

Current Sikh Issues-Sikh Historical Perspective

(part 4-19)

The elements inimical to Sikhs led by some of the Brahmanical cult who were exposed the most in Sikhism for the exploitation of the innocent masses and creating division in the mankind on caste and creed systems, started from the very beginning to misrepresent the Sikh religion and Sikh historical traditions by making altogether false assertions. It is still continuing. Imaginary stories were concocted and got written from some stray poets in several books in contradiction to the established Sikh traditions. Sikhs were in conflict with the Mughal rule in guerilla warfare and so it became easy to create such misrepresentations and interpolations. Initially the British administration after the annexation of Sikh empire also extended its hidden support of the falsification of Sikh traditions and historical events. Most of such fabricated books were kept hidden in the beginning to escape the notice of Sikhs. Sikhs were propagated to be a sect of Hindus and Sikhism to be a part of Hinduism on altogether false assertions to assimilate it. In the last quarter of 18th century Arya Samaj and its leader Daya Nand became active with such a false propaganda, but Sikhs jointly rebuked them. Dayan Nand left Punjab after a few months. But still some literature came in to existence, though kept secret.

As pointed out above, first of all some immature writers without deep study of Sikh religion and history made stray remarks that Sikhism is the offshoot of Islam, some that Sikhism is an offshoot of Hinduism, while some that Sikhism is a mixture of Hinduism and Islam. However the eminent scholars who did the deep study of Sikhism rejected these views holding that Sikhism is a separate and independent world religion like the other religions of the world. Now Sikh religion is in the list of five main world religions.

Some Christian missionaries like Trump and Macleod made false and dishonest misrepresentations against Sikh religion on the crucial and admitted historical perspectives. Those were also rejected by the eminent scholars of Sikh religion. Later on Macleod mostly withdrew his controversial and unwarranted misrepresentations, but it left a trait in North America where his group remained active for a few decades inclusive of a few Ph.D. degree seekers in Sikh garb and other writings with the correct approach were not available to the new scholars of Sikhism. Some Muslim writers, who had the sympathy with their co-religionist tyrants of Mughal empire played down the real historical facts but they also could never be successful to damage the great religion of Sikhs, even with their falsities. But some other writers, inclusive of European and Western scholars did quote them and were adversely affected particularly when they had no other books available to contradict and falsify those writers. A British writer, author of 'The short history of Sikhs' Macleod, 1812 on page 54 remarked:

"These (historical events of Sikhs and their Gurus) are related by the Mohammedan authors who detract from all the pretensions of this enemy of their faith and name."

But still Malcolm made misrepresentations against Sikh historical perspectives on several aspects, perhaps influenced by some other writers and the wrong facts given by them against Sikhs. As regards the misrepresentations made by Gulam Hussain in 'Siyar-al Mutakherni' Max Arther Macauliff, author of his prestigious book 'The Sikh Religion' remarked: "The Mohammedan author of the 'Siyar-ul-Mutaakharni' gave the utterly incompatible version with the whole tenor of Guru Teg Bahadur's life and writings and can not be accepted as even an approach to History. The Siyar-ul-Mutaakharin' contains many obvious misstatements regarding the other Gurus also.' Regarding Mohsin Fani's 'Dabistan', Khushwant Singh recorded in 'A History of Sikh' page 63:"It is unfortunately wrong even about some of the important dates and the sequence of events."

Similarly in 'Ibratnama' of All-ud-din, in Tawarikh Punjab of ButaShah and several other writings misrepresentations have been made against Sikh historical events.

Some Hindu writers also did not lag behind to make false assertions and misrepresentations against Sikh Religion and history, particularly under the instigation of some Brahmanical agents. Even interpolations were made in the Divine writings of the tenth Guru in Dasam Granth in praises of Hindu legends obviously against his divine thoughts of Sikhism.

In Gur Bilas Patshahi Chheevin' written by some 'Sohan without giving his identity also misrepresentations were made using deceitful name of the Sikh Martyr Mani Singh in the attempt to create superstitions and myths, which were rejected outrightly in Sikhism. Several writers have been misled by it. Arya Samaj leader

Swami Daya Nand made misrepresentations and false assertion in his book "Satyarth Parkash" even against Guru Nanak, founder of Sikhism in an attempt to hold the superiority of Vedas. Attempts were made by him and his aids and other Hindu fundamentalists that Sikhism is a part of Hinduism. Several writers made altogether false and untenable assertions.

In that anxiety the references of names of some Hindu incarnations were misrepresented that Sikh Gurus followed them, as these are referred to in Divine Sikh Hymns, though such like references are also to the Muslims names as Allah, Rahim etc. In Sikhism it has been very clearly clarified that 'Truth' is only the name of God, though persons call Him in different names. Several other misrepresentations against Sikhism have been made with imaginary theories.

What to say of such spurious material or fabricated books even now, false and fabricated accounts of some Sikh traditions and historical facts are being given in the school books published by NCERT, a government authority to publish those books as the text books for school students. Even the Sikh Divine Gurus have not been spared from the concocted false misrepresentations.

Dr. Naval Tiyogi, an eminent historian and scholar who is working on a research project entitled 'history of the Indigenous People of India' stated in his press statement as published in Tribune, Nov 3, 2003:

"Modern historians are distorting history according to the Brahmanical thoughts. "

The worst sufferers are the Sikhs in this regard. It is a matter of great concern that in spite of all such conspiratorial fabrications against Sikh religion and history, Sikhs as a whole nation, have not taken, serious notice of such glaring false misrepresentation, what to say of exposing and falsifying them and to stop such conspiratorial attempts against their religion and history. It is rather surprising that Sikhs tolerated not, the injustice to others but acted not to the injustice to their own religion and history. A few individual efforts can never be sufficient.

The Sikhs, as a whole must give the serious thought and take the desired action to save them and their religion from such onslaughts which are of far reaching consequences. They must become knowledgeable in such matters. Their leaders (political and religious) must be competent to understand such conspiracies and take the immediate necessary action to falsify all such misrepresentations with honesty of purpose, though action should have been taken to nip the evil in the bud.

The Sikhs, first of all, have to identify all the misrepresentations and fabrications and false assertions, having been made up till now, as most of them having not come to the surface as yet, though being made from the very inception against their religion, history and established traditions. The Sikh scholars of capability and integrity have to be entrusted this duty.

After all these misrepresentations have been identified, then these are to be falsified on facts and reality one by one. It can be done by those scholars of Sikhism. The unanimous corrections of the wrongs done in the past to Sikh religion, history and traditions have to be ensured leaving no scope to any further conspiracies. After it is so done, then the publications have to be made to apprise all of the Sikhs and others to outrightly reject the previous misrepresentations and fabrications. It would serve as a warning for the future to those who were involved in falsifications of Sikh record. The legal action available against the wrongdoers may also be resorted to. S.G.P.C, should be responsible to take such action in coordination with Delhi Gurdwara management committee and other Sikhs and Sikh organization. These two statutory bodies are duty bound in this respect which has the vast financial and other resources at their command. Their inaction in this matter up till now can have no appreciation besides that of the other Sikh leaders, who claim to represent the Sikhs in the religious or political arena. No more laxity is desirable in such a matter of far reaching consequences to Sikhs and Sikh religion.

Dasam Granth Interpolations There is Dispute over Dasam Granth compositions from the very beginning, which the Sikhs must decide without disrupting the Sikh unity, educating the Sikhs to the correct aspect. There can be no doubt that some Divine compositions of Guru Gobind Singh are contained in Dasam Granth. While the bulk of it may be the compositions of some Hindu poets, relating to Hindu legends, incarnations and mythical stories which are on the face of it in contradiction to the Divine thought of Guru Gobind Singh and that of Guru Granth Sahib. Most of those contain the names of the Hindu poets to have been translated from Markanda and Bhagwat Puranas written by them.

Eminent scholars of Sikh religion have so concluded with convincing reasons. Even the eminent scholar and author of 'World Religions' Geoffary Parinder, of USA at page 259 of his book took no time to come to the conclusion:

"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."

There is no dispute that the Divine compositions of Guru Gobind Singh contained in Dasam Granth are : "Jap Sahib" "Akal Ustat" "Shabad Hazare" "Khalsa Nehma" "Tetis Sawayas" and Zafar Nama". But the other compositions may not be of the great Guru . In fact in some of those compositions the names of Hindu poets have been written several times that these are their compositions. Chaubis Avtar, is the composition of Syam poet including that of Sri Ram Chandra and Sri Krishna, which are recorded to be the translation of `Bhagwat Puran"

`Chandi Charitar and Chandi di War' are recorded to be the translations of `Markande Puran. `Tiria Pakhyan , the Wiles of Women' is recorded to be the composition of Ram and Syam poets. The `Hikayats' in Persian also appear to be the works of some Muslim poets in Persian language dealing with the typical stories. All these compositions are in total contradiction to the Divine thought of Guru Gobind Singh who had totally rejected all the gods and goddesses of Hindus and their stone worships in idolatory in his `Shabad Hazaras' Teti Sawayas and all other Divine compositions.

Poets, Syam and Ram are included in the list of 52 poets, at the Darbar of Guru Gobind Singh, the first at serial no 13, and the second at no 49. These poets admit them to be the authors in these compositions. They appear to be the devotees of Goddesses Durga as they have sought her blessings to write these compositions. The interpolations of their writings in Dasma Granth is thus obvious .

Admittedly Guru Gobind Singh had not compiled any Dasam Granth and neither it was so compiled in his life time. It is alleged to have been compiled after a decade but no evidence worth acceptance as to who did it and where are the originals. Sikh had disputed it from the very beginning but due to their struggles against the state powers they could not finally resolve the dispute. It is a sin to deny the real divine compositions of Guru to be not his, but it is more sin to attribute the compositions of other poets to him. The Sikhs must settle this dispute which stands already delayed, by getting it thoroughly examined by the unbiased experts and scholars, remainiong vigilant that their adversaries may not exploit it to divide and defame them.

Sikhs to preach Sikhism and to discharge their duty to bring it to the notice of World. Most of the scholars of Sikh religion particularly of the west have expressed their genuine grievance against Sikhs that they have not made available Sikh scriptures and history in the main world languages and that the publications in English and Punjabi languages are also too insufficient. They have blamed the Sikhs for not having discharged their duty which they owe to mankind to bring Sikhism to its notice which is the religion of the present age.

In fact the accusation against the Sikhs is justified. However first of all Sikhs remained occupied in the struggle for freedom of religion and other basic human rights against the autocratic Mughal rule which had crushed all these human rights and values by force of gun committing all the brutalities. This struggle was prolonged for about a century when the Sikhs wiped out the Mughal and Afghan invaders and established their own sovereign Sikh state. In that state also Sikhs remained occupied in battles against the principalities that had allegiance to Afghans to free the entire area of Punjab their homeland. Then the Sikhs remained occupied with the British who after the occupation of the rest of India were engaged in the conspiracies against Sikhs to usurp the Sikh state. Thereafter, Sikhs had to oust the Mahants who had made the Sikh religious places to be their hierarchy and were involved in the anti Sikh practices at those holy places under the instigation of British administration and Brahmanical agents. Thereafter Sikhs were engaged with freedom movement of India to be the leading part. Unfortunately Sikhs had to carry on the struggle in the republic of India for their rights when the Indian government made them the victims of betrayal, discrimination and persecution.

However, this does not absolve the Sikhs from the liability and duty to bring Sikh religion of Universe to the notice of the world.

Sikh religion has now spread over through out the world.. There would be hardly any big town and city in the world where Sikhs are not residing and have not constructed their Gurdwara. In the twenty first century the Sikhs must discharge the onerous duty which they certainly owe to the mankind in the world.

The Sikhs first of all themselves have to understand their religion with earnestness, and strictly adhere to the code of conduct of Sikhism to become and act as true Sikhs. Then they have to ensure such compliance by their younger generation teaching them Sikh Religion, Sikh history and Punjabi language in which Sikh scriptures are written to enable them to live in Sikh way of life. It is then only that they can send the

message of Sikhism to the world by publishing the Sikh scriptures and history in world languages to discharge their duty to the mankind under the blessings of God, the Almighty.

It is the right and appropriate time for this purpose as world peace stands disturbed; moral and ethical values stand ignored; religion conflicts stand widened; material entanglements stand increased; and selflessness stands overpowered by selfishness. The Divine light of Sikhism has the potentiality to set these wrongs right. Teachings of Sikhism are very relevant for the present disturbed era for maintaining the world peace.

Sikhism is the practical way of life to overpower the evils of the day and to lead a truthful living. The meditations in the name of God (only and the only one), the creator of the entire creation as to be imbued in one's mind and the total submission to His will and commandments, while doing the pious deeds is the way of life in Sikhism. There is no scope for miracles and mysteries in Sikhism. It leads the man direct to his goal without involving in verbose theorizing and useless rites and rituals. It provides the Divine knowledge of one's own self and of the creator and his creation. Sikhism teaches love between man and god; love between man and man to earn with one's hard labor with honest means and share with the needy, selfless service to humanity, equality and dignity of every human being.

Sikhism provides the Divine knowledge of the same Divine light which shines in all, of the same matter which forms all, and of the same soul which resides in all, and to unite with the creator and then to help others to attain that aim.

Sikhism elevates the mankind spiritually, morally, socially with its comprehensive ethical system. Sikhism indeed is sure to uplift the mankind, so as to overpower the evils of the present era with its message of truth, name of God and pious deeds and to establish peace in the world. The message of love and peace of Sikhism to the world is to be conveyed by Sikhs alone. Sikhism is now well spread over throughout the world. Sikhs should have their one world Sikh leadership, for their unity and welfare, as the same are the problems for them every where. They should ensure the teachings of their religion to their younger generation and observance of Sikh code of conduct by them to live in the Sikh way of life. Sikhs should bring the Sikh religion to the notice of the world and discharge their duty which they owe to the world in this regard as several eminent scholars of Sikh religion particularly of the west have blamed them for not discharging this pious duty on their part.

The Divine message of Sikhism of truth, the Name of God and pious deeds leading to love and peace is to be conveyed to the world which is needed today as remarked by the eminent British Scholar, Johan Arch Clark which can only be so done by Sikhs. The higher moral and ethical values and the conversion of the human mind with narrow egoistic tendencies to the God tuned of higher conscious as taught in Sikhism are also the need of the day to give the right direction to all socio-political activities in the world.

S.G.P.C. Amritsar and Delhi Gurdwara management committee which manage most of the Sikh historical Gurdwaras and have the vast resources financial and others, must take these Sikh problems and preaching of Sikh religion with honesty of purpose and lend the other managements of Sikh Gurdwaras and Sikh organization by rising above the petty party factions. Sikh saints who are spread over widely and other Sikh preachers must be involved seriously in a missionary spirit to preach Sikh religion and to bring all the Sikh in the Sikh code of conduct, rising, above the monetary considerations. The Sikh leaders, who claim to represent the Sikhs on political side must also be duty bound to preach Sikh religion and become the role model for Sikhs as to their honest and Sikh way of life with selfless service to Sikh Panth and to the humanity at large.

If all of the Sikhs are brought in Sikh code of Conduct, it is then only that the younger Sikh generation can be motivated to come under Sikh code of conduct, by making them to be proud as Sikhs and imparting the knowledge of Sikh Religion and history. The Sikh scholars have to be made Sikh oriented with committed Sikh teachers and managements to fulfill the aim for which these educational institutions had been set up.

In the countries out side India, the Gurdwaras should be utilized for the Sunday Gurdwara schools to educate the Sikh youth in Sikh history and Punjabi language in which Sikh scriptures have been written, as in their regular schools no such education can be available. The disputes over the managements should be totally avoided in the Sikh Gurdwaras, which give a wrong signal to the Sikh youth as to the false hypocrisies, besides creating the petty party factions in Sikhs. It is for the Sikhs to peacefully preach their religion with honesty of purpose.

World Sikh Representative Body Sikhs should have a world Sikh representative body, being the need of the day in accordance with the basic Sikh concept of 'Guru Panth and Guru Granth' being refereed to as Sarbat Khalsa in Sikh history to discuss and decide all the Panthic issues. For sometime Akali Dal

remained the representative Sikh party but in the recent past it has become the Punjab Regional party with Hindus and Muslims as its members also, to give it a secular image to contest the parliamentary and legislative assembly elections, being the legal requirement of the election laws of Indian republic. The Sikhs have also spread world over and they demand their involvement in the decision making process for the Sikh affairs. The Sikhs should elect or select their representatives world over in the Supreme Panthic body. SGPC, Delhi Gurdwara Management Committee and the Management committees of Takhts Patna Sahib and Hazur Sahib are the statutory bodies to be elected by Sikhs and other Sikh bodies to be elected by Sikhs, may nominate their representative on this body . The countries out of India may be divided in 6-7 zones. On the basis of Sikh population to nominate their representative Gurdwara management bodies in those zones may be the electorate, being elected by the Sikh, besides any other such Sikh organizations. A Commission may be set up to finalize the procedural matters for this purpose after the consultation with Sikhs world over. Such a world Sikh representative Sikh body may consist of 100 persons known for their honesty, integrity, capability and sincerity to Sikh cause with some distinguished Sikhs known for their services to Sikhs and Sikh Religion. It may hold its meetings at Akal Takht Amritsar to discuss and decide the Sikh issues and pass the Gurmatta, to be acceptable to all the Sikhs. It should nominate the Jathedar of Akal Takhat to be its spokesman to ensure the compliance of the decisions taken . It should frame the rules and regulations for the qualifications, service conditions of Jathedar of Akal Takhat and other Takhts. The supremacy of Akal Takhat can be maintained in this manner.

The control of Jathedar Akal Takhat by SGPC and of other Takhat by their managements committess alone, has already brought these Sikh institutions under controversy and eroded their supremacy. The decisions taken by these Jathedars have been openly challenged to be of no jurisdiction, on the ground that only Panth, through its representatives can take such decisions under a Gurmatta, in accordance with the Divine guidance of Guru Granth Sahib. So far no Sikh has challenged the authority of Akal Takhat, but the challenges to the Jathedar and the decisions taken by the Jathedars of Takhts, who are under the thumb of their management committees without any security to their tenure and having no jurisdiction to take the Panthic decisions. This challenge automatically becomes irrelevant if the decisions are taken by the world, Sikh representative body as Sarbat Khalsa . The Sikhs themselves are to sort it out to set up their representative body which will solve most of the problems of Sikhs world over.