind Singh.

For such interpolations there could be the brahmanical brain behind it as Guru Gobind Singh had warned the Sikhs to always keep their separate identity and not to follow the brahmanical rites and

rituals. These Sanskrit legends were mostly known to the Brahmin cult. Sikhism had hurt the self-proclaimed supremacy of this class the most and brought to an end the exploitation of the poor innocent masses by this Hindu priestly class in the name of religion. Guru Gobind Singh ordained the Sikhs to accept Guru Granth Sahib as the perpetual eternal Guru of Sikhs, which contains the revealed word of God. It completely rejects the Gods and Goddess of Hinduism and their reincarnations and the worship of Idols. Guru Granth Sahib preaches the Name of God (one and only one, formless, unborn and self illuminated) to be imbued in ones mind. If any composition violates these fundamentals of Sikhism and praises any Hindu God, Goddess or their incarnation it can never be of any Sikh Guru or even of any true follower of Sikhism. Guru Granth Sahib is such a true guide that it is not at all difficult to come to the true conclusion in this respect. The compositions relating to the praise of Goddess Durga, Ram Chandra or Sri Krishna or any other Hindu God can never be attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. American scholar Geoffrey Parinder who authored the book 'World Religions' could find no difficulty to conclude at page 259- "The Dasam Granth is an eighteenth century collection of miscellaneous works attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. The

attribution appears to be accurate in the case of few compositions, but the bulk of the collection, consisting of Hindu legends and tales of the wiles of women can not possibly have been his work." Several other scholars of Sikh religion have also come to the same conclusion. Guru Gobind Singh in his

divine hymns totally rejected all Hindu Gods, scriptures, rites and rituals and the Hindu Caste System. Instead Guru Gobind Singh created a separate Sikh identity to complete the formation of Sikh nation. The Sikh nation was made so independent and powerful that it established a sovereign Sikh empire through out north India. It is a self-deception to take advantage of the dishonest interpolation of the Hindu legends in the Dasam Granth. The real compositions of the great Guru rather prove to the otherwise without any shadow of doubt that Sikh religion is an independent separate religion with its distinct identity, religious practices and unique doctrines and ideology. In fact it is the great Guru's prescribed

identity and the code of conduct that always stood as a rock to fail the futile exercises by some Hindu fundamentalists to falsely misrepresent Sikhs to be part of Hindus time and again.

4. Sikhs had asked the census authorities in British regime in the first census of the country to record them as "Hindus and Sikhs" both, but still they were recorded as Sikhs alone as British had created a chasm between Hindus and Sikhs for their vested interests. It is also a false statement that Sikhs had asked the census authorities in British regime to record them as Sikhs and Hindus both but the British to create a chasm between the Hindus and Sikhs for their vested interests recorded them as Sikhs alone. There could be no reason for Sikhs to record themselves as Sikhs and Hindus both as a person cannot have two religions. Sikhs never considered themselves as part of Hinduism and so they correctly recorded themselves as Sikhs. Most of the field recorders of this census were Hindus with the British officers only at the top. If indeed the British officers had instructed the recorders to list the Sikhs as only Sikhs and not as Hindus and Sikhs, as proposed by the RSS chief, then this would have created an opposition by the Hindu leaders and a denial by the recorders to follow such illegal instructions against their own religion. British had much more hostility towards the Sikhs than the Hindus. They had fought fierce battles against Sikhs with the help of Hindus of India, which the British had occupied much earlier, to occupy Punjab and the sovereign state of Sikhs. Hindu Brahmins and Dogmas who had been appointed to the highest posts in the Sikh State by Maharaja Ranjit Singh betrayed the Sikh State and conspired with the British in the struggle between Sikhs and British. Thus British had no soft corner for the Sikhs as to confer the separate identity on them in the census recorded if the Sikhs had not asserted it. This assertion stands totally falsified from the fact that in the 19th century Sikhs unanimously declared that Sikhs are not part of Hindus. Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, a respected Sikh leader published his book 'Hum Hindu Nahin' in response to the false propaganda of Arya Samaj and its leader Dayanand that Sikhs are part of Hindus. Also, Giani Ditt Singh and other Sikh leaders raised their strong voice in speeches and published articles that Sikhs are not Hindus. Dayanand silently left Punjab not to return after the realization that Sikhs are unanimously against his statements and were offended by them. Thus how could it be ever

thought that Sikhs had requested the British census authorities to record them as Sikhs and Hindus? Sikhs rather asserted with determination to record them as Sikhs alone, which they are. This statement is obviously illogical and ridiculous. History records that Sikhs had made supreme sacrifices to assert their separate identity with

full determination from the very beginning up till now; in the Mugul rule, in the British rule and in the Republic of India for which they can never reconcile. 5. Hindu dharma should be accepted as a way of life by every one who lives in India and then they were free to worship at their religious places and there

are no minorities in India, being sons of the soil as Hindus. Every religion has got its own doctrines, ideology and religious practices, which prescribe its own way of life. This assertion is altogether ridiculous, illogical, and unconstitutional, that Hindu Dharma should be accepted as a way of life by every one living in India and then the followers of other religions are free to worship at their religious places. For the people living in India who are not followers of the Hindu faith, how can it be made a condition precedent to accept Hindu Dharma as way of life, to worship at their individual religious places? Everyone living in India has the full freedom of practicing his religious faith, which is his fundamental

right. Freedom of religion is the most basic human right respected as a fundamental right in the constitution of India and other countries of the world, as secularism and democracy is the widely accepted setup of the present day world. In the bygone days of autocratic rules even, history records that when a regime interfered with the freedom of religion of its people, that regime faced its downfall soon. Such interference in freedom of religion in India is highly objectionable besides being illegal and unconstitutional.

India has a democratic and secular set up. The preamble of the constitution of India states: "We the people of India, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a sovereign, socialist, secular, democratic republic and to secure to all of its citizens:- Justice- social, economical and political Liberty- of thought, expression, belief, faith and

worship Equality- of status, of opportunity And to promote among them all The above-mentioned assertion out rightly violates the constitution of India, which secures the liberty of belief, faith and worship for every citizen of India. Everyone has the right to follow his religious way of life and Hindu Dharma is relevant to Hindus alone while irrelevant for others. The assertion that there are no religious minorities in India as they all are sons of the soil and that every one living in India is Hindu, is on the face of it also, illogical and unconstitutional. A country, in which there is a majority of a certain community, would have the other communities to be the minorities. In India Hindus form the overwhelming majority and so other communities i.e.: Muslims, Sikhs, Christians etc. are the minorities. The constitution of India recognizes the minorities in India who have been given the fundamental rights. Article 29 of the constitution of India deals with - 'Protection of interests of minorities', while Article 30 deals with 'Rights of minorities to establish and administer educational institutions.