

Current Sikh Issues-Sikh Historical Perspective

chapter 4-13

Most Sikh educational institutions are no more Sikh oriented-need immediate reformation-

Sikh educational institutions-khalsa schools and then khalsa colleges were set up from the time of Singh Sabha movement in the later 19th century, mostly in Punjab, from where this movement started and where most of the Sikhs were residing. Later on such educational institutions were also set up in other parts of India according to the spread of Sikh population. The main purpose of these Sikh educational institutions was to impart education of Sikh religion and Sikh history along with other general education to make the Sikh students to be well educated and also to enable them to follow Sikh way of life and Sikh code of conduct. These Sikh schools and colleges did a lot in this regard. However that zeal and spirit is fading away now for the last few decades and most of these Sikh schools and colleges are becoming ineffective to achieve the purpose for which these were set up and rather are no more Sikh oriented. The managements and the teachers of most of these educational institutions are even no more true Sikhs committed to Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life, what to say of the students.

The obvious consequences that the Sikh students are drifting away from Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life, having been totally deprived of the study of Sikh religion and history and of the role models of teachers as Sikhs. Even overwhelming majority of students shorn their hairs, forgotten the turbans, and lost their Sikh identity altogether, besides becoming drug addicts, totally forbidden in Sikh religion. Immediate reformation in these Sikh educational institutions to make them Sikh oriented is the need of the day to achieve the objectives for which these were set up to ensure the Sikh students to live in Sikh way of life and Sikh code of conduct by teaching them the higher values of their religion and to practise in their practical life by becoming and acting as Sikhs. In the beginning all the Sikh students were given Sikh initiation of Amrit-khande de pahul and made to observe Sikh code of conduct, in their school career and they lived by it in their lives. It should be the goal now as well. To achieve it the managements of these institutions will have to be of the true Sikhs, living in Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life, known for honesty, integrity and capability. The teachers in these schools should also be of this calibre, committed to Sikh way of life and to be the role models for students as true Sikhs. More Sikh schools and colleges may now be needed of this pattern.

Due to the lack of preaching of Sikh religion in Sikhs even and of becoming the Sikh schools and colleges non Sikh oriented, the younger Sikh generation is drifting away from Sikh way of life and Sikh initiation and Sikh code of conduct, which needs very effective measures to bring them back to Sikh code of conduct. Sikh Gurdawara schools should be set up to teach the Sikh students Sikh religion and history in their spare school time, in the evenings and week ends as most of the Sikh students are not studying in Sikh schools. There are Gurdawaras everywhere in the areas where Sikhs reside. Those should be utilised for this purpose. SGPC should look after this project in Punjab and the areas of its jurisdiction. It should earmark the funds for this purpose in their budget and supervise it with the honesty of purpose. Other Sikh Gurdawara managements should

take up this project in their areas. In this way all the younger Sikh generation can be involved to teach them Sikh religion and history as to enable them to live in Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life. It is the duty of the present day Sikhs to teach their Religion and History of their nation to the younger Sikh generation, particularly who are living abroad as they hardly get any opportunity to study it in their educational career in schools and colleges; but they must have the knowledge of their own religion and the nation, so as to inspire them to live in the Sikh way of life and to be proud of it. The eminent scholars of world religions and History particularly of the West, who had the occasion to study Sikh religion and history are unanimous to comment that Sikhism is the religion of the present space age and capable to solve the problems of the modern man and that it is a matter of pride and privilege to understand and follow its higher values in all its spiritual, moral and ethical spheres, with which mankind has to deal with. These scholars have blamed the Sikhs for not discharging their solemn duty to bring the values of Sikh religion to the notice of the entire world. The Sikh youth living in different countries of the world should discharge their duty in their countries in this regard in this century, but they have to themselves learn their religion and history first and feel proud to be Sikhs. They must establish them in the respectable professions, which they are successfully doing but they must live in the Sikh way of life, which is now well known and respected throughout the world, for its sense of honesty, hard labor, and religious devotion. It would bring them more honor and acceptability, if they remain true to their religion and its higher values. Similarly, it would be beneficial for all the Sikhs to live in the Sikh way of life who are not strictly adhering to the Sikh code of conduct and to all others who would like to be acquainted with Sikh religion and history which is a must for every seeker of truth.

The Sikhs and particularly the younger Sikh generation should earnestly understand their religion and act upon its higher values by living in the Sikh code of conduct and Sikh way of life and then bringing it to the notice of the world, which would enhance their own esteem. M. A. Macauliff, the eminent British scholar rightly remarked,

"All persons of discrimination acquainted with the Sikhs, set a high value of them, but it appears that knowledge throughout the world of the excellence of their religion would enhance even the present regard with which they are entertained.

" (The Sikh Religion, by Macauliff, VII Preface and page XI Preface)

and

"Not less important will be the result of Sikh teachings on the minds of religious Europe and America. Already the Khalsa, has achieved a worldwide renown in matter of bravery. In the matter of religion too, the name of the Khalsa will shine resplendently when the glorious deeds of their ancestors in the moral and religious world are made known far and wide.

"What more pride can be for the Sikhs of their religion? What more aspiration can be for the Sikhs to understand, act upon and preach their religion throughout the world? These high tributes to their religion are by the very eminent British scholar and historian, author of a prestigious book, "The Sikh religion," published by Oxford University, London; The American eminent scholar of religions, H.L. Bradshaw, has gone to the extent of stating:

"The older faiths were good in their day, but that day is now past and we are living in the dispensation of Guru Nanak (founder of Sikh religion)." (Sikhism-Sikh Review-Calcutta)

These tributes are by a highly reputed Christian priest. The Sikh religion is the new world religion, and so commented to be the religion of the present age. It was founded in the 15th century by Guru Nanak Dev, who had been sent as a Prophet by God the Almighty with His Divine Message of truth, Name of God and pious deeds for the entire humanity to uplift and protect it. It is thus a religion of the present age, capable to solve the problems of the modern age. If still Sikhs themselves do not understand and act upon it and nor ensure it for their own younger generation, then they will be held responsible for the unforgivable fault, in the Sikh history and more so who pose them as Sikh leaders-religious and political, that they utterly failed to discharge their duties in this respect.