

Current Sikh Issues-Sikh Historical Perspective

Chapter 4-9

All intoxicants including alcohol forbidden in Sikh religion-Not to be consumed by Sikhs-

All the Intoxicants are totally forbidden in Sikh religion including alcohol. Some Sikhs mistakenly think that perhaps only tobacco smoking is prohibited as it is one of the violations-Kurahaits. But all the intoxicants are forbidden in Sikhism.

There are Divine Hymns in Guru Granth Sahib which prohibit alcoholic drinks.

"Alcohol even if prepared from Ganga Jal (which was considered to be pure in Hinduism) is a bad thing to drink which deprives a human mind of its control and causes depression." GG 1293

"One should drink the nectar of the Name of God and not the useless Alcohol." GG 360. And

"One should strictly avoid alcohol by drinking which only loses one's control of faculties, forgets God. Alcoholics would be punished in God's court."

As to smoking of tobacco, which is a violation-kuraihat-

"People smoke and keep chewing betel nuts for pleasure and thus waste their lives. They do not remember God and the angel of death punishes them." GG 726

"Kuttha meat (Hala) tobacco, Alcohol, charas, ganja, tarri, topi, --- --should never be consumed by Sikhs." (Rehat Name Bhai Daya Singh)

In spite of these clear dictums of Sikh religion prohibiting the use of all the intoxicants, as contained in Guru Granth Sahib, still some of the Sikhs commit the violation of these Divine teachings. The consumption of alcohol in Sikhs is rather alarming, particularly in Punjab, the homeland of Sikhs, which has defamed them the most, where it should have been totally prohibited. Instead the state Govts. including those who claim to represent the Sikh interests are driving huge revenues from its sale there, defaming the Sikhs and the state itself.

In Sikh rehat maryada, which is binding on all the Sikhs, it has been provided that a Sikh, who uses any narcotic drug or intoxicant (opium, wine, poppy hemp, cocaine etc.) is guilty of Sikh violation, liable to Sikh traditional punishment.

In Sikh gurdawaras act, 1925, legal recognition has been given to such prohibition and a Sikh who takes alcoholic drinks is debarred from even becoming a voter for SGPC elections. Similar is the provision in Delhi Sikh Gurdawaras act, 1971.

It is thus obvious that Sikh religion strictly forbids the use of every intoxicant to which Sikh code of conduct provides the punishment, while Sikh Gurdawara acts debar such a Sikh from the voting rights even. Every Sikh must understand that if he takes any such intoxicant, then he not only defames him and rather defames Sikh religion as well.

No doubt it exhibits the lack of preaching of the real requirements of Sikh religion and of knowledge of its prohibitions to Sikhs even, to which the Sikh institutions and Sikh leaders who are duty bound to do it, can not escape their responsibility. But the ultimate responsibility lies on the defaulter itself, for the defiance of the dictums of his religion, to which he is duty bound to follow. Every one has the right to follow the religion of his choice, but once he decides to be a follower of a certain religion, then he has to obey the dictums of that religion.

There is no denying the fact that intoxicants are a real danger to health, leading to several crimes, besides the spiritual retardation. Suffice it to say that no Sikh should indulge in the use of any of the intoxicants including alcoholic drinks so as to commit no violation of the dictums of his religion and the norms of his own health and other moral values.