

# MY BOOK OF REVIEWS

A Critical Study of 30 Books

Hardev Singh Virk



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# Introduction

The idea of publishing “**My Book of Reviews**” came to my mind in April 2019 after reading a Sanbun publication of reviews written by Gurcharan Singh, who offered me a copy of his book. Arvinder Singh of Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi explained me the worth of review books for general public and libraries and advised me to go ahead with my own book of reviews.

My journey of review writing starts after my retirement from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in 2002. During 2003, I was visiting UK to deliver lectures in Dundee University of Scotland and on return made a trip to Cambridge and Elveden. The curator of Ancient House Museum at Thetford provided all information about new publications about Maharaja Duleep Singh and his family. My first two reviews are based on books written about the legacy of Duleep Singh, the last exiled ruler of Sikh Kingdom of Lahore.

More than 50% reviews are based on books dealing with Sikhism, Sikh diaspora, and other areas of Sikh studies. Some other reviews cover my study of books concerning science, technology, and biographies. Prominent authors of books who form the gamut of my reviews are Tarlochan Singh (Ex-MP), SS Bhatti (Chandigarh), DP Singh (Canada), and Rajinder Singh (Germany). Reviews of my own books by DP Singh are also included in this volume.

Review writing is an art. My reviews are appreciated because of the full coverage of the text, critical nature and

pointing out the need for further improvements in the coming editions. Almost all these reviews have been published in national and international journals, including *The Sikh Review*, *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, *Sikh Philosophy Network*, *Rozana Spokesman*, *Indian Science Wire*, and online portals, *Sikhnet* and *Researchgate*. I acknowledge my gratitude to the editors of all these journals.

Sanbun Publishers took the initiative to bring “**My Book of Reviews**” into the market. Hope it will prove a useful source for research institutes and libraries to explore new realms of Sikh studies and other areas of knowledge.

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# THE MAHARAJAH'S BOX: An Imperial Story of Conspiracy, Love and A Guru's Prophecy

By **Christy Campbell**

Published by Harper Collins, London, 2000

Pages: 474; Price: £8.99 (U.K.)

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The Maharajah's Box is a most fascinating account of the life story of the exiled King of Punjab, Maharajah Duleep Singh. Christy Campbell, the author, is a journalist, writer and former defense correspondent for the Sunday Telegraph. He has not spared any effort to dig up the resource material and meticulously researched the historical documents concerning the Sikh Kingdom of Punjab. Maharaja's Box is a tale of murder, deception and riches beyond imagination and it reads like a historical novel.

On the death of Ranjit Singh in 1839, the Sikh Kingdom of Lahore was the most powerful in India but it was annexed by the British Indian Government in 1849. Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last King of the Punjab, was born on 6 September 1838, occupied the throne at the age of 5 and removed from the throne in 1849. The deposed Maharajah was placed under the guardianship of Sir John Login and brought to England. He

was baptised as a Christian before his deportation. Rani Jindan, his mother, was imprisoned in Fort Chunar from where she escaped to Nepal. Duleep Singh was liberally treated and provided an annual pension of 50,000 pounds in England. He purchased a large estate of 16,000 acres at Elveden in Suffolk and settled down as a country gentleman.

The title of the book has nothing to do with the contents. It all started with the declaration of an unclaimed Swiss bank account in the name of Princess Catherine Hilda Duleep Singh that the author began his investigations and penned down the true tragedy of the last King of Lahore, Maharajah Duleep Singh. He visited Punjab and Delhi to search for Maharajah's descendants. It was believed that the box in Swiss bank may contain jewellery and other valuable documents about the Sikh Empire but nothing of that sort happened.

In chapter 4 "The Lion", the author highlights the glory of Sikh Darbar at Lahore as depicted in a painting by Theodor Schoefft, a Hungarian. The Sikh Empire had grown into an independent state of conspicuous wealth and power. Its army, tutored by Prussian, French, American and Spanish generals, had become the most formidable fighting machine outside British India. After Ranjit Singh's death, the British wanted an excuse for takeover and the Sikhs themselves provided it. Lord Ellenborough, the Governor-General of India predicted, "The break-up of the Punjab will probably begin with murder". How true his prediction proved to be. The Sikh Empire disintegrated within a decade after the death of "Lion of Punjab". The author narrates the stories of death and mayhem carried out by courtiers and the Khalsa army of Ranjit Singh leading to chaos in Punjab.

Lord Dalhousie put young Maharajah Duleep Singh under the charge of Dr. and Mrs. Login. He was baptised on 8 March 1853 and his long Sikhly hair were cut off as a part of denaturing process. He was deported to England on the steamer SS Hindustan on 19 April 1854, reaching London in end of May. He was introduced to the Royal family at Windsor Palace and the Queen Victoria felt infatuated with his youth and beauty.

The Maharajah had come to Windsor on several occasions and the Queen got his portraits made by the celebrated court painter of Frankfurt, Franz Winterhalter in 1855. He made friendship with Prince of Wales and enjoyed the company of princesses. It was during one such Winterhalter sitting that the Queen persuaded the Maharajah to gift her the Kohi-Noor diamond, the mountain of light. The Queen showered her affection, generosity and sympathy for the young Maharajah which was not liked by Lord Dalhousie. Duleep Singh was not allowed public school or University education but Prince Albert appointed tutors to teach him science, music and German and he became well versed in all. In 1863, he left London and settled down at Elveden estate in Suffolk.

#### **RETURN TO SIKH FAITH AND GURU'S PROPHECY:**

The poignant and pathetic tale of Rani Jindan, the mother of Duleep Singh, is touched briefly by the author. Christy Campbel has been rather unkind to the role of Jindan in the whole episode. Mother and son met in Calcutta on 16 January 1861 after thirteen and half years. She was shocked to discover Duleep as a clean-shaven young man and told him bluntly that she did not repent the loss of Sikh Kingdom so much as the loss of his Sikh faith. Duleep took Jindan to England where she died in 1863. She was cremated according to the Sikh rites in India and her ashes scattered in the waters of the Godavri river at Nasik as Maharajah was banned to visit Punjab. On his return journey, Maharajah stopped in Cairo and married a pretty girl, Bamba Muller. His marriage was solemnized as per Christian rites.

Rani Jindan told Duleep about Guru's prophecy that he shall rule over India but he did not believe. In 1883, Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia, cousin to Duleep Singh, was summoned to England. It was Thakur Singh who convinced the Maharajah about the truth of Guru's prophecy and prevailed upon him to return to the Sikh faith. This prophecy was broadcast mainly by the Kukas in Punjab who were fighting against the British Empire in India. A part of the prophecy ran: "When the Russian

troops invade the country, agitation will prevail in London and the British army will march to India. A Sikh martyr will be born and will reign as far as Calcutta. Duleep Singh will shine among the Khalsa and will drive his elephant throughout the world”.

Convinced of Guru’s prophecy, Duleep Singh wrote an impassioned appeal on 25 March 1886 in name of his countrymen: “I beg forgiveness of you, Khalsa-Ji, for having forsaken the faith of my ancestors for a foreign religion. It is my fond desire to take the *Pahul* again on reaching Bombay”. Maharajah was dissuaded not to visit India but he had resolved to do so. He set sail with his family but was detained at Aden on 21 April 1886. After a few days, his family returned to England. Maharajah Duleep Singh was administered *Khande Di Pahul* on 25 May 1886 at Aden but not allowed to visit India. Heart-broken and frustrated, Maharajah returned to Paris in July 1886. In Paris, he set up his headquarters to start his revolutionary activities against the British Empire. But he was not a gifted conspirator according to the author of the book.

Paris was a meeting point for revolutionaries. Duleep Singh met Irish rebels and Russian diplomats in Paris. He issued two proclamations from Paris, the first to the Sikh brethren and the second was addressed to ‘Brother Princes and Nobles and the people of beloved Hindustan’, declaring himself as the Maharajah of Sikhs and exhorting them to revolt against the British Empire.

### **JOURNEY TO RUSSIA:**

Maharajah Duleep Singh travelled to St. Petersburg, the Russian capital, under the false identity as Mr. Patrick Casey, the Irish rebel. He was accompanied by a young pretty girl, Ada Wetherill, whom he married in Paris after his return from Russia. Mikhail Katkov, the editor of the Moscow Gazette and a staunch nationalist, invited Maharajah. Katkov and his collaborators in Paris campaigned for a Franco-Russian alliance and had strong influence on the Russian Czar, Alexander III.

Unfortunately, Katkov fell from Czar's grace, died of cancer in Moscow and Duleep Singh failed in his mission. He wandered for a year in Russia as a frustrated man.

Duleep Singh wrote a detailed letter to Russian Czar on 10 May 1887, asking for his help in liberation of India. He also mentioned his Guru's prophecy in this letter. It was a masterly plan in tactics and geo-political warfare. Czar made comments on its contents but did not adhere to Maharajah's plan of action. Maharajah dispatched his emissary, Arur Singh, to India with letters of revolt addressed to Indian princes. After the death of his sponsorer, Mr. Katkov, in August 1887, all the schemes of Maharajah to liberate India with the help of Russian army came to naught.

The British has penetrated the Maharaja's conspiracy with impeccable accuracy. All his letters were copied and dispatched to the office of Secretary of State for India in London by the French officer-in charge of Maharajah in Paris. Arur Singh was captured in Calcutta and all the plans of Maharajah were revealed by him during his interrogation. Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia acted as Maharajah's Prime Minister-in-exile. He was based in Pondicherry, the French colony in India. He died (some believe poisoned) while Maharajah was still negotiating his terms with the Russian Czar. His family *Jagir* was confiscated by the British. The aspirations of the Khalsa in Punjab were aroused by the proclamations of Duleep Singh but nothing concrete was achieved except all round frustration.

Maharajah Duleep Singh returned to Paris and married Ada Douglas Wetherill, who also acted as a British spy during his sojourn in Russia. The network of British spies was so perfect that all his movements were reported to London and Simla simultaneously. He had eight children, six from his first wife and two girls from the second. All of them died issueless, as a consequence of another prophecy of the Guru! Maharajah Duleep Singh, the last King of the Punjab, died in a Paris hotel on 21 October, 1893. He was buried in Elveden Estate cemetery, not as a Sikh but a Christian. The Maharajah's Box by Christy Campbell is a heart-rending account of the life of the last Sikh Maharajah of Punjab.

# THE DULEEP SINGHS: The Photograph Album of Queen Victoria's Maharaja

By **Peter Bance**

Published by Sutton Publishing Limited, UK

Pages: 160; Price: £18.99

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

After my sentimental journey to Elveden in UK, where the last Maharaja of Sikh kingdom of Lahore lies buried in the church cemetery, my curiosity to collect information about the family of Maharaja Duleep Singh was aroused. The curator of Ancient House Museum at Thetford came to my help. I collected all information about new publications about Maharaja Duleep Singh and his family. The book under review is the latest in the series published in 2004.

As the title suggests, the book under review is a pictorial album of Maharaja Duleep Singh's family, being a lavishly illustrated account with almost 200 images of the Maharaja, the Maharani and their children. The book "The Duleep Singhs" is divided into eleven chapters. The historical origin of the Sikh kingdom is traced in the introduction. First chapter deals with the birth of Duleep Singh, his coronation as Maharaja and his surrender before the Governor General, Sir Henry

Hardinge, in Lahore after defeat of the Khalsa Army in the first Sikh war. The pictures are based on paintings and engravings and illustrate the poignancy of the situation. One is moved to watch the surrender ceremony of eight year old Maharaja Duleep Singh and annexation of Sikh kingdom after the second Sikh war. Photography and Duleep Singh were contemporary phenomenon in India. A calotype photograph of the Maharaja in 1848 by John Mclosh is also included; which may be considered as the first photograph taken by using a camera in Punjab.

Chapter 2 deals with Maharaja's life in England. Under the tutelage of Dr John Login and Lena Login, Duleep Singh was deported to England in April 1854 and separated from his mother Rani Jind Kaur. Her Majesty Queen Victoria of England received Duleep Singh at Buckingham Palace on 1<sup>st</sup> July 1854. He became a favourite of the Queen and was accorded the rank of a European prince. The most beautiful paintings of Maharaja Duleep Singh were got prepared by the Queen in her presence from the topmost painters of Europe. Chapter 2 is fully illustrated by these paintings and photographs of palaces where Duleep Singh resided in England.

Chapter 3 describes Maharaja's trip to India, his emotional reunion with his mother Rani Jind Kaur, his second trip to India for the last rites of his mother, his marriage with Bamba Muller on his return journey at Cairo and return of the royal couple to England. The Maharaja was not allowed to visit Punjab to perform the last rites of his mother. She was cremated at Bombay and her ashes were immersed in the river Godavari at Nasik. The chapter includes two unique photographs of Maharaja Duleep Singh and Maharani Bamba in wedding robes. It was a Christian marriage ceremonised in the Presbyterian Church of Cairo.

Chapter 4 "The Suffolk Squire" is the most illustrated chapter of the book. In 1863, Maharaja Duleep Singh left London and purchased an estate of 17,000 acres in Elveden on the Norfolk-Suffolk border. He renovated Elveden Hall in the oriental style and raised his family of 6 children. Maharaja

Duleep Singh indulged in his passion for hunting and shooting and arranged *shikar* parties for the royal guests, Prince of Wales. He was a great lover of *shikar* like his father. Imitating his royal friends, the Maharaja had a flirtatious nature. His notorious escapades to Paris and London clubs are mentioned in this chapter. He displayed all the virtues and vices of an oriental monarch and indulged in high life of London. The chapter illustrates the royal visitors to Elveden Hall residence of Maharaja, elite society ladies and Thakur Singh Sandhanwalia who was designated as Prime Minister-in-exile for Maharaja Duleep Singh later on. It was Thakur Singh who persuaded Maharaja to return to the Sikh faith and fight for his lost Sikh kingdom. The Maharaja was fully convinced of the betrayal and treachery played by the British and he revolted against the Empire.

Chapter 5 describes Maharaja's wish to return to India for taking *khande di pahul*. He was off-loaded the ship at Aden and ordered to return to England. Before his return, he was re-initiated into the Sikh faith as a Khalsa. His desire to visit Punjab was never fulfilled and in frustration he resigned his pension and took residence in Paris. He was so much annoyed with the British Empire in India that he joined a revolutionary group in France and travelled to Russia to seek help from the Russian Czar. The Maharaja was not a gifted conspirator. His Russian collaborator died and by a strange coincidence of misfortunes, he failed in his mission to liberate India from the clutches of British Empire. He died in a Paris hotel in utter frustration. This chapter narrates a sad story full of poignant details of Maharaja's life in Paris.

Chapters 6-10 are dedicated to the six children of Maharaja Duleep Singh : Princes Victor, Albert Edward and Frederick Duleep Singh and Princesses Catherine, Sophia and Bamba Duleep Singh. Maharaja wanted his eldest son to marry in India but he did not agree calling the Maharaja 'my idiotic father'. Victor studied at Eton and Cambridge where he met his true love, Anne Blanche of Coventry and married her. Duleep Singh did not attend the marriage ceremony. Even Queen

Victoria was not happy with Victor over this marriage. She treated Victor as her god-son. She called the Princess Anne, the pretty wife of Victor to her audience and ordered her to leave England and take a vow never to have children, the would be heir apparent of the Sikh Kingdom. The couple followed the royal command faithfully and never returned to England.

Albert Edward Duleep Singh died at the young age of thirteen. Maharaja Duleep Singh visited from Paris to see his ailing son and wept bitterly but he returned and could not attend his funeral. Prince Frederick Duleep Singh was the most talented of all the Princes. He went to Cambridge and got an MA degree in history. He was a keen collector of old books, coins, stained glass and other artifacts. He was a kind-hearted man and became very popular in his County as the 'Black Prince'. He was historian, archaeologist, philanthropist and a great lover of music. He was keen to promote the legacy of Maharaja Duleep Singh. Keeping this in view, he donated all his art collection to set up the Ancient House Museum in Thetford, which is a living testimony to the family of Maharaja Duleep Singh. Chapter 7 is fully illustrated depicting the life of Frederick Duleep Singh, who remained a bachelor all his life.

The author has devoted three chapters to Princesses Catherine, Sophia and Bamba Duleep Singh. Catherine was ranked as one of the most beautiful European princesses but she did not marry. She spent most of her time in Germany with her governess, Lina Schafer. Princess Sophia was the youngest of the three sisters, a firebrand like her father and became a leading figure fighting for the voting rights of women in England. During the first World War, Princess Sophia visited wounded Punjabi troops in the Indian army and gave them mementos as a grand daughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. She kept her links with the family of Takhur Singh Sandhanwalia who served his father faithfully and offered to adopt Pritam Singh as her son.

Princess Bamba Duleep Singh was the most colourful

character in Duleep Singh's family. She was a rebel like her father and began styling herself as the 'Queen of the Punjab'. She frequently visited India and married colonel Sutherland who became Principal at King Edward's Medical College, Lahore. Once Sophia and Bamba visited Lahore in 1924 and the crowds gathered from Punjab villages to see the daughters of their last king, Duleep Singh. The police dispersed the crowd, as it was thought to be politically too dangerous for the British Empire. Princess Bamba visited Khalsa College, Amritsar during the 1940s and in 1944 she shifted to Lahore. She never accepted the partition of Punjab and settled in Lahore, the capital of Sikh kingdom, as a permanent resident. She set up a museum in Lahore fort, which is known as 'Princess Bamba Collection'. The last member of Duleep Singh family, Princess Bamba died on 10 March 1957 and is buried in the Christian Cemetery in Lahore.

'The legacy of Maharaja Duleep Singh' is the last chapter of the book by Peter Bance. It is followed by Maharaja Duleep Singh's family tree. One wonders, how all the direct descendants of Maharaja Ranjit Singh vanished leaving no heir apparent. All of them died issueless as a consequence of Guru's prophecy; it is a myth created in Punjab.

After procuring the book from Sutton Publishing, UK, another riddle appeared before me about the identity of its author, Peter Bance. On the internet, I requested for his biodata. It was a pleasant surprise that Peter Bance is a third generation Sikh (nee Bhupinder Singh), settled in England. He is a keen collector of Sikh antiques, including an unrivalled collection on the Duleep Singhs' which form part of the book under review. I congratulate the young author (29 years old) of Duleep Singhs' for writing this illustrated historical album after a strenuous research of eight years. The book will prove to be a collector's choice and should decorate the drawing room of every Sikh family keen to probe its heritage.

# THE SIKHS IN BRITAIN (150 Years of Photographs)

By **Peter Bance**

Published by Coronet House Publishing Ltd., London, 2012

Pages: 186; Price: £22.99; Indian Price: Rs. 1595.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Peter Bance (nee Bhupinder Singh) is a young Sikh historian, author of celebrated books on Maharajah Duleep Singh, namely “The Duleep Singhs” reviewed by me in The Sikh Review and the other: “Sovereign, Squire & Rebel: Maharajah Duleep Singh & the Heirs of a Lost Kingdom”. The author is a keen collector of Sikh antiques. The present volume is the revised, enlarged and annotated edition of his earlier book, “The Sikhs in Britain” published in 2007. It is a fascinating photographic history of the Sikhs and their contribution to British society from the mid-nineteenth century to the present day. The author narrates the story of the Sikhs from the first arrival in Britain to modern times, illustrated by over 200 photographs drawn from private collections and museums. The beauty of the present volume is that most of the old photographs have been added in an enlarged frame and some newly discovered rare photographs also find a slot in the revised edition. However, there is not much change in the textual material of the revised edition.

Facing contents page, author has added a new photograph of Birmingham born Chaz Singh. He has spent 6 years promoting the Sikh identity, including the Sikh turban, in Britain through his various media and publicity campaigns. He has become an iconic figure in his Burberry and tartan turbans. He has educated people about Sikh identity, showing you can be both a Sikh and British. He is proud of his heritage as a British-born Sikh. His popularity led him to become Plymouth's first Sikh councillor.

The book under review is divided into 9 chapters. In the introduction, the author traces a brief history of Sikhism and Sikh kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. According to author, "The first Sikh in Britain, Maharaja Duleep Singh, made a symbolic impact on British society when he arrived in 1854. Looked upon as an adopted son by Queen Victoria, his children became the Queen's godchildren. Since then Sikhs have continued to make an impact, from a tartan Lord Sikh in a Scottish castle, a veteran record-breaking marathon runner (Fauza Singh) to an aspiring international cricket star (Monty Panesar); for more than 150 years Sikhs have been one of the most successful migrant races to settle in Britain."

According to the author: "There were four significant periods of Sikh migration to Britain. The first was between the world wars, consisting of enterprising businessmen, students and pedlars. The second was after Indian independence in 1947 when significant numbers of young labourers came to fill the gap in the labour market from Punjab. The third phase saw the greatest number of Sikhs arrive via chain migration and from former British Colonies. The fourth was predominately from East Africa, after expulsion from Uganda in the 1970s. By 2001, over 336,000 Sikhs had made Britain their home."

Chapter 1 covers the period from 1854 to 1900 and traces the history of Maharaja Duleep Singh and his family. It vividly describes the roles played by Maharani Jind Kaur, Sardar Aroor Singh and Sardar Thakur Singh Sandhawalia in bringing back

Duleep Singh into the Sikh fold. He appointed Sardar Thakur Singh, Prime Minister-in-exile, to regain his lost empire but the British were too tactful to allow his conspiracy to succeed. My review of 'Maharaja's Box' by Christy Cambell describes the adventures of Maharaja Duleep Singh alongwith his frustrations. It is heartening to note that Sardar Balwant Singh Grewal of Ludhiana district was the first commoner Sikh student who reached London in 1894 to study law at Lincoln's Inn. Since Balwant Singh, a total of eleven members of Grewal family, including Gurnam Singh Grewal, former Chief Minister of Punjab, became practising lawyers educated in Britain. Some of the photographs show Sikh officers at Queen Victoria's Golden Jubilee celebrations in London during 1887. We also see the famous architect, Bhai Ram Singh, a Ramgaria Sikh from Amritsar, who was invited to design the Durbar Room at Osborne House for Queen Victoria. Bhai Ram Singh reinvented modern Sikh architecture, of which one of the best examples is the Khalsa College, Amritsar.

Chapter 2 describes the visits of members of the royalty, particularly of the ruling houses of Patiala, Kapurthala, Nabha and Jind. The Francophile Maharaja Jagatjit Singh of Kapurthala made his first visit to England during 1893. He made several visits to Britain on his way to USA and Europe in later years. His grand daughters, Princesses Ourmila, Indra and Sushila, became well-known London socialites during 1930s. We also find photo of Princess Sita Devi of Kapurthala, one of the most-talked about ladies of her time in India and Europe. In later years, Maharaja Jagatjit Singh adopted Christianity. It is interesting to find Baba Khem Singh Bedi, painted in his majestic robes, at Warwick Castle in 1902.

Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala was the most famous of all Indian Maharajas to grace Britain with his presence. The famous 'Patiala Necklace', one of the most expensive pieces of jewellery ever made, was created for him by the house of Cartier in 1928. Besides his passions for beautiful women and sparkling

gems, Maharaja's addiction to the prestigious Rolls-Royce Motor car practically kept the firm in business. In his garage at Moti Bagh, Patiala, the Maharaja had 44 Rolls-Royces, all specially built for him. During his 1911 visit, the Maharaja was approached by Khalsa Jatha Members to set up a Gurdwara in London. He donated 1000 £ on the spot and performed the opening ceremony of Maharaja Bhupinder Singh Dharamsala at 79 Sinclair Road, London. This became the nucleus of first Gurdwara in Britain.

Chapter 3 is devoted to the exploits of Sikh troops of the British Indian Army who fought for the British and their Allies during First and Second world wars. The photographs show Princess Sophia Duleep Singh nursing wounded Indian soldiers at a convalescent camp in 1917. Sikh soldiers from Punjab wrote back memories of grand daughter of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. Sikh soldiers were always fighting in front rows as Vanguard and the British army in the Second Line of defense. As a consequence, thousands of Sikh soldiers were killed or maimed in action. Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala visited his forces in action to inspire them in the capacity of Major-General of British Indian army. The two memorable photographs of this chapter represent Hardit Singh Malik CIE, OBE, ICS in London (1918) and Squadron Leader Mohinder Singh Puji of the RAF, London (1940). Both of them fought against the Germans and won laurels during first and second world wars, respectively. We also see Pilot Manmohan Singh, who became the first Indian to fly solo from England to India in 1934.

Chapter 4 is devoted to early Sikh pedlars who migrated to Britain during 1930s. They filled the vacuum created by the migration of Jewish pedlars from Europe to USA. Sikh pedlars mostly belonged to *Bhatra* sect who maintained their Sikh identity intact even under adverse circumstances. Lodging houses were set up in East End of London to accommodate pedlars and other new migrants from India. The most exciting photograph for the Sikh youth of Punjab appears at page 69 of

the book, where Shaheed Udham Singh is shown being escorted from Caxton Hall by Scotland Yard police after he shot dead Sir Michael O' Dwyer on 13 March, 1940, to avenge the massacre of innocent Punjabis at Jallianwala Bagh in April, 1919.

Chapter 5 relates to the migration of Indian labour after 1947. The British market needed labour and immigration laws were liberal, so many families from Punjab (Doaba region) sought refuge in Britain. Photograph at page 84 shows Master Tara Singh in a Manchester Gurdwara in 1954. He went to raise funds and canvass support for forthcoming SGPC election in Punjab. Master Akali Dal won a thumping majority by winning 126 of the 130 seats in the election and Congress sponsored party was routed. By 1946, there were 20 Indian restaurants in London and in 1947; Gurbachan Singh's Punjab Restaurant was established. It is still being run by one of his grand sons. The chapter describes the working Sikhs' plight and their movement to Southall after the East End, London. At present, Southall is the hub of activity of Sikh Diaspora in London and you will miss a chance to locate a white man in this locality.

The author records Narinder Singh Kapany, father of fibre optics in the world, working in his research laboratory at Imperial College of Science and Technology, London in 1953. Another photograph on page 86 shows the couple (Narinder and Satinder) after the wedding ceremony solemnized in London according to the Sikh rites in 1954. There are some other photographs of Sikh marriages being solemnized in Maharaja Bhupinder Singh *Dharamsala*, London, in this chapter.

Chapter 6 narrates the heroic deeds of Sikh struggle in Britain. The right to wear turban at the workplace was denied to Sikhs in Britain. Sundar Singh Sagar spearheaded the struggle for wearing turban on the Manchester buses while on duty as a driver or a conductor. Ultimately, the Sikhs won their battles in almost all big cities. As a consequence, the Sikhs were allowed

to wear their turbans while on duty in Buses, Trains and even in police force. The chapter includes a photograph depicting the weapons of Guru Gobind Singh displayed at India House, London, before these were brought to India as relics of the Tenth Guru.

Chapter 7 gives the history of Sikh Gurdwaras in Britain. The author gives full credit to Sant Teja Singh, who was instrumental in setting up first Sikh Gurdwara (Maharaja Bhupinder Singh *Dharamsala*) in London. As a young student, Teja Singh became a role model for other Sikh students in Cambridge to keep the Sikh identity intact. He was acting as a Sikh missionary while losing some precious years at Cambridge. Teja Singh founded the Khalsa Jatha British Isles in Cambridge during 1908, paving the way for establishment of first Sikh Gurdwara in London. Ramgarhia Sikhs from East Africa formed the Ramgarhia Sabha Southall in the 1960s and built its own Gurdwara. Gurdwaras were built in all big and small cities of Britain to cater to the needs of growing Sikh Sangats. London has nearly one dozen Gurdwaras at present.

The last two chapters describe the impact of Sikhs on the social and cultural life of the Britain. Turbaned Sikhs began riding motorbikes after winning Turban – Helmet case in favour of Turban. The Sikhs started participating in local and national politics. The Sikh musical bands have put Punjabi music on international map. Author has given some space to the proponents of Khalistan movement in England, showing Dr. Jagjit Singh addressing crowds at London's Hyde Park in 1984. With UK Sikh population of about 350,000, Sikhs have diversified into every field and industry in Britain. Thus, the Sikhs have proved themselves a worthy and successful community in Britain. All those achievements are depicted by photographs by the learned author. The Sikhs have come of age in Britain and find a niche in all walks of life. The last photographs show Monty Panesar, the star cricketer of England, a role model for Sikh youth of Britain and Queen's Sikh

bodyguards at Buckingham Palace, London.

The author deserves appreciation of Sikhs all over the globe for bringing out a pictorial biography of the Sikhs in Britain. Some of the observations made by the author are remarkable. For example, some of the photographs show a mixed gathering of English men and Sikhs in the Gurdwara during 1930s. Due to lack of preaching about Sikhism, we have only the presence of Sikhs in our Gurdwaras now. Sikh *Bibis* (women) are shown playing the role of a priest in the Gurdwara, circa 1934 (ref. to photos on pages 117-18). The only other example I witnessed was in Yangon (Rangoon) Gurdwara of Myanmar in 2005. Our SGPC has to learn a lesson to give equal rights to Sikh women in the Gurdwara services at all levels. During Second World War when ration system was introduced in Britain, Sikh Gurdwara in Birmingham was serving *langar* for 3 days per week to the needy. This is the best way of promoting Sikhism in foreign lands.

Peter Bance has created a unique volume, "The Sikhs in Britain" with a pictorial history of the Diaspora Sikhs in UK. In author's view, the Sikhs have added a little something to Britain. He recounts Guru Nanak Marg, Khalsa Avenue, Glassy Junction, Bhangra music and many more landmarks of Punjabi culture in London. The ancient martial art of *Gatka* was first introduced by Nihang Didar Singh in 1980s and it was performed in the Queen's Golden Jubilee procession in the Mall during 2002.

# DISCOVERING THE SIKHS: Autobiography of a Historian

By **W.H. McLeod**

Published by Permanent Black, Delhi

Pages: 245; Price: Rs. 550.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The book "*Discovering The Sikhs*" has been divided into two parts: Part I deals with biographical account of author's life in New Zealand and Punjab, and part II contains his explanations in defence of the specific charges made against his writings. A full Chapter is devoted to the *Institute of Sikh Studies* at Chandigarh and the role of Sikh scholars associated with it. Daljit Singh, Jagjit Singh, Kharak Singh, Gurtej Singh and Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon find a special mention by the author. The author makes a bitter attack on the Institute (page 199): " Although the *Institute of Sikh Studies* may have genuinely believed that what they did was for protection of the Panth, clearly it was dismally wrong. Victory for the Institute meant the defeat of sound teaching, the honest enquiry, and the search for truth".

Professor WH McLeod, the author, was born in 1932 in New Zealand, had his schooling in Nelson College and obtained his Master's degree in History from Knox College in university

of Otago. During his university days, author had close connection with Presbyterian church and was a member of the Student Christian Movement. He became a divinity student in the Knox Theological College after completing his MA in History. McLeod was recruited for missionary work in Punjab by Overseas Missions Committee and he joined Christian Boys Higher Secondary School in Kharar during 1958. It was during his sojourn in Punjab that the author became interested in the study of Sikh religion and Sikh history for his doctoral thesis and life-long mission. He learnt Punjabi in Gurmukhi script and acquired proficiency to read Janamsakhis and Sikh literature in original. He got his Ph.D. degree from University of London in 1965 and his thesis was published by Clarendon Press in 1968 under the revised title, “Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion”.

In Chapter 4, the author vividly describes his experiences in Punjab. He was a failure as a teacher of English in Kharar. He writes (page 34): “I decided that teaching of English to Punjabi boys was not for me”. But in Baring Christian College (BCC), Batala, he was a popular and successful teacher of History even in Punjabi medium. During his interaction with students and staff at BCC, Batala, the author got a peep into the Sikh way of life in Punjab. On page 43, the author narrates his experiences: “In general the students proved to be very friendly and invited me out to their villages. These students were invariably Sikhs. These experiences taught me a great deal concerning their beliefs, their customs, and the agricultural life of village Punjab”. He spent 4 years in Batala out of his total sojourn of 11 years in Punjab. In addition to his teaching assignment, he was fully absorbed in his research on Sikh religion, its history and culture. There is no mention of his missionary activities anywhere in this book for which he was recruited and despatched to Punjab.

Professor WH McLeod has been a prolific writer of Sikhism and published almost a dozen volumes. Some of his famous

titles are *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*, *The Evolution of the Sikh Community*, *Early Sikh Tradition*, *Who is a Sikh*, *Sikhs of the Khalsa*, and the title under review, *Discovering the Sikhs*. The author gives three for his interest in Sikh studies (Chapter 1, pages 3-6). He has been most controversial author on Sikhism after Ernest Trumpp. To make an analysis of his approach to Sikh studies, we must scrutinize the background material provided by the author himself.. On page 21, he mentions: "I revelled in such questioning and in the overturning of old beliefs, as a Member of the Student Christian Movement". It is an enigma that he was recruited as a member of Presbyterian Church but he was not a believer, according to his own admission. The author calls himself an agnostic! That clearly shows the game plan of author to secure a job in India on a false pretext, or we may call it a dishonesty of purpose. On page 47, the author mentions: " I never really believed in any religious system or held any belief in God". And further on page 48, "Sikhism believes in God (or Vaheguru, or Akal Purakh). I do not believe, and my lack of belief lies behind all that I have written."

Another prop used by the author to explain away criticism of his works on Sikhism is elaborated in Chapter 8 (pages 129-131): "I am a western historian, trained in western methods of historical research and adhering to western notions of historiography. My primary objective has been to communicate an understanding of the Sikh people and their religion to educated western readers and to those who think in a western mode". This western understanding underlies all that I have ever written and no apology is offered for it". Applying the western method, the author lets loose a virulent attack on the sources of Sikh history and religion, namely, the *Janamsakhis*, *Rahitnamas* and *Varan Bhai Gurdas*.

In Chapter 9, the author gives an overview os his books already published and draws support provided by Dr Ganda Singh in his editorial in " The Punjab Past and Present". The

author examines 124 *Sakhis* and out of these 87 were classified as possible, improbable, or impossible. This comprised such major anecdotes as Sajjan the Robber, the discourse with Siddhs on Mount Sumeru, Nanak's visit to Mecca, the meeting with the Emperor Babur, and Multan and the Jasmine petal. The author also rejects the historical evidence of Guru Nanak's visit to Ceylon and Baghdad. Bhai Gurdas, a contemporary of 3rd to 6th Guru is considered to be one of the most authentic source on the Guru period and he mentions about Guru Nanak's visits to Mecca, Multan and Baghdad. The encounter with Siddhs is described by Guru Nanak in his composition '*Siddh Goshit*' in Adi Guru Granth Sahib. If we believe the contentious propositions of the author, it will be damaging for the Sikh faith. The author challenges the authenticity of *Kartarpuri Bir* (Adi Guru Granth Sahib), originality of Guru nanak and Sikh faith, and tries to create utter confusion in the minds of Sikh believers by his so called western historical approach.

The *Institute of Sikh Studies*, Chandigarh took up cudgels to demolish the McLeodian model of historiography which created a phobia amongst Indian and western historians to find fault with the originality of Sikh faith. In Chapter 11, the author tries to play down his critics, especially Daljit Singh, Gurdarshan Singh Dhillon and Gurtej Singh. He writes (page 178): "Gurtej Singh may represent the Institution at its most influential, but assuredly the statements which he produces are well off the mark". The comments of the author on '*Planned Attacks on Aad Sri Guru Granth Sahib*' are noteworthy (page 183): "The book is filled with absurdities and one can refuse to waste time answering it". But the author is vehement in his attack on the book "*Earnest Trumpp and WH McLeod as Scholars of Sikh History*" by Dr Trilochan Singh. He writes (page 184): "At least those who read my books will surely have understood that Trilochan Singh makes claims that are simply not true. His manner was not at all appropriate for reasoned discussion and his book should accordingly be dismissed and set aside".

In Chapter 12, the author laments his banishment from Toronto due to opposition by the local Sikhs and the *Institute of Sikh Studies* at Chandigarh, which made a representation to the university of Toronto during 1990. On the part of the Institute, Kharak Singh and Gudarshan Singh Dhillon lead the attack. The author laments, "There are seven charges listed against me which I certainly do not accept". The author blames the Institute for banishment of Sikh studies programme from University of Toronto (page 199). The stubborn attitude of the author is borne out by his statement under the heading '*Regrets*' (page 210): "I do not regret the controversy that has arisen over my writings, at least not in the general sense".

I may close my review with some quotations from 'The Spirit Born People' by Puran Singh (pages 86-89) which are relevant to the western approach adopted by the author. "History and biography are both lies, so far as these matters are concerned. Only fools concern themselves with what they call historical events. The greatest events are of the soul and they are revealed in one's own *surta* (consciousness). Intellectual interpretations exhaust genius, it is self spending of consciousness. Only a spiritual genius can write the authentic history the Sikhs".

The main text is followed by four Appendices and a Glossary of terms. The author tries to demolish the myth of Panja Sahib, i.e, palm mark on the boulder. In '*Discovery of the Sikhs*', I have discovered one of the most prolific but controversial writer of the Sikh history and religion.

# SIKHISM: ANTI-SIKHISM

By **Charanjit Singh Bal, Canada**

Published by Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi, 2012

Pages: 159; Price: Rs. 150.00, US\$ 5.99, C\$ 7.99

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The book under review consists of 19 essays. I was attracted to read and review it because of its title which is quite fascinating. I was curious to explore something unique in the essays under section Anti-Sikhism but to my dismay I found most of the articles a recount of the material already published. Charanjit Singh Bal belongs to a new genre of Diaspora Sikh writers who want to promote Sikhism in the western hemisphere; who are well versed in using new tools of IT world but who lack vision and insight of a mature writer. The author writes in the preface: "This book is a composition of my articles and virtually verbatim print media news reports and cyber messages pertaining to noble Sikhism and ignoble Anti-Sikhism. It is my humble endeavor to propagate quintessential concepts, egalitarian doctrines, pragmatic practice and authentic history of universal Sikhism."

In Chapter 1, the author reports what many others have already written, namely, "Views of prominent non-Sikh writers about Sikhs and Sikhism". I wonder why the author fails to cite the references where these quotations occur. I remember my own predicament when I quoted the views of Reverend

H.L. Bradshaw about Sikhism in my article and the Editor pulled me up for not giving reference to his quote. I believe the author has not made an attempt to look up and research original sources of these quotations.

Chapters 2-4 are the most important chapters of this book. The author gives a vivid account of the religious situation in India at the time of advent of Guru Nanak in Punjab, in Chapter 2. He tries to establish Sikhism as a pragmatic faith in Chapter 3, calling it a unique and practical religion. The author is at his best in Chapter 4, "Concepts of Sikhism". He defines concept of God, Guru, Origin of Universe, Creator, Human Virtues and many other concepts in a nut-shell manner, quoting relevant *shabads* from Guru Granth Sahib. He succeeds in proving the rational approach of Sikhism which rejects dogmatism, ritualism and asceticism. However, the author commits some blunders in Chapter 2 (p.24) calling Shiva's consort (wife) Sita, instead of Parvati and locating Younepeeth shrine in Gauhati in Bihar (p.25), instead of Assam. A *shabad* of Guru Ramdas (p.60) is attributed to Guru Amardas. In Chapter 5, 'Guru's Langar', the author remarks, "Guru's Langar combines three noble principles of Sikhism: charity, community service and social equality."

Chapter 7 deals with Sikh Rehat Maryada (Code and Conventions). The author traces the historical evolution of Sikh Rehat Maryada and its implications. The author is critical of the Amrit Sunskar ceremony as practiced today (p.84-85): "Guru Gobind Singh's concept of Amrit has apparently been misconstrued and ritualized. Amrit Sunskar reads like creed of dogmas from Hindu Simritis. There has to be greater emphasis on preparedness and determination of worthiness of a Sikh prior to Amrit Sunskar." In Chapter 8, "Khalsa Panth", the author goes into background of the need for creating the Khalsa by Guru Gobind Singh in a logical manner. However, his definition of Khalsa as pure is too literal. In fact, Khalsa is a Persian word which means crown property that belongs directly to the King. Hence, Khalsa belongs to the Guru/God. The author is advised to check up historical facts regarding Iftar Khan as

governor of Punjab (p.91), and correct his date/year of baptismal ceremony which was held in March 1699, and not in March 1669 as mentioned by the author (p.96).

The author is highly critical of the priestly class, Jathedars and their *hukamnamas*. He refers to the ongoing tussle between Sikh intelligentsia and Akal Takhat Jathedar in view of *hukamnamas* issued against Kala Afgana and Joginder Singh, Editor Spokesman. The author also condemns fake Khalsa (p.100): 'Although the identity is an integral part of a religion, it does not enhance a man's spiritual consciousness. But the zealous orthodox religionists profess that the religious garb takes precedence over exalted spiritual consciousness.'

Chapter 12 "Anti-Sikhism" traces the history of persons and movements which were inimical towards the revolutionary religion of Sikh Gurus and tried to create schisms in it. Anti-Sikh movements started during the Guru period and continued unabated till date. The author displays wonderful sense of history in this chapter and narrates all the events which tried to torpedo the Sikh movement. Role of RSS, both the Hindu and its counterpart, Rashtria Sikh Sangat, the Sikh organization, is criticized. The author does not spare some of the authors, like Rattan Singh Jaggi, who change their stand without bothering about their conscience. I do not know why the author considers it obligatory to include Chapters on Air India Massacre and on Homosexuality under the Anti-Sikhism section? The book ends with an interesting Chapter on Nankana's Endowment Lands, which has no relevance to the theme of the book, and is based on the narration given by Harpal Singh Pannu in his article published in Sikh Shahadat.

It seems the author has made his first attempt in writing this book in English language, which is not his mother tongue. The publisher is equally responsible for ignoring the editorial/vetting work. There are all type of errors, rather howlers, incomplete sentences (p.143, 146), spelling mistakes (quakes for quacks, p.69) and all types of flaws which one expects from a novice, not well versed in English language. Despite all its short comings, the book can serve as a reference material for those interested in the study of Sikhism.

# SIKHS IN LATIN AMERICA: Travels Among the Sikh Diaspora

By **Swarn Singh Kahlon, Chandigarh**

Published by Manohar Publisher, New Delhi, 2012

Pages: 361; Price: Rs. 1075.00; H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The book under review is divided into 13 chapters followed by 10 appendices. A few years back, I was introduced to the author when he called me after reading my travelogue to Uzbekistan and Myanmar published in the Sikh Review, Kolkatta. I found Swarn Singh Kahlon deeply motivated to write about the Sikh Diaspora. He had collected lot of information during his travels abroad, mostly to Europe and America, in connection with his professional career, while working for a multinational company (ICI India). In the preface to his book, the author frankly admits: "My only claim to originality is to introduce Latin America as part of the Sikh Diaspora. In any study of Sikh Diaspora, Latin America has been grossly neglected." In the introductory chapter, the author gives the background of this study in the following words: "I have been globetrotting since the late 1950s when I went to USA for higher studies and work experience. It was an era when the Sikh was considered either a Maharaja, or a pauper who presumably had no money to shave his beard." The author's curiosity to know more about Sikh migrants became

a sort of hobby – expensive but very rewarding and exciting in later years. He has frequently traveled to study the Sikh Diaspora. He visited Argentina, Bolivia and Brazil in 2005 and Belize, Mexico, Cuba, Panama and Ecuador in 2006. A chapter each is devoted to Sikh Diaspora in these countries.

Chapter 1 with title “Sikhs on the Move” gives a history of the Sikh migration with their founder, Guru Nanak, himself as a prolific traveler of his times. The British encouraged the Sikhs to join the army and for other security duties in the British Empire and thus began their migration to Malaya, Thailand, Hong Kong and China. From there, many enterprising Sikhs migrated to British outposts of Australia, New Zealand and Fiji, while the more ambitious among them ventured out to USA and Canada, the El Dorado of their dreams. The author has given useful data about Sikh migrants, current estimates of global Sikh population, history of migration and establishment of Sikh Gurdwaras in countries of their adoption in tables 5-8 of Chapter 1.

Chapter 2 is devoted to ‘Travels among the Latin American Sikhs’. The author refers to Singhvi High Level Committee Report prepared by Govt. of India for recording Indian Diaspora in Latin American countries. This is the first official survey conducted by the Govt. of India but it fails to highlight the Sikh Diaspora and its problems. Why Sikhs chose to go to Latin America needs to be investigated? The author has tried to collect information from Sikh migrants on this aspect. It has been revealed that Latin America was not their destination by choice but by default. Latin American governments were not as hostile to Sikhs as other white dominated countries of USA and Canada. Major part of this chapter is covered by Author’s travels dairy and travel nuggets. The author stresses the role of Gurdwara in Sikh Diaspora. The community develops more cohesiveness and closeness with the setting up of a Gurdwara. Some Sindhi migrants supplied a copy of Sri Guru Granth Sahib for setting up the Gurdwara.

Chapter 3 is most elaborate and illustrated with photographs of Sikh Diaspora in Argentina. The author gives some interesting accounts based on his interviews with Diaspora Sikhs. He writes, "The Sikhs in Argentina have been substantially assimilated into the local society and the third and even second generations may not call themselves Sikhs. But emotional bonds exist and a Gurdwara was commissioned in the early 1990s. Fresh immigrants keep coming in small numbers but turbaned Sikhs are a rarity."

The author met a wide spectrum of Argentinean Sikhs during his sojourn. The names of second generation Sikhs are usually local, e.g., Leandra, Dante, Carmen, Nora, Esther, etc. The author found them very friendly and they wished to know about their Sikh heritage and Punjab culture. Case studies of Sikh Diaspora by the author are interesting as these record trials and tribulations of Sikh migrants to Argentina. The story of Dan Singh and harrowing tale of Sikh migration in 1911 via Fiji is most adventurous and heart rending account of exploitation of illiterate Punjabis.

Chapter 4 is titled 'Sikhs in Belize'. The original name of Belize was British Honduras. It was a British colony like India but Sikhs when offered immigration to this colony by Canada, they refused. The author describes success story of a Sikh migrant, Bawa Singh Mann, who came to Belize in the early 1930s. His son George Singh rose to the coveted position of Chief Justice of Belize in 1998. Some of the new young immigrants to Belize are using it as a transit point to migrate to North America. Immigration agents in Punjab and Delhi send young students to Belize using fraudulent tricks assuring them admissions in non-existent Belize University.

In Chapter 5, 'Sikhs in Bolivia', the author relates some case studies and interviews with Sikh migrants. The reason for Sikh migration to Bolivia is passion for owning farm land at a dirt cheap price of \$30 per hectare. During 1980s, Sikhs built a Gurdwara 30 kms. from Santa Cruz. The author records

interviews of Amarjit Singh Viridi and Santwant Singh Sandhu who arrived in Bolivia for doing agriculture farming. The author laments that an enterprise by adventurous Sikhs failed causing misery because of lack of professionalism, in-fighting, back-biting and downright meanness by many of them in times of adversity. But the author also interviewed Gisela (Sham Kaur) who offered a ray of hope for the Sikh Dharma to flourish in Bolivia. The followers of Yogi Bhajan are setting up yoga centres and Gurdwaras in Latin America to promote Sikhism among the local people.

Chapter 6 is devoted to 'Sikhs in Brazil'. It is one of the biggest countries in the world with vast resources lying untapped. However, the author feels that Sikh presence in Brazil is indeed insignificant and only a few Sikhs have struck permanent roots in Brazil. The only highlight of this Chapter is the moving story of Subagh Kaur Khalsa and her husband, Gursewak Singh Khalsa, who endured all kind of hardships to set up a Gurdwara in Sao Paulo in Brazil.

Chapter 7 and 8 are dedicated to Sikhs in Cuba and Ecuador, respectively. The Sikh migrants use Cuba as a transit camp for catapulting into other Latin American countries. The author has recorded some case histories in both these countries. The story of a 'Wandering Sikh', Dilbagh Singh Bhullar, is worth mentioning. Bhullar is a victim of the police terrorism in Punjab but who is desperate to reach North America by any legal or illegal means. His escapades are full of high drama.

Chapter 9 and chapter 10 give us history of Sikh migration to Mexico and Panama, respectively. Case studies of Sikh migrants are there as in other Chapters. Mexico has large presence of Yogi Bhajan's Sikhs doing business. During my visit to Mexico in 1983, I found a shop in Mexico city selling dairy products under the brand name 'Satnam'. Arjan Singh Khalsa, a Jat Sikh from Punjab, is a success story in Mexico. He feels happy and secure in Mexico and enjoys patronage of 3HO Sikhs of Yogi Bhajan.

Sikh immigration to Panama started when the US Government began construction of the Panama Canal. After the construction of Canal in 1914, many Sikh migrants took up jobs in American Fruit Company, some became peddlers, while others started driving pick up vans called 'Cheevas'. Some of them moved to other Latin American countries for better avenues. There are many success stories from Panama in Chapter 10. Dhaliwal brothers have a flourishing business and 'Sher-e-Punjab' farm in Panama.

Chapter 11 recounts some stories of Diaspora Sikhs in Uruguay, Peru, Chile, Surinam, Venezuela and Costa Rica in Latin America. Some of the stories narrated by Khuswant Singh, United Sikhs and collected from Newspapers and Internet are recorded by the author in this Chapter. I find stories of Partap Singh of Peru and J.P. Singh of Chile quite devastating. Both of them became victims of hate crime in Latin America. J.P. Singh, a graduate from Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar, is the lone Sikh living in Chile. Being a turbaned Sikh, he is facing taunts from the locals, who call him 'Bin Laden' or 'terrorist'. He had been attacked in the street and confronts racism and discrimination in Chile, being a Sikh but misunderstood as a Muslim. It is unfortunate that Sikhs have been victims of hate crime in both North America and Latin America.

The author recounts his own story in chapter 12. He earned Graduate Assistantship in the Mining department of Pennsylvania University of USA in 1958 and after completing his Masters in Mining, he joined as Efficiency Engineer in Hanna Coal Company, Ohio. He returned to India in 1961. The author sums up his experience of student life as wonderful: "A Sikh was somewhat of a curiosity, to say the least. Americans were by and large generous, welcoming and curious." I am not inclined to discuss author's personal episodes as his visit to USA does not fall into the territory and regime of Latin America. But I do appreciate that the author maintained his Sikh identity and values in a most dignified manner in United States of America.

Chapter 13 'Conclusions' is the most important Chapter of this book. Swarn Singh Kahlon brings into focus the reasons of Sikh migration. According to the author, "It is the frustration from rampant unemployment among rural Sikh youth that has given rise to this obsession of going abroad at any cost. The state has to create jobs for the semi-literate rural youth. Rural life in Punjab is in crisis and Sikh youths are seeking migration out of India as their only way of survival." The author laments that Punjab has lost out to other states in economic, industrial, social, and services fronts. The author displays his professional wisdom in analyzing the Punjab crisis. I fully agree with author's concluding remarks (p. 305): "While Sikhs have done a good job to survive they need a strategy to thrive. Nothing less than a total revamp at a political, social and religious level is required."

I hope that the Sikh youth and Social Scientists will find lot of useful information about Sikh Diaspora in this book authored by Swarn Singh Kahlon. I also learn from the views expressed on the blurb of this book that he intends to bring out a series of books on Sikh Diaspora in coming years. I wish him success in his mission.

# SIKHS IN ASIA PACIFIC: Travels Among the Sikh Diaspora from Yangon to Kobe

By **Swarn Singh Kahlon, Chandigarh**

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Pages: 352; Price: 1195.00; H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Swaran Singh Kahlon is an avid traveler with a mission to explore Sikh diaspora all over the globe. His first book: "Sikhs in Latin America" was published in 2012. The book under review is divided into 13 chapters followed by 18 appendices. It explores Sikh diaspora in 11 countries of Asia Pacific in 11 chapters and has one chapter devoted to Sikh Participation in Ghadar and Indian National Army (INA) and one on conclusions of study. The author has followed the same style of writing as adopted in his first volume, i.e. tracing the history of Sikh migration followed by case histories recorded in India or abroad.

The author begins the text with a brilliant Introduction to the region under study; his methodology and field visits concerning his project; history of Indian migration to Asia Pacific; and parameters of Sikh migration at global level. This

chapter has 8 tables summarizing highly useful data for social scientists and historians regarding global Sikh population, migration patterns and setting up of first Sikh temples (Gurdwaras) by the Sikh diaspora in Asia Pacific region.

Chapter 1 is focused on the theme: "Sikhs in Burma." The author starts this chapter with mention of two romantic poems about Burma: one by Rudyard Kipling and the other by Mughal king, Bahadur Shah Zafar, who immortalized his death in Burma by this epitaph written on the prison wall. Sikh migration to Burma started with the British Indian army in the 19<sup>th</sup> century when Burma became a province of India in 1856. The 1931 census listed a total of 10,761 Sikhs in Burma with many more coming until the Second World War. Sikh presence and enthusiasm can be gauged from the fact that in early 1950s there were 136 Sikh Gurdwaras, 11 Khalsa High Schools, 5 Libraries, 1 Girls School, 2 Ashrams and 1 independent Langar Hall. The Sikhs were well organized under Khalsa Diwan-Burma and spread throughout the country engaged in all professions, business, farming and dairying.

The present Sikh scene in Burma is disappointing and after three exoduses, their numbers have dwindled which is indicated by closing down of Sikh institutions, including Gurdwaras being reduced to only 48. The military dictatorship nationalized Sikh institutions and businesses without any compensation, resulting in large scale exodus of Sikh population to other countries. During my own visits to Burma in 2005, I noticed the impact of Sikh migration on the general morale of Sikhs in Burma; only those who have no means to migrate are left in Burma. Hopefully, the situation may improve for the better with recent change over of military regime to democracy. The author has recorded case studies of some prominent Sikhs of Burma. The most interesting story relates to Bibi Balbir Kaur who is head Granthi of main Gurdwara in Myanmar (Rangoon), a privilege being denied to Sikh ladies in India.

Chapter 2 relates to Sikh presence in Thailand. Sikh

migration to Thailand started in 1884. By the year 1911, many Sikh families had settled in Thailand, with Bangkok as the centre of immigrant Sikhs. The first Sikh Gurdwara was set up in 1912 in a wooden Thai style house but the present one is a six floor building with a school running inside it. Sikhs in Thailand are the largest community amongst Indians and maintain good relations with the king of Thailand. They are mostly settled in areas adjoining Pahurat Road in Bangkok and engaged in textile and real estate business. Outside Bangkok, Sikh presence is visible in Chiang Mai and Phuket with big Gurdwaras existing in both towns. The Sikh community in Thailand is prosperous by all means, engaged in profitable business ventures and philanthropy. The Namdhari Sikhs migrated earlier than Jat Sikhs and are well settled as real estate tycoons. During my visit to Bangkok, I observed a unique harmony among Sikhs of Thailand, which is reported by the author also, that there is only one common Gurdwara being frequented by the Sikhs of all shades; a feature absent in India.

Chapter 3 is based on Sikhs in Malaysia; which has the largest Sikh community in Southeast and East Asia, numbering around 80,000. Sikh migration to Malaya (Malaysia) started in 1873 when Sikhs arrived as policemen in Perak. The first Sikh Gurdwara was set up in 1881 in Cornwallis in the Police Lines. The first public Gurdwara was inaugurated in 1903 in Penang. During the British rule in Malaya, the Sikhs were a pampered lot. They occupied top positions in Police and Army. It is a fact that there are more Sikh Gurdwaras (15 in number) in Kuala Lumpur than the Muslim Mosques, with dominant Muslim population in Kuala Lumpur and Malaysia. Sikh diaspora in Malaysia has assimilated in the mainstream while keeping its identity intact. Malaysian Sikhs are rooted in Sikh culture and its moorings in a better way as compared with other Sikh diaspora anywhere in the world.

Sikhs in Malaysia actively participate in all 55 social organizations. The pioneer Sikh socio-religious organization

was Khalsa Diwan Malaya, which was founded in 1903 in Taiping, Perak. Sikh Naujawan Sabha Malaysia (SNSM) has been the most active Sikh organization catering to the socio-religious needs of the Sikh youth of Malaysia. The SNSM has been organizing youth camps annually since late 1960s. The SNSM's initiatives to help victims of natural calamities resulted in the formation of Global Sikhs, which is also supported by United Sikhs of America. Sikhs in Malaysia are a minority community amongst 30 million strong Muslim majority comprised of Bhumiputras. They face discrimination in getting jobs and starting new business ventures under the affirmative action policy, as it favours only Bhumiputras.

Chapter 4 deals with Sikhs in Singapore. The author calls Singapore Sikhs as a model minority. They are professionally organized and have succeeded in various walks of life such as business, education, civil services, military and the corporate sector. There are less than 20,000 Sikhs in Singapore but they have earned a good reputation in the country for their contributions to Singapore economy. Singapore was part of Malaya under the British and the Sikhs migrated to Singapore as policemen. The Sikh Foundation and the Punjabi Foundation of Singapore are promoting the Sikh heritage and Punjabi language, respectively. Some of the prominent Sikhs who earned name and fame in Singapore public life are as follows: Justice Choor Singh Sidhu, who rose to be the first Sikh Judge of Supreme Court; Jaswant Singh Gill, the first Commander of the Singapore Navy; Brigadier General Ravinder Singh who became Singapore's Army Chief; Inderjit Singh and Davinder Singh, the two Sikh MPs in Singapore Parliament; Bhajan Singh, the Educationist; and Kartar Singh Thakral, who is the owner of Thakral Group of Companies and reputed to be one of the richest Singaporeans.

Chapter 5 deals with Sikhs in Indonesia. They started migrating to Indonesia in end of 19<sup>th</sup> or beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century. They mostly worked as farmers and in the dairy

business. They opened a Khalsa High School in 1920s in Medan (Sumatra). Sikhism is not a recognized religion in Indonesia and hence the Sikhs have to register under Hinduism or any other recognized religion. Sikh population in Indonesia is estimated at around 7,000 spread out in various provinces. Many Sikhs have moved from Medan area to Jakarta for better opportunities. The Sikhs are engaged in Sports goods and furniture business and established a foothold in shipping by starting the Gill Shipping Company.

Chapter 6 forms the subject matter of Sikhs in Fiji. While other Indians migrated as indentured labour, the Sikhs migrated to Fiji as free passage immigrants. In 1874, Fiji came under the British Crown and over the next 40 years, more than 60,000 indentured labourers from India were brought to work on sugarcane plantations. Majority of Sikhs arrived in Fiji between 1920-30 from Nawanshahar, Garshankar, Phagwara and Phillaur tehsils of Jalandhar district. The Sikhs have built 5 Gurdwaras in Suva, Lautoka, Labasa, Tagitagi and Nasinu. The Sikh Educational Society of Fiji formed in 1960 established 5 Sikh Schools: 3 Primary, one Khalsa Secondary School at Labasa, and a Khalsa College at Ba. In recent years, due to political crisis in Fiji following two coups, there is a large scale exodus of Sikhs to Australia and North America.

Chapter 7 "Sikhs in Philippines: The '5-6 Bumbay' Moneylenders" is an interesting account of Sikh moneylenders who are known by their pet name as '5-6 Bumbay'. The first Sikh migrant in 1902 who settled in Manila just accidentally while on way to USA was from the village Sangatpur, near Jalandhar. During 1930s, the Sikh population was just 250 but it started rising slowly and steadily reaching 23,300 in 2000. The Sikh moneylenders are able to accumulate substantial amount of money to establish their own retail stores in Manila. Some others are employed in MNCs, established restaurants and Indian specialty stores but their most lucrative business is moneylending.

The author has discussed in detail the mechanism of moneylending by the Sikh migrants. The economy of rural areas of Philippines is based on credit provided by Sikh moneylenders. It involves no paper work, no bank guarantees, and is totally hassle free. The interest rates are high going up to 20 percent in 4 months. With a hassle-free life style and easy availability of women and sex, the Philippines is an attractive country for Punjab village youths, whose landholdings are small and who just have high school education with no prospects of a good job in India. But this business involves high risks and every year there are reports of Indians being murdered or shot while on their rounds to collect payments. The author has recounted some success stories of Indian Filipinos; the most interesting being that of Ramon Bagatsing, who was elected as Mayor of the city of Manila from 1971 to 1986. Most of Sikh migrants earn enough money and return to India after a decade.

Chapter 8 is devoted to Sikhs in Hong Kong. Possibly, the earliest recorded Sikh migration took place in 1841 to Hong Kong as described in the book: "Sikhs in Hongkong" edited by Gulbir Singh Batra and reviewed by me. The present author has challenged this claim and considers 1867 as a more plausible date of migration. It is however agreed that Sikh policemen were recruited from Punjab as prison guards and security personnel to control rebellious Chinese in Hong Kong and mainland China. Sikhs continued to play an active and important role in the Hong Kong Police force right up to 1950. The author visited Hong Kong Police Museum to record his impressions about the role played by the Sikh Police in maintaining peace in Hong Kong.

Hong Kong was a transit point for the Indian troops deployed in China. During 2<sup>nd</sup> World War, Hong Kong was occupied by the Japanese in 1941. The Sikh Regiment was deployed to defend Hong Kong but Japanese killed and captured Sikh soldiers. Large scale killing took place in Hong Kong. Hong Kong's strategic location made it hub for onward

migration of Sikhs to other countries, including Canada and USA. The *Komagata Maru* episode has direct links to Hong Kong as the trip to Vancouver was started from this port. The present Gurdwara in Hong Kong was built in 1901 but there is evidence of earlier Gurdwara started in Police barracks. After the Chinese occupation of Hong Kong, the Sikh migration has almost dwindled to the bare minimum. But the Punjabi Sikhs have co-existed harmoniously with the local Chinese community for over a century.

Chapter 9 “Sikhs in China” is almost an appendix to Chapter 8. The Sikh migrants went to Shanghai (and mainland China later on) as policemen and security guards or watchmen in the same way as they immigrated to Hong Kong. However, after 1949 Chinese revolution, they moved out to Hong Kong, or returned to India. The British won the Opium Wars in China with the help of Sikh troops. The Chinese hated the Sikh policemen and there was no love lost between the two communities. Author has visited Shanghai Police Museum and inserted some photos/cartoons showing Sikh policemen. Shanghai Gurdwara (1908) is occupied by Chinese families and its building is deteriorating. There is a revival of interest in mainland China and Thakral Brothers of Singapore have set up their business enterprise in Shanghai with over 1,000 stores across China.

Chapter 10 “Sikhs in South Korea” describes the pattern of Sikh migration to South Korea as different to the pattern in other Asian countries. Sikhs went to Korea looking for jobs in mid-1980s as there was a shortage of labour in the country. The Sikh migrants work on farms and most of them are illegal and avoid contact with the police. There are two Gurdwaras in the suburbs of Seoul. Dr. Lakhwinder Singh, who is a Professor in University of Seoul, provided answers to queries made by the author regarding the Sikh migrants and their situation in Korea, in the form of a questionnaire.

Chapter 11 “Sikhs in Japan” describes two distinct

communities of Sikhs in Japan. The older Sikh migrants in the Kobe area are well entrenched and affluent in Japan while the new entrants prefer to stay in Greater Tokyo area and majority of them are 'overstayers' and vulnerable to being deported. As reported by the author, the first Sikh student who joined Tokyo University in 1899 was Puran Singh, who returned to India after 3 years. There were Sindhi businessmen already in Tokyo before 1899. The Sikh migrants docked their ship *Komagata Maru* in Yokohama en route to Canada to pick up passengers. But there is no historical evidence of Sikh presence in Japan before 1936 when Thakral Brothers of Singapore set up their overseas branch in Japan. The Sikh merchants were staying in Kobe before World War II and the first Gurdwara was set up in 1952. Kobe Sikhs are engaged in business dealing with electronics, automobile parts, textiles and other sundries. They are quite rich and affluent. In Kobe, Sikh migrants retain full Sikh identity and maintain cultural links with Sikhs in South-East Asia.

Tokyo immigrants are mostly from Uttarakhand, Jammu and New Delhi and very few from Punjab. Apart from some IT engineers, restaurant owners and entrepreneurs, most are employed as factory workers, welders, electricians, etc. They are clean shaven and without turbans to hide their Sikh identity and illegal status. Some of them marry Japanese girls to avail legal status for stay. The Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara was started in 1999 at the time of 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Khalsa. It is as yet a make shift Gurdwara open only once a month when service is held.

The author has narrated some case studies of Sikh migrants. I will like to mention just 2 cases: Kirandeep Sethi family of Kobe and Sarabjit Singh Chadha of Tokyo. Kirandeep is married to a Japanese lady and has two sons; the family maintains Sikh tradition and acts as a role model for Sikh migrants. Sarabjit Chadha is the first non-Japanese singer of Enka- a genre of Japanese songs that can be compared to ghazals for

their slow, meaningful melody. Chadha owes a lot to the turban and can easily pair his turban with a kimono. He is a popular TV artist in Japan and is known as Dancing Maha Chadha, and every Sikh with a turban is called Chadha in Japan.

Chapter 12 covers an important aspect of Sikh immigrants, who imbibed the spirit of freedom, and joined Ghadar movement and Indian National Army, popularly called Azad Hind Fauz, to liberate India from the clutches of British Empire. The author took the trouble to trace the history of these movements in South-East Asia but the main fulcrum of Ghadar movement was not Asia but North America. In the Conclusion, the author gives an abstract of all the Chapters briefly. He has given a comparison of profiles of Sikh migrants to East and West in a tabulated form. The book contains 18 appendices, which are highly useful for a researcher, as these illustrate history of Sikh Gurdwaras, including a catalogue of Sikh institutions and Gurdwaras of Asia-Pacific countries covered by the author in his book.

The book is very well written, free of flaws, and provides useful source material for researchers in social sciences and diaspora studies. I am looking forward to his 3<sup>rd</sup> volume covering Sikh migration to Europe.

# SIKHS IN HONGKONG

By **Gulbir Singh Batra**

Published by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Educational Trust,  
Hongkong & Khalsa Diwan, 371, Queen's Road East, Hongkong  
Pages: 210 (Deluxe Edition on Art Paper); Price: Not Given

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

**Sikhs in Hongkong** is a fully illustrated history of the Sikhs who migrated to this British Island colony after the fall of Khalsa Raj in Punjab. According to Hongkong records, in 1844, Captain J. Bruce formed an Indian Night Guard with 20 men, 2 sergeants and one Havildar from Indian troops stationed in Hongkong. A Sikh contingent of 148 Sikhs arrived in Hongkong in 1867. There were 226 Sikhs in Hongkong in 1897, 477 after World War I and 774 Sikhs during World War II out of a total Indian force of 2220. Most of the Sikhs stayed back in Hongkong and served in Police as constables or Prison Guards. The photographs of Sikh soldiers given on pages 25-26 show turbaned and bearded Gursikhs serving in Hongkong. They earned a good reputation due to their physical appearance and bravery. One Sikh prison guard was able to control 103 Chinese prisoners effectively. Most of the Sikh soldiers were 6 footers and created panic in the minds of hooligans operating in Hongkong.

The book has been divided into 6 sections. Section I is a

very short introduction to Sikh Religion. Section II has messages from eminent personalities of Hongkong. Section III contains most useful information about Sikhs in Hongkong. It serves the purpose for which this book has been written. Starting with the history of migration of Sikhs to Hongkong, this section covers the rise of Sikhs in the social, cultural and business life of Hongkong. Those who attained high profiles in Hongkong find a special mention, for example, Harnam Singh Grewal rose to the position of Secretary for Civil Service in 1987, Gurbachan Singh Chadda served in the Inland Revenue Service of Hongkong, Harinder Pal Singh Banga is the Vice-chairman of Noble Group of Industries, and Inderbethyl Singh Thakral is MD of Thakral Group of Companies with business interests in 40 countries including Hongkong, Singapore and mainland China. The Thakral brothers, Mr Kartar Singh and Inderbathal Singh, are both Amritdhari Sikhs, associated with many charitable and religious organizations engaged in uplifting the standard of Sikhs in India and abroad. They have contributed liberally for the construction project 'Nishan-e-Sikhi' of Baba Sewa Singh Khadoorwale and for setting up of 'Sahib Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji Educational Trust' in 1999 for ameliorating the condition of Sikh youth in Hongkong. The Trust operates from the precincts of Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara. Thakrals have set up a Sikh place of worship in their Shanghai home on mainland China.

Sikh professionals find a lot of space in this section. Photographs of 3 dozen professionals are given with their brief profiles. It is most interesting to note that migrant Sikhs educated their wards in 'Ellis Kadoorie School for Indians' started in 1891 in Hongkong. The product of this school occupies a respectable place in Hongkong civil society. Sikh community participates in Hongkong community's overall welfare by organizing blood camps, free kitchens (*langars*) for the needy, interfaith meetings and environment protection. Khalsa Diwan caters to the needs of new immigrants by providing them

training in computers, accountancy and Chinese language. Teaching of Punjabi and *gurbani kirtan* is also arranged for the Sikh youth. Prominent members of the Sikh community are profiled in this section. They serve as role models for the Sikh youth in Hongkong.

This section also includes photographs of some prominent Sikh families. One of the oldest Sikh families in Hongkong is that of Surjit Singh Gill who belonged to Jagdev Kalan in Punjab. The photographs of old residents who died in Hongkong are also published to remind the new generations about their sacrifices.

Section IV is devoted to Gurdwara Sahib (Khalsa Diwan Sikh Temple) and its history in Hongkong. The first Gurdwara was created in 1901 at 371 Queen's Road East in a small structure. The evolution of Gurdwara is related to the evolution of Sikh community in Hongkong. Sikh Gurdwaras abroad reflect the prosperity of the diaspora Sikhs. In Hongkong, Gurdwara was set up under Khalsa Diwan and it is still known by its old name in official records. It was destroyed during World War II due to heavy bombardment by the Japanese. After the War, it was reconstructed at the present site. The present structure has been built up during 2003-2008. It has all the modern facilities with separate congregation and *langer* halls, a floor kept reserved for teaching Punjabi, Chinese and Computer with LCD facilities. The funds for Gurdwara construction were raised from all the Indian families living in Hongkong, including a large donation made by the Sindhi community. Khalsa Diwan Gurdwara has Kindergarten and Library facility on the ground floor. There are rooms for the senior citizens and medical camps are organized by the Gurdwara Management Committee. It represents unity in diversity of India.

A list of donors has been appended at the end of this section. A list of past Presidents and Secretaries has also been given. On special occasions such as Vaisakhi, sports are organized by the Gurdwara Committee. A brief introduction to Koma Gata

Maru episode is included as the Sikh temple in Hongkong was the starting point of this long journey to Vancouver.

Section V includes the brief history of Hongkong and its places of tourist attraction. Till 1773, Hongkong was known as a fishing village only and the Chinese Emperor Kangxi allowed entry to the British for the purpose of limited trade. British traders misused this facility to earn huge profits and it became the Opium capital for mainland China. In 1839, the British occupied Hongkong after the Opium war, under the Treaty of Nanjing. In 1898, Britain forced China to lease the New Territories, which included 233 outlying islands, for 99 years. This lease expired on 30<sup>th</sup> June 1997 and Hongkong was merged as an administrative unit of mainland China.

The last section VI is written by Dr Inderjit Singh Gogoani of Sikh History Research Cell of Khalsa College, Amritsar. It is the Punjabi version of the English text of Hongkong's history and Khalsa Diwan, based on news items published in Khalsa Akhbar, Lahore. It elaborates the activities of the Gurdwara and highlights the contribution of Sikhs to the economy of Hongkong and China.

I congratulate Gulbir Singh Batra and his team members, Sharanjit Singh and Inderjit Singh Gogoani for bringing out this illustrated history of Sikhs in Hongkong on the high quality art paper for posterity.

# SIKH-ING: SUCCESS AND HAPPINESS

By **Dya Singh**

(World Music Group, Adelaide, Australia)

Published by Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi, 2016

Pages: 192; Price: Rs. 192.00; P.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The title SIKH-ING of the book under review is as unique as its author Dya Singh, who is well known for his World Music Group and his concerts to preach Sikhi in a unique way. I wonder why he has used Sikh or Sikhi, a noun, in the form of a verb 'Sikh-ing' in the title of his book. I will like to call it: "Sikhi: A Guide to Success and Happiness".

The author has clearly defined the motive and purpose of writing this book on page 9 as follows: "This book is for those who like to read something uplifting and inspirational and helps them on the path to success, fulfillment and happiness; those who know me as a Sikh musician and want to know what keeps me happy; those who feel down in life and need upliftment; those who want to know the basics of Sikh *kirtan*, etc. etc." The author also claims that this book is meant for Sikh Youth and Non-Sikhs alike, who might wish to know the secrets about the Sikh way leading to success and happiness.

In his foreword, Dr Bhajan Singh of Singapore calls Dya Singh a World Traveller and a Messenger of the Truth. He

further writes: "Dya Singh is sharing a profound message of a futuristic and universal Sikh value system, what he calls the " best kept secret of this planet".

The contents of book have been covered in 13 Chapters. In the opening Chapter, Dya Singh gives his background and goes on to define Happiness in a unique way: "Happiness is not the final reward, rather it is the engine that powers success, and even good behaviour and positive results." In Chapter 2, he writes: "I believe that Sikhism has plenty to offer in the quest for world peace and harmony between peoples from different parts of the world and of different religions." The author laments that the Sikh community does not have a country of its own but he does not consider it as a handicap, rather he claims that Sikhs are the genuine 'global citizens' of the world today. Dya believes that the inspiration to write this book is given by a divine force (cosmic energy) whom he calls 'Waheguru' and he likes to say "Thanks Waheguru".

Third Chapter is on '*Mun*' (Mind) and '*Muth*' (Intellect) and it is most difficult to comprehend for readers who are not familiar with Eastern thought and its ethos. Dya tries to clarify as follows: "The 'mind' is actually divided into '*Mun*' and '*Muth*'. The mind as described in western terms is actually the '*Muth*' - the intellect, and the other part of the mind is the '*Mun*' - emotions, or feelings. It is the '*Mun*' that affects the heart." He lists the attributes of '*Mun*' and '*Muth*' in a tabulated form. He writes on page 29: "The doorway to the soul/spirit is through infinite '*Mun*' because it feels, NOT the finite '*Muth*' because the '*Muth*' feeds on tangible proof. Then he tries to explain roles and functions of '*Mun*' and '*Muth*' on pages 33-34. Let me tell the author that there are many 'twists' due to these definitions. My examination of this entire text of the book reveals that author has taken liberty to use '*Mun*' as 'heart', as 'soul' and also as 'emotional brain'. It may cause some confusion among Sikh and non-Sikh youths who are trained in the western system of education.

In Chapter 4, author defines his take on 'God' as 'Good': "God is the epitome of 'love' and 'truth'. God is a universal consciousness, a cosmic library, so to speak, of universal intelligence. It is an energy source, which pervades all existence, and into which we, humans, can tap into, if we are open to that through mindful meditation, which we call *simrin*." In fact, *Mool Mantar* provides a wholesome interpretation of author's take on God. What is meditation? It is the time one spends in His company, awareness of His reality. For a Sikh, this is *Nam Simrin*. The author beautifully illustrates his findings with quotes from Sri Guru Granth Sahib: "*Jo brahmanday, soi pinday jo khojai so pavai*." What is our relation with God? "As the seed of God, the soul (*atma*) is within us, we human beings are 'Gods in embryo' - a microcosm within a macrocosm."

In Chapter 5, Dya Singh introduces the concept of Happiness based on his personal experiences of life. In Chapter 6, he introduces the Sikh way of Happiness as *Santokh* (contentment): "Contentment should not be a deterrent for one's loftier aspirations. It should not be a consolation for non-attainment but a positive powerful force - a launch pad for further progress and success." The Sikh way of Happiness is unique as given in SGGS: "*Nanak Satgur bhetiyai, puri hovai jugt. Hesendheyan, khelendheyan, painendeyan, khevendheyan, vichai hovai mukt*." The author quotes research findings of Harvard: "If one is happy, one's work is of a better quality". Happiness produces greater wealth, not the other way around. To enjoy happiness, one must be carefree.

In Chapter 7, the author further elaborates the practice of Sikh way of Happiness which is based on three pillars of *Chardhi Kala*, *Amritvela* and *Anand*. He goes on to define *Chardhi Kala* as a mental state of ongoing optimism. According to author, *Amritvela* is that period just before the sun comes up (but in Sikh parlance it is one *pehar* (3 hours) before the sun rise). *Anand* is a state where there is no happiness, nor despair, nor sadness. It is a state of serene acceptance of *Hukm*, the Divine

Law. Author quotes Gurbani to prove that it is joyful to be in the company of a *Gurmukh* who radiates 'anand'.

In my view, Chapter 8 "Meditation Magic for Happiness" is the most important as the author elaborates three techniques of meditation, namely, *Saas Simrin*, *Dhyan Simrin* and *Padh Yatra*. *Saas* meditation, via breathing, is simple and effective for all generations. It helps to re-align the mind, body and spirit - the ultimate sense of wellbeing. The author has given tips to perform *Saas* meditation along with the hints for the ecstatic states to be experienced by the practitioner. From this description, one can easily conclude that the author has experienced these states himself during meditation. Classification of thought waves representing various states of mind are described under headings: Beeta, Alpha, Theeta and Delta. Theeta represents a deeper state of relaxation and is highly suitable for meditation. What is meditation? The reader will find all answers to his queries in this section on pages 93-94. For illustration, I shall like to cite the following:

- i) Meditation is constant. It is a technique unique to each individual.
- ii) Meditation is not separate from daily life. It is part and parcel of life.
- iii) Meditation requires undivided attention to whatever we are saying, doing or thinking.
- iv) True meditation does not depend on a particular posture or attitude.
- v) Meditation reaches its climax when you can experience timelessness, i.e., eternal NOW.

The other two techniques, *Dhyan Simrin* and *Padh Yatra* (Meditation while walking) also find a mention in this Chapter. Author narrates his experiences of both these modes of meditation for the benefit of readers.

Chapter 9 and 10 are devoted to "Mindful Visualization of Success and Happiness" and "The Five Vices & the Ultimate

Path to Happiness", respectively. The five vices listed in Sikhism are *Kaam* (lust), *Krodh* (anger), *Lobh* (greed), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahangkar* (ego). The author has given the Sikh recipe based on Gurbani to conquer these vices. The purpose is not to kill these vices, which are essential for a human, but to keep them under full control through *Sewa* and *Simrin*. In Sikhism, "*Sewa* is an expression of our love for others. That love can only arise when we have contentment and humility".

Chapter 11 presents author's views on East versus West; he himself is a product of both cultures. The Western values are diametrically opposed to Eastern values. Hence the author concludes: "The absence of these Eastern virtues and Western excesses have brought us to brink of disaster, hence we need to become proactive to remedy the wrongs that we have committed in the past for the sake of future generations". The author highlights the problems of Old Age, Living with Parents and Marriage in the West vis a vis East.

The author seems to be at his best in Chapter 12 "Detachment as a Tool for Happiness" while explaining the Sikh way of detachment. "To detach yourself from the reality aspect of this life, you need to find attachment to some higher purpose - a nobler ideal. What one needs is a mission in life which must be beyond our selfish personal interest. Internal detachment comes with time, spiritual contemplation, reflection, and a higher purpose". According to author, the crux of the problem is: "Detachment is rather subtle to understand and even more difficult to practice". He is conversant with the Sikh way of detachment as illustrated in SGGS by the example of Lotus flower: "*Jeo jal meh kamal alpeto vartai, teo vichay greh udas*". What a unique definition by the author? "Detachment is a state of unattached involvement".

In the Epilogue, author sums up his ideas: "My heroes have always been my ten Sikh Gurus". I have discovered, for the first time in the Sikh literature, the new definitions of prayer and meditation: "**Prayer is when you speak and Waheguru**

**listens and meditation is when Waheguru speaks and you listen”.**

There are 3 Supplementary Chapters after the Epilogue as useful introduction to Sikh History, Devotional Music as Meditation, and *Naam Simrin*, the essential trait in the life of a Sikh. The author writes: “*Simrin* is not an endless repetition but about self improvement”. Referring back to Chapter 8, he recommends the use of WAHEGURU, SATNAAM and MOOL MANTAR for *Saas Simrin* and refers to implications of *Naam Simrin* with reference to a meeting of Gurmukh Singh, author’s elder brother, with Bhai Randhir Singh of *Akhand Keertan Jatha*. Glossary of Sikh-orientated words used in the book is a useful addition for comprehension of text for readers unfamiliar with Sikh lore.

Before I conclude, I must refer to some salient features of this book as follows: It is highly original in its approach and presentation; it is not a theoretical treatise but based on author’s practical experience; each chapter is followed by Exercise to put the ideas of author into practice; it derives its food for thought from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Jee; and it promotes Sikh way of life and Sikh *Simrin* at global level.

I wonder why author made a blunder in Supplementary Chapter I: “Guru Nanak Sahib, the founder of Sikhi was born in Kartarpur, now in Pakistan”. It shows that the Editor failed to correct this mistake as Guru Nanak was born in *Rai Bhoi Di Talwandi*, now called Nankana Sahib but he left his mortal frame in Kartarpur. This may be due to author’s oversight.

# SIKHISM AND SPIRITUALITY

By **Rabinder Singh Bhamra**

Published by Xlibris, July 2015

Pages: 258; Price: E-Book \$3.99; P.B. \$19.99

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The author of this book, Rabinder Singh Bhamra, is known in Sikh Diaspora as an Engineer and a Sikh Scholar who got his first degree from the prestigious institute of India, known globally for its brand as IIT, Bombay. After reading his manuscript, I realize that Mr Bhamra has not lost his moorings. He remains steadfast as a practising Sikh of the Guru despite his engagements in worldly affairs. The book has been written with a motive to demolish false propaganda of a few so called intellectuals who want to mislead simple-minded Sikhs by misinterpreting Gurbani to suit their whims. The author has selected 53 Topics dealing with Sikh religion and culture to project his ideas. I wish the author brings some order in his presentation as the topics under discussion are arranged in a random order.

In the opening Chapter, the author focusses on Guru Nanak and his mission as follows: "Guru Nanak Dev was commissioned by God to spread His message by singing His glories and sharing the wealth of Naam with humanity as a Satguru, installed by God Himself, the mission for which he spent the rest of his life. For twenty two years starting in 1499 AD Guru Ji travelled

on foot almost twenty two thousand miles in all four directions. In each travel, he met the religious leaders of Hindus, Muslims, Sidhas and Yogis from Sumer Mountains in Himalayas to Ceylon, from South China and Assam to Mecca and Turkey."

What was the mission of Guru Nanak? The author explains: "God gave Guru Nanak, the treasure of Naam to share with others and never asked account for it: *"Bhagat bhandaar Guru Nanak kau saunpay. "Phir lekhaa mool naa laiaa"* (SGGS, p-612). One drop of this nectar of Naam can give liberation to one who takes it and makes him immortal: *"Ek boond Gur Amrit deeno taa atal amar na mooaa."* (SGGS, p-612). Guru Ji kept distributing this invaluable gift to his lucky Sikhs: *"Satgur Sikh ko Naam dhan deh. Gurkaa Sikh vadbhaageeh."* (SGGS, p-286).

The author also cautions us: "Satguru Nanak showed us the path to freedom then and is showing even now in Gurbani. We did get freedom following him. But now we have turned away from him and fallen to our own intellect which is very limited and deals only with three Gunas of Maya. So we are back into slavery of Maya. We have lost our faith in Satguru and *Khande Dee Pauhal*".

I find the author has given new meanings to some fundamental concepts of Sikh religion. For example, defining NAAM, the author writes: "Often Naam is confused with Name of God whereas it is God Himself within His created universe. Naam is the Divine-Consciousness, Wisdom, Intelligence, Creative Power, Plan, Will, Order (Hukam), Light (Jyot), Utterance (Sabad), Love, Grace etc. It is everything that God is. So it is the essence of God (*Siv*) and His extension into Maya (*Sakti*), His creation, both physically visible and invisible. God created Naam out of Himself." He used Naam to create His universe and is sitting in each of His creation as Naam and is relishing it." *Appeenay aap saajio aapeenay rachio Naaon. Dooee kudrat saajeeay kar assan ditho chaa."* (SGGS, p-463).

Sabad and Anhad Sabad find new explanations in author's book: "Sabad in Gurbani means the utterance of God. So Anhad Sabad means Divine Utterance which is still going on in the universe." It is thru Sabad that we connect with Naam and

thru Sabad again we unite with God:

*"Sabday he Naaon upjay Sabday mail milaiaa."*

(SGGS, p-644)

In author's view Sabad is not same as Gurbani: "Misunderstanding this Sabad as Gurbani, most of current scholars are calling Sri Guru Granth Sahib as Shabad Guru whereas it is Sabad Guru/Gurbani Guru/Satguru. In Gurbani the word Guru, Satguru refers to Naam or God and not Guru Ji themselves. Guru Ji considers Naam and God the same:

*"Gur Govind Govind Guru hai, Nanak bhed na bhaee"*

(SGGS, p-442)

Maya is a typical Indian concept which is predominant in Hindu religion. It finds an echo in Sikh scripture also. But like Sabad, which occurs in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and misinterpreted as Gurbani, Maya is the most misunderstood word in Gurbani. The author is at his best to offer his own view point on Maya: "It is the world of Maya we live in; it is the Maya which leads us into problems and it is Maya we have to fight to win freedom and gain union with God. Maya is all the visible creation of God, we live in. God put the world of Maya to work as per His plan. But He installed in the minds an intoxicating love for the world and led the whole world astray:"*Tudh aapai jagat upaaykai appey dhandhe laeyaa.*

*Moh thagauly paaeykai tudh apau jagat bhulaaeaa."*

(SGGS, p-138)

However Maya is not an objective reality and leads to duality rather than unity, so that like a mirage the world becomes an end in itself. So Maya is what makes you forget God, produce attachment to the world and duality:

*"Eh Maya jit Har visre moh upje bhao dooja laaiaa."*

(SGGS, p-921)

The author took pains to explain Hukm, Surt, Mind, Sunn, Spirituality, Reincarnation and many other concepts which occur time and again in Sikh scripture. He has elaborated his

experience about NAM JAPNA. It seems author has some esoteric knowledge about Naam. He is emphatic about the Sikh practice of repeating name of God as Waheguru: "Naam Japna is the first of the three basic duties of a Sikh, the other two being Kirat Karni and Wand Shakna. Naam Japna relates to the practice of remembering our Creator God and is done by repetitive utterance of God's Name which is given to us by our Guru Ji. The Name for remembering God given to us by Guru Ji is WAHEGURU".

According to author: "The biggest hindrance in understanding Gurabni is interpreting Sabad as Gurbani. Sabad in the old Punjabi language means a sound and not written word. When Guru Nanak Ji says "*Sabad Guru suratdhun chela*", he is not referring to his own uttered Gurbani but the sound of the Divine utterance which one hears on elevated spiritual path. Sabad is the utterance or communication of God with His creation thru His Naam/ Soul.

Science and Religion is one of the most important Chapters of this book. The author is highly critical of the pseudo-scientists who claim to interpret Gurbani logically and scientifically: "Subject of Science and Religion is often brought up for discussion by the scientific minded persons who under its influence are turning atheist. They are afraid to admit that they are atheist but write about God to prove that atheists can also be spiritual. They question the existence of God stating that there is no scientific proof of it. They openly deny the existence of soul and mind which are both extension of God within us. Soul is God Himself: "*Atam Ram Ram hai Atam*" in all God's creation. Mind is subtle manifestation of Soul or Jot: "*Mun too Jot saroop hain.*" Their opposition to reincarnation and after life is based on their no belief in existence of soul.

The author believes that science has destroyed the faith in God: "As a scientist and engineer myself, I do admire the great achievements of the dedicated work of many a scientist around the world who have contributed to the welfare of humanity at large notwithstanding the side effect of some of their products are very serious and we have to be worried about these. But

the biggest side effect of all this has been the evaporation of faith of people on God and spirituality as they have started thinking that they are independent of any control or Hukam of God”.

Interpretation of Gurbani is a challenge for all our Sikh brethren in India and in Diaspora; hence author is conscious of this malady: “Sometimes, we may misinterpret some Gurbani words and it may suit our belief system and may push these understanding onto others, not fair either. Sometimes, we will look up quotes which appear to match our beliefs and quote it without caring in what context Guru Ji had said that, we could be wrong either. Until we have complete understanding of Gurmat and the Game of life what Guru Ji calls ‘*Akath Katha*’ which really means ‘story of our spiritual journey to meet Akal Purakh’, we will not be able to interpret Gurbani correctly”.

In my view, the author has a motive and purpose for writing this book to checkmate those writers who are bent upon destroying the aesthetics of Gurbani by creating confusion in the minds of believers in Sikh faith. Author has offered the concluding evidence based on his original research in interpreting concepts of Gurbani and their implications for Sikhism in the modern world. He argues: “Spirituality is questioned by rationalists because they cannot see the spirit, mind or God. So soul is being called DNA, mind the ‘Jot Saroop’ is being called brain. Brain is just a processor of communication from five sensory organs of our body to mind and orders of our mind to the five work organs of the body to do karmas”.

The author has analyzed the impact of Science on Society in the following way and takes a dig at humanists: “Life on this planet has turned into a far more complicated drama where man trying to depend only on his own intellect has been giving up faith in God and spirituality. People are turning from being a theist to atheist and giving it socially acceptable name of being secular humanist”.

He continues his onslaught on scientists: “Similarly if we consider soul as DNA and since soul is part of Infinite God,

then God must be an infinite DNA. So it is very easy to see God because DNA, an organic acid can be seen under a powerful microscope. Since DNA can be altered we have choice to have a designer God. Calling God as energy is making a mockery of Gurmat”.

The author is supportive of implementing Sikh Rehat Maryada (SRM): “Present day Panthic Sikh Rehat Maryada is based on all different rehatnamas written at the time of Guru Ji and later Sikhs and is approved by Khalsa Panth with the seal of Akal Takhat. This is the Rehat or discipline for all Sikhs and guides us on all aspects of temporal life of the Sikhs at individual and societal level whereas Gurbani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib elaborates on our spiritual source and how to achieve our spiritual goals to realize ourselves and connect with our Source, Parmatama thru Naam. Whereas SRM gives basic guidelines for how to live our life as a Sikh, Gurbani fully guides the seeker to the spiritual goal. Both are equally important for a Sikh to live a successful life”.

There is a Chapter titled “Keeping Your Children Sikh” where the author has suggested a Ten Point Program for the Parents to motivate their children to Sikh faith. I found the 6<sup>th</sup> point as follows: “At community level we should have a Punjabi school in the Gurdwara where they can learn the language, Sikh history and also should learn to do kirtan. The kids should be allowed to participate in the Sunday program. A special program for the kids only, be arranged once a month in English where they do all the service: Kirtan, Katha and Ardaas. This will encourage their attendance, learning process and be trained to further participate in the management of the Gurdwara.”

A Chapter on Sikhs and their Religion is interspersed in the middle of this book, which looks odd. It has no relevance here and needs to be written in a book form separately. I will recommend its deletion from the book.

# SCIENCE AND SIKHISM: Conflict or Coherence

By **D.P. Singh**

Centre for Understanding Sikhism, Mississauga, Ontario, Canada

Published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar (INDIA), 2018

Pages: 334; Price: Rs. 595.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr. DP Singh is a prolific writer in many areas of Science, Religion and Literature. He came into my contact almost four decades back when he started his teaching career in Shivalik College, Nangal. In my note published on the blurb of this book, I wrote: "I expect his forthcoming book *"Science and Sikhism: Conflict or Coherence"* will prove to be a landmark in the area of Science-Religion Dialogue, with special reference to Sikh religion". I can declare without an iota of doubt that DP has more than justified my claim on his book.

The title of the book is followed by a note *"Anthology of Essays on various Concepts in Sri Guru Granth Sahib"* which may be considered as a sub-title to the book. Nearly a dozen titles have appeared in the global market projecting scientific vision of Sikh Gurus enshrined in the holy pages of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) but there is no rival to this volume in my view till date. The coverage of topics by DP Singh is very

exhaustive. All Chapters of the book open with an appropriate quotation from Science, Religion or Literature.

The book is dedicated to “Inquisitive Human Spirit” which is displayed by the author throughout this volume. The dedication is followed by the famous quote of Freeman Dyson, the renowned Physicist: *“Science and religion are two windows that people look through, trying to understand the big universe outside, trying to understand why we are here. The two windows give different views, but they look out at the same universe. Both views are one-sided, neither is complete. Both leave out essential features of the real world. And both are worthy of respect”*. Surprisingly, Dyson is contradicted as SGGS and Science are compatible in their world-view and there is no conflict but harmony between these two windows.

The preface *“A Spiritual Journey over a Scientific Bridge”* has been written by Solomon Naz, an ex-Professor of Comparative Religious Studies of York university, Canada. I agree with his remarks: “Dr. Devinder Pal Singh is one of those physicists who reinterpret religion under prismatic analysis of scientific knowledge. One great asset that I find in Dr. Devinder Pal Singh is his dedication to explain and expound the relationship of Bani (spiritual hymns), not only to the divine life alone, but the unbreakable and indivisible unity of spirit and physicality. Unity in diversity is the central theme of Guru Granth Sahib and Dr. Devinder Pal Singh has explored all its aspects thoroughly”.

The contents of this volume are divided into 21 Chapters for the sake of classification of topics under discussion. Chapter 1 begins with the famous quote of Albert Einstein: *“Science without religion is lame, religion without science is blind”*. The author goes on to discuss the relationship of religion and science with mankind: “The interaction between science and religion has been quite fascinating. It has led to a new awakening, causing a perceptible change in their inter-relationship. With passage of time, accepting the scientific truths, religious

thoughts undertook the process of replacement of the irrational beliefs with truth and rationality. In contrast, Sikhism is relatively a new religion. The ideas as expressed in its holy Granth – Sri Guru Granth Sahib – have been found to be more in tune with the modern scientific facts”.

In Chapter 2, author calls SGGS as a unique religio-philosophic treatise and elaborates its universal perspective as follows: “The beauty and splendour of SGGS is that the revealed *Shabad* and reason are consistent. There are no dogmas; only universal and eternal rational beliefs and practices. The ideals, as laid down in SGGS, are pragmatic, logical and viable. These are perennial source of freedom and creativity, unique in the present-day world”. The universal character of SGGS is fortified by quotes from *Gurbani* which makes it as a worthy tool for forging unity in mankind. According to author: “SGGS rejects all ritualism, formalism and symbolism. It defines a religion consisting of loving conviction and good will for fellow human beings. With such a universal approach, *Gurbani* is aiming at forging common bonds in the human race without discrimination of caste, creed, sex or nationality”.

In 3rd Chapter “Guru Nanak’s Teachings: A Scientific Perspective”, author defines scientific perspective and tries to establish that Guru Nanak followed it in his life and teachings: “Guru Nanak’s life was a continuous process of scientific experimentation and statement. Guru Nanak’s life and writings are rich in several such examples wherein his scientific approach to resolve several real life situations with logic and rationality is evident”. This unique character of founder of Sikh religion is brought into limelight so beautifully that it needs to be adopted by Sikh preachers (*Kathakars*) in their exegesis of *Gurbani*.

The following seven Chapters (4-10) starting with “Sunn (Primal Void): Nothing or Everything?” and ending with “Moon: An Esoteric Neighbour” may be considered as the Core Chapters of this volume. Stephen Hawking in his last book denies the

existence of God but believes in creation of Universe out of 'Nothing': "*Science predicts that many different kinds of universe will be spontaneously created out of nothing. It is a matter of chance which we are in*". However, concept of "Sunn (Primal Void)" has been advocated by Eastern religions, including Buddhism and Sikhism. The author has discussed this concept at length with reference to holy texts of Eastern religious traditions. He has invoked the Quantum field theory to establish the link between Modern Physics and "Sunn (Primal Void)".

The author has quoted profusely from the *Maru Solhe Raaga* and other Banis of SGGS to establish his thesis of 'Sunn':

ਜਲੁ ਥਲੁ ਧਰਣਿ ਗਗਨੁ ਤਹ ਨਾਹੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪੁ ਕੀਆ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥  
 ਨਾ ਤਦਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਮਗਨੁ ਨ ਛਾਇਆ ਨਾ ਸੂਰਜ ਚੰਦ ਨ ਜੋਤਿ ਅਪਾਰ ॥  
 ਸਰਬ ਟ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਲੋਚਨ ਅਭ ਅੰਤਰਿ ਏਕਾ ਨਦਰਿ ਸੁ ਤ੍ਰਿਭਵਣ ਸਾਰ ॥  
*In that state, there is no water, land, earth or sky; only the Creator Lord Himself exists. There is no intoxication of Maya there, and no shadow, nor the infinite light of the sun or the moon. The eyes within the mind which see everything, with one glance, they see the three worlds.*

(Gujri, M. I, SGGS, p. 503)

According to author: "The Sikh scripture describe the ultimate reality as Sunn – the *primal void* – a primal manifestation of the creative force (Creator) of the worldly phenomena. *Sunn* is not nothingness but represents a pregnant emptiness".

Chapter 5 "Creation of Universe: A Fabulous Tale" tries to establish the Sikh Cosmology but the author fails to refer to the work already published by his predecessors in this domain. There is nothing new at the conceptual level which has been discovered by the author. The most popular quote from the *Maru Solhe Raaga* has been repeated by the author:

ਅਰਬਦ ਨਰਬਦ ਪ੍ਰਿਧੁਕਾਰਾ ॥ ਧਰਣਿ ਨ ਗਗਨਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਅਪਾਰਾ ॥  
 ਨਾ ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਨ ਚੰਦੁ ਨ ਸੂਰਜੁ ਸੁੰਨ ਸਮਾਧਿ ਲਗਾਇਦਾ ॥

*For endless eons, there was only utter darkness. There was no earth or sky; there was only the infinite Command of the Creator. There was no day or night, no moon or sun; The Creator sat in primal, profound Samadhi.*

(Maru M. I, SGGS, p 1035)

I consider the Chapter “Panch Tattva: The Five Classical Elements” as one of the best contribution of author to the Sikh literature. He has discussed the concept of “Panch Tattva” in the most elaborate manner and discovered its origin from the treasure troves of cultures of both East and West. I find a new interpretation of Japuji Sloka by the author: “Guru Nanak has emphasized the vital role of *panch tattva* (air, water, earth, day representing the fire element-sun and night representing the element akasha, with its numerous stars or worlds) for the growth and well-being of the whole world. Thereby Gurbani proclaims the importance of living in harmony with *panch tattvas*”.

Chapter “Kudrat (Nature) in Guru Nanak’s Holistic Vision” is also a masterpiece created by the author. As in Chapter 5, the omission of references to work of predecessors is an irritant for the reviewer. The author fails to record why Guru Nanak chose Arabic term ‘Kudrat’ to represent ‘Nature’, in preference to the Indian term ‘Prakirti’ used in Sankhya system. He writes that both these terms are synonymous (which is not true): “Guru Nanak has delineated in great detail about *nature* in his hymns. In his hymns, the word ‘*kudrat*’ has often been used to depict ‘creation’ or *nature*. In Guru Nanak’s *Bani*, the word ‘*kudrat*’ is also synonymous with ‘*prakirti*’ or ‘*maya*’”. It clearly shows that he had overlooked the work of Sirdar Kapur Singh referred to by the reviewer in his essay “Concept of Nature (Qudrat) in Science and Sri Guru Granth Sahib”.

The next three Chapters are focussed on Sun, Earth and Moon. The author has dug up cultural roots of origin of these heavenly bodies as they have been used as ‘Metaphors’ in Indian

and other cultures. For example, earth has been referred to as 'Mother' in the Indian culture: "The earth, in a very real sense, is our mother. We are born from this mother, we are extensions of the earth and the cosmos of which it is a part. This means that our conceptualizing and our spirituality also extend from the spiritual dimension of the cosmos and the earth". Sikh Gurus have emphasized that the Creator is all pervading in His creation. The following hymns describe that the Creator is pervading in earth as well:

ਜਲਿ ਥਲਿ ਮਹੀਅਲਿ ਸੋਇ ॥

*He (The Creator) is pervading the water, the land and the sky.*

(M. V, SGGGS, p. 837)

ਆਪੇ ਧਰਤੀ ਆਪਿ ਜਲੁ ਪਿਆਰਾ ਆਪੇ ਕਰੇ ਕਰਾਇਆ ॥

*The Beloved Himself is the earth, and He Himself is the water;  
He Himself acts, and causes others to act.*

(M. IV, SGGGS, p. 605)

The next three Chapters discuss Indian Flowers (Lotus in particular) and Spring (*Basant*) with reference to SGGGS. I find these Chapters out of tune with the aims and objectives of the book under review. Though I do not find any conflict for inclusion of these Chapters but they are incoherent with the title of this book. Perhaps, the author wants to establish that Indian mythology has been rejected in SGGGS: "In Indian mythology, it is stated that though being born from the lotus of Vishnu's navel and having practiced austere penance, Brahma was unable to find the extent of the God's creation. Gurbani describes this fact as:

ਨਾਲਿ ਕੁਟੰਬੁ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਰਦਾਤਾ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਭਾਲਣੁ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਗਇਆ ॥

ਆਗੈ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਤਾ ਕਾ... ॥

*Brahma, the bestower of blessings, entered the stem of the lotus, with his relatives, to find the extent of the universe.  
Proceeding on, he could not find its limits...*

(M. I, SGGGS, p. 350)

The Chapter on Wismad (Wonderful Bliss) has impressed me a lot. Author defines various forms of Wismad and calls it the “The Pinnacle of Spiritual Experience”: “We all need to experience *wismad* in order to set a firm foundation for spiritual and psychological development in our lives. In its essence, mystical wismad is spiritual and sacred. We can experience the meaning of life and its much splendour simply by immersing ourselves in this state of wonderful bliss. Gurbani emphasizes that the experience of mystical *wismad* is a sine-qua-non to understand the ultimate reality”.

ਬਿਸਮਨ ਬਿਸਮ ਭਏ ਬਿਸਮਾਦਾ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਹਰਿ ਸਿਮਰਿ ਪਰਾਨੀ ॥

*Being wonderstruck with His (Lord's) wonders; meditate on Him, O mortal, and you shall understand the ultimate reality.*

(M. V, SGGS, p. 893)

The last six Chapters of this volume deserve a special mention as they explore the role which SGGS and Sikhs are destined to play in the present day global crisis. The author is worried about the ecological crisis: “At present, in the midst of a technological revolution, humanity is facing great challenges for its survival. Ecological crisis is one of the gravest among these. There is a serious concern that the earth may no longer be a sustainable bio-system”. The chapter “Ecological Concerns in Sri Guru Granth Sahib” discerns the role to be played by SGGS: “SGGS declares that the purpose of human beings is to achieve a blissful state and to be in harmony with the earth and all of God's creation”.

“Relevance of Guru Granth Sahib in Twenty First Century” stresses the significance of SGGS in the present century to tackle the problems of Environment, Corruption, Drug Abuse and World Peace. The author quotes profusely from Gurbani to support his reliance and claims on SGGS: “The ideals of the Universal brotherhood of man and the Universal fatherhood of God, as laid down in SGGS are of fundamental importance to settle all conflicts of man”:

ਏਕੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹਮ ਬਾਰਿਕ... ॥

*One True Lord is the father of all; and we are His children...*

(M. V, SGGS, p. 611)

The role of Sikhs has been defined in the Chapter “Peaceful Co-existence and Role of Sikhs”: “Thus a Sikh’s role is to lead an exemplary life based on strong ethics and love for God and all beings. A life-style based on the principles of honest labour (*kirat karo*), sharing with others (*vand chhako*), *Seva* (selfless voluntary service) and *simran* (love of God or meditation) leads to an inner peace in an individual and thus providing a basic framework for fostering peace at family level and in society as well”. The role of Sikh organisations is of paramount importance: “Sikh organizations and Institutions should develop a common understanding of the concepts and terms of coexistence”.

“Religious Experience in Science” is an important contribution to this volume. The author has supplied the best available quotes from renowned scientists to establish a congruence between Science and Religion. According to author, the study of science helps in the discovery of God: “It has been the experience of many great scientists, that science ultimately leads man to a personal encounter with the absolute or the ultimate reality. An awareness of the ultimate reality may come to the scientist through the perception of order in nature, in the form of a spiritually moving experience”. The author has retrieved and collated all the text in this chapter from other sources in a harmonious style.

In the last Chapter “Interpreting Gurbani: Formulating a Methodology”, the author explores the topic of Gurbani Hermeneutics from its first principles. He defines the two laws of Gurbani Hermeneutics as follows: “ *The first important Law of Gurbani Hermeneutics is that the SGGS should be interpreted literally. Literal Gurbani interpretation means we understand the Gurbani in its normal/plain meaning. The SGGS says what it means and means what it says. The second crucial Law of Gurbani*

*Hermeneutics is that a verse or passage must be interpreted historically, grammatically, and contextually. Historical interpretation refers to understanding the culture, background, and situation which prompted the text*". I wonder author has relied on one dozen foreign sources for writing about "Various Schools of Gurbani Interpretation" while ignoring completely an equal number of Indian sources. In my view, Taran Singh, Nirbhai Singh and Gurnek Singh, all from Punjabi University Patiala, must deserve a mention by the author as they wrote their treatises about Gurbani interpretation before and after the era of Hermeneutics.

I am pleased to write this review as a unique opportunity was provided by the author to go through this comprehensive volume of 21 Chapters. I have examined the text critically and find hardly any flaw like typos, misquotes of Gurbani hymns etc., except some lack of references that I have pointed out in my review. I hope the preachers of Sikh religion and exegetes of Gurbani will find this volume as a resource material.

# SIKHI SOCH DE PEHREDAR: (The Watchdog of Sikh Thinking)

By **Tarlochan Singh** (Ex-MP Rajya Sabha);

Editor: **Ujagar Singh**

Published by Charhdikala Publications,

Rajpura Road, Patiala (2015)

Pages: 160; Price: Rs. 150.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Tarlochan Singh, the author of this book, has been a leading figure in the firmament of Sikh politics; starting his journey as Press Secretary to President Giani Zail Singh, then moving to Rajya Sabha as its member, and becoming Chairman of Minority Commission of India (with the rank of a Cabinet Minister). In whatever capacity he served, he left an imprint of his personality and professionalism. The book under review is based on his articles and speeches delivered at various forums. The book is edited by Ujagar Singh. Jagjit Singh Dardi, publisher of this book, writes in his introduction: “The publication of this book will prove to be a milestone in Sikh politics, Sikh culture, Sikh concerns and issues, and Sikh Literature”. Prof. Balkar Singh in his preface has given a critique of the thought processes of the author by his brief review. I like his statement: “The process of dialogue is almost absent in Sikh society. Tarlochan

Singh has used Sikh thought and praxis as a technology to resolve on-going conflicts”.

The author starts his innings with the essay: “*Sikh Qaum da Safar* (Journey of Sikh Nation)” in which he recounts the history from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh and spread of Sikhi in all nook and corners of India and outside of India. There is a clear evidence of spread of Sikhi in the 1699 Baisakhi congregation held at Anandpur Sahib where five Beloved ones (*Panj Pyaras*) hailed from different regions of India despite all handicaps of undertaking long journeys. He has praised the role of Yogi Bhajan in spread of Sikhi in America and traced the history of Sikh diaspora citing their success stories. He is critical of the role of SGPC which failed to supply literature and prepare preachers who could deliver sermons of Sikhi in English and other foreign languages. He is fully aware that only the message of Guru Nanak is relevant in modern scientific age.

In the following 5 chapters, the author asserts that Guru Gobind Singh was the harbinger of the freedom movement in Punjab; he worries about *Patit Lehar* in Punjab and suggests some remedies to stop it; an account of Guru Nanak’s travelogues is given; creation of *Virasat-e-Khalsa* as an historical monument to Sikh heritage; and condemnation of Sikh Talibans who have created a fear psychosis in Punjab by their anti-Sikh activities. I fully appreciate the concerns of Tarlochan Singh regarding the change of Sikh nomenclature (naming Mata Gujri to Gujar Kaur, Sundari to Sundar Kaur, etc.) in recent times which is against our history and Sikh tradition. Author is also highly critical of mixing political demands with visits of foreign dignitaries which happened during the visit of David Cameron, the Prime Minister of UK, to Golden Temple. The sanctity of such visits need to be maintained by SGPC.

The author is worried about the preservation of Sikh artifacts of historical value. He suggests that such rare artifacts needs to be collected and preserved as per UNESCO guidelines for

our posterity. The case of rare artifacts of Guru Gobind Singh in possession of Maharaja of Nabha is a case in point. SGPC must collaborate with archaeology department to preserve these valuable symbols of Sikh culture in a museum. Calendar issue has split Sikh nation and author suggests that we must get out of this rut by adopting the original calendar.

In the next few chapters, author recounts the history of Anand Marriage Act which was presented by Tikka Ripudaman Singh of Nabha and approved by the Viceroy of India on 22 October 1909 despite opposition by the Arya Samaj and some catholic Sikh organisations. After independence, this act remained in disuse and Sikh marriages were being registered under Hindu Marriage Act of 1955. Tarlochan Singh had to canvass support for re-introduction of Anand Marriage Act in Parliament by making strenuous efforts and garnering support of all political parties irrespective of their party affiliations. This single achievement of the author has made him a hero in the Sikh world.

The author traces the history of Rajiv-Longowal pact which failed to bring peace to the troubled Punjab because it was conceived in secrecy by a coterie of Sikh intellectuals and wily politicians without the involvement of Akali stalwarts, Jathedar Gurcharan singh Tohra and Parkash Singh Badal. The suggestions of author to involve the real Akali leaders were ignored by Rajiv Gandhi and hence its failure. The other burning issues which were discussed by the author on the forum of Parliament are related to Nanavati Commission and injustice meted out to the Sikhs, Operation Blue star and role of Indira Gandhi. The author believes that Indira Gandhi was mis-guided by a coterie and took a decision against her wishes.

The author is appreciative of role played by Mater Tara Singh in the trial of Veer Savarkar, President of Hindu Mahasabha and a staunch supporter of RSS ideology. The author makes a strong plea to consider Banda Singh Bahadur as the first free King of India and his account of bravery should be

a part of school curriculum in India. There is strong criticism of Haryana Sikhs demand for a separate Gurdwara Committee by the author which will prove disastrous for the Sikh unity. There is a chapter on the role of Dr Balbir Singh of *Panchvati*, Dehradun in promoting Sikh literature. The author forgot to mention the role of Puran Singh, the great Sikh Scientist, Poet and Philosopher, who was a life-long friend of Dr. Balbir Singh in Dehradun and living in Ivanhoe, next door to *Panchvati*.

The last 2 chapters are interesting and important from historical point of view. The author has given an account of Sikh presence in other provinces of India and how Sikhs are flourishing in their businesses outside Punjab. The author proposes that Sikhs must get political mileage where ever they live by seeking support of like-minded parties as they have done in Canada, England, Singapore and Malaysia. There is a suggestion that *Daswand* (Tithe) of Sikh nation must be spared for upliftment of marginalised sections of Sikh society, viz. *Sikligars* and *Vanjaras*. How the armaments of Sikh Gurus and Warriors were recovered from the debris of Akal Takhat is highly rewarding and exciting account narrated by the author. In fact, these *shasters* (armaments) were displayed in Quila Gobindgarh, Amritsar by the army after Operation Blue Star just like a war trophy. It was N.S. Rattan, Secretary to Punjab Govt., who pointed out to Giani Zail Singh the real worth and Sikh heritage of this collection in presence of S. Tarlochan Singh. There is no historical record of these artifacts and there is lot of confusion about the genuineness of these armaments kept at Akal Takhat.

The author writes his own account in the last chapter under the title "My Story". I enjoyed reading this inspiring autobiography of the author. This sums up the life history of 80 years full of adventure, political fortunes, vicissitudes, and rise of a man from public relation officer to the rank of a Minister of Cabinet rank in India. This story can inspire any young man and needs to be broadcast.

# SIKH SAMAJ DE MASLE

## (The Problems of Sikh Society)

By **Tarlochan Singh** (Ex-MP Rajya Sabha)  
Published by Charhdikala Publications, Rajpura Road,  
Patiala (2016)  
Pages: 133; Price: Rs. 200.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Tarlochan Singh, the author of this book, needs no introduction. He has been a rising star in the firmament of Indian politics; starting his journey as Press Secretary to President Giani Zail Singh, then moving to Rajya Sabha as its member, and becoming Chairman of Minority Commission of India (with the rank of a Cabinet Minister). In whatever capacity he served, he left an imprint of his personality and professionalism. The book under review is 4<sup>th</sup> in the series and is based on his articles and speeches delivered at various forums. The book is edited by Ujagar Singh, its preface written by Jagjit Singh Dardi, Editor-in-Chief of Charhdikala group of publications, and an introductory note by SP Singh, ex-VC of GND University, Amritsar.

The book contains 33 short essays and I classify it as a coffee table edition. The author has made a critical analysis of events leading to Indian Partition and its after effects on the Sikh (Akali) politics, the Hindu-Sikh brotherhood, and Indian democracy. The main concern of the author is Sikh society and its problems: Sikh Identity, management of Gurdwaras, Akal

Takhat, the influence of *Deras* on Sikhi, and promotion of Punjabi language and culture at global level. The book is written in adorable Punjabi style touching readers' inner cords, and my review will only cover the salient features of the book.

The opening Chapter is titled: "Are the Sikhs facing any Danger from the Hindus?" The author has exposed the hollow claims of Sikh intellectuals and some historians who try to create a wedge between Sikhs and Hindus. Most of our Sikh converts during and after the Guru period came from Hindu society; so much so that all the Five Beloveds (Panj Pyaras) of the Sikhs who offered their heads to Tenth Master were Hindus from different parts of India. The Head *Granthis* of Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras in Punjab mostly came from educated Kashmiri Pundit converts to Sikhi before 1947. The author advocates the merger of millions of Nanak Panthis (followers) and all sections of *Sehajdharis* in the Sikh fold.

In the following 3 Chapters, the author squarely blames four Bhisham Pitamas of Sikhs (Swaran Singh, Harkishan Surjeet, Giani Zail Singh and Darbara Singh) for keeping silent and not playing an active role in stopping the blood bath in Punjab during 1980s. The Akali Party suffered heavy losses before and after partition due to unfaithfulness of its top leaders, who shifted their loyalty and allegiance to the Congress party. Only Master Tara Singh remained steadfast and loyal to Akali Party till his last breath. The author has exploded the myth of Sikh state being granted by the British by referring to the historical meeting between Master Tara Singh and Jinnah held in New Delhi in 1946 in the bungalow of Sir Teja Singh Malik. Jinnah was not prepared to granting autonomous status to the Sikhs within the boundaries of proposed Pakistan; hence Sikhs had no option left but to join India.

The author is all praise for Dr PS Pasricha, who was instrumental in all round improvement and the facelift of Hazur Sahib Gurdwara and the city of Nander during tercentenary celebrations of Guru Granth Sahib Installation as Shabad Guru of the Sikhs. The author himself was involved in changing the nomenclature of Nander Railway station to Hazur Sahib Nander and getting approval for Guru Gobind

Singh airport at Nander. In the Chapter “Sewa de Na te Loot”, the author exposes the hypocrisy of Sikh leaders who want to control the Gurdwaras posing as its Sewadars, but are not ashamed to even pay bribe to get elected as members of Gurdwara management, thus making the Sikhs laughing stock of the people of other faiths. He praises the contribution of Nirmala Saints to the cause of Sikhi and education of the poor. The influence of Deras in Punjab elections is emphasized; Dera Sacha Sauda is cited as an example where Parkash Singh Badal and other political leaders also used to visit to gain support. The author laments that the Sikhs are going astray from their faith in ignoring the command (*Guru manio Granth*) of Guru Gobind Singh to accept the Shabad Guru (*Guru Granth*) as their ultimate redeemer.

The author is highly critical of giving reservation to Jats in Haryana and their counterparts in Punjab. Both of these communities are land owners and command respect in power and politics of both the states. Moreover, it goes against the paradigm of equality preached by Sikh religion. The most significant Chapter “What is the Message of Anandpur Sahib?” needs to be propagated by the Sikh institutions engaged in celebrations of 350 years of its foundation. Author highlights the message as follows: Anandpur Sahib signifies (i) Freedom of Conscience for all; (ii) The concept of National Integration as the Sikh Sangat came from all over India to participate in the event of 1699; (iii) Equality of all races in India as the Panj Pyaras belonged to Indian backward classes; and (iv) The symbol of Khanda created at Anandpur Sahib represents Sovereignty and Power.

The politico-cultural status of Chandigarh is under threat. According to author: “The legal status of Chandigarh is that it has to be treated as an *amanat* (pawn) with the Indian government, which has no authority to inhabit it with people of non-Punjabi origin to change its demography with an ulterior motive and purpose”. Punjab University has been transferred to Punjab but it is fully controlled by the Centre for all practical purposes. Punjabi language is being given as step-motherly treatment in the Union Territory of Chandigarh. Tarlochan

Singh was invited to Punjab University, Lahore as an invited speaker in a conference where he raised an important issue: "Why there is no mention of Sikh religion, Guru Nanak and Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the curriculum of Punjab University? Why there is no teaching of Punjabi in Gurmukhi script?" He won applause from the audience and a promise from the Vice Chancellor to review this situation. There is a word of praise for Jaspal Singh, VC of Punjabi University, for starting online courses to teach Sikh religion and Gurmat Sangeet for Sikh diaspora. There is a Chapter dealing with Indian democracy and its successes and failures. The author has made a bold attempt to suggest that if we do not inculcate communal harmony our democracy will suffer as he referred to occurrence of Indian riots in 1984, 1989 and 2002.

In the last few Chapters, the author has a word of praise for discipline and management at Radhaswami Satsangs, which needs to be emulated by the Sikhs. There are suggestions to make Sikh identity intelligible to foreigners, especially to make a distinction that the Sikhs are not terrorists to be targeted in cold blood. The question of disunity among the Sikhs is haunting the author and he proposes that religion must be a common factor, irrespective of political affiliations. There is a word of praise for Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru and his concern for Punjab. The Sikh inheritance needs to be kept intact and the glory of Turban is stressed.

To my surprise, the editing job of the book has not been handled efficiently in a professional manner. In Chapter 1, two paragraphs are repeated in the text. There is another serious lapse in editing; identical text is found listed under two different Chapters with different titles on pages 74 and 121 dealing with demolition of Babri Masjid. The text has some howlers, for example, when referring to Sikh Studies Chair, Santa Barbara is written as Saint Babra. Hope these mistakes will be taken care of in the revised edition of the book. I am sure this book will definitely give a peep into the multi-dimensional personality of its author and inspire young researchers to focus their attention to the burning problems of Sikh society as envisaged by the learned author.

# ROLE OF A PARLIAMENTARIAN (Tarlochan Singh's Speeches, Mentions & Questions in Rajya Sabha)

By **Kehar Singh**, Ex- Prof. Political Science,  
Punjabi University, Patiala  
Published by Punjabi University, Patiala (2016)  
Pages: 228; Price: Rs. 300.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The chief architect of this book, Sirdar Tarlochan Singh, was elected from the state of Haryana, with the support of BJP and INLD, as an independent member of Rajya Sabha for a term of 6 years from August 1, 2004 to July 31, 2010. The book under review is unique in several respects. The Indian democracy is vibrant but hardly any Member of Parliament has published the record of his speeches delivered in the Houses of Parliament. Punjabi University has achieved a new milestone in its history by publishing this book. Preface of the book is written by Dr Jaspal Singh, Vice Chancellor of Punjabi University, Patiala. Kuldip Nayar the renowned journalist, has written an appraisal of the book and its author. Introduction by the Editor, Kehar Singh, is highly illuminating. The book is bilingual: the original speeches in Hindi and their translation in English.

I may recount the striking points mentioned in the introduction as follows: (i) Tarlochan Singh (TS) raised issues in Parliament concerning local, regional, state, national, as well as international problems; (ii) The depth and breadth of his information about these issues is praiseworthy; (iii) The perseverance and determination displayed by TS in pursuing these issues need to be appreciated; (iv) The support he got for his views from his fellow parliamentarians across political divisions is marvellous, and (v) The liberal Sikh perspective which remained the focus and lodestar of his participation in debates of the Parliament.

The book is classified into seven sections: Sikh Issues, Agriculture, Railways, Information and Broadcasting, Sports, Miscellaneous Issues, Special Mentions and Questions in Rajya Sabha. The Editor has done his job well by introducing each section briefly. I agree and support the conclusion of editor: "Tarlochan Singh is a pragmatist and optimist. He believes that most of the problems faced by the Sikhs in Indian state can be fruitfully addressed through a meaningful participation and logical presentation in the democratic fora of the country".

Sikh Issues section starts with the speech delivered by TS on August 11, 2005 on the Report of Nanavati Commission in which he elaborates on the deficiencies of Report in a logical manner and took Justice Nanavati to task. The Report says that there was an organised attack on Sikhs and it was known that Police will not intervene but then why the report is silent on the question: "Who was the mastermind of this massacre at such a large scale". TS is very diplomatic in his criticism of the coterie of PM, who must have misled both Mrs. Indira Gandhi and Rajiv Gandhi. In his wisdom as MP and a devoted Sikh, TS made 2 suggestions to assuage the hurt feelings of the Sikhs: (1) To set up a "Truth and Reconciliation Committee" as it was done by Nelson Mandella; and (2) Govt. must name all the guilty persons and they must seek pardon; the Sikhs will forgive them. Despite these brilliant ideas of TS, the Govt.

failed to act and Nanavati Report is gathering dust. TS concluded his speech with the sarcastic remarks: "The ifs & buts and whats & whys are irrelevant and meaningless. The issue before the Parliament is what the Commission has done? Commissions are set up to buy time and avoid public fury, and Reports are meant to be consigned to archives".

During discussion on Liberhan Commission report, TS squarely blames Indian judiciary which failed to deliver any judgement in Babri Masjid case during 15 years and thus kept the communal cauldron boiling. He referred to the bigger injustice done to the Sikhs in 1984 when Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) was attacked by the Indian army. TS brought a twist in the discussion on Babri Masjid when he quoted verbatim the hymns of Guru Nanak from Guru Granth Sahib recorded under Babar Vani: "Bringing the marriage party of Sin, Babar invaded from Kabul, demanding our land as a wedding gift". The soul of Babar must have felt the pangs in his grave as he was labeled as a Sinner by these quotes of Guru Nanak!

TS is at his rhetoric best in his speech delivered on 14th December 2009 during a call attention motion on killing of Sikhs in 1984. He traces the history of Sikh sacrifices made for India and reminds the Parliament about the injustices meted out to Sikhs in Punjab. Anyone who reads his entire speech will become sentimental as it touches the emotional chords of the Sikhs. He reminds the Parliament: "Why didn't the earth shake when Mahatma Gandhi was murdered, how many Marathas were murdered in the country, because the murderer was a Marathi? When Rajiv Gandhi was killed, how many Tamils were killed? Why were only the Sikhs victimized, why the tree had to fall only on the Sikhs?". Again, TS is critical of role played by the Indian judiciary and CBI in dealing with the Sikh episode.

TS participated forcefully in the debate on Dera Sacha Sauda (12th May, 2007) and made a speech on the Black List of Sikhs (26 July, 2010). But the singular achievement for which TS will

be remembered by coming generations of Sikhs is his advocacy of Anand Marriage Act for recording the Sikh marriages independently and out of the ambit of Hindu Marriage act. The amendment to 1908 Anand Marriage Act was moved by TS, the Bill went through all the necessary stages and finally adopted by the Parliament. Reading the queries of Members, it looks funny how this minor amendment was delayed by the Ministry of Law and how TS got the written support of SGPC and all MPs from Punjab and elsewhere cutting across party lines. I consider it as a feather in the turban of Sirdar Tarlochan Singh.

Participating in Foreign Affairs debate, TS pleads for issuing Visas to Sikhs who are barred to visit India due to political reasons, helping Sikhs settled in Italy and Spain by the Indian embassies, setting up Visa facility for visit to Pakistan at Amritsar, raising the turban issue in France, setting up religious shrines in Middle-East and helping Afganistan refugees to settle in India.

There are very important issues raised by TS during the debate on Motion of Thanks on the President's Address in Parliament (8th March 2007). He reminds the august House that 1857 Mutiny was not the first war of Independence of India; why not take it back to 1709 when Banda Singh Bahadur defeated the Mughal empire to set up his independent Khalsa Raj? TS also raised the issue why Education Policy and the content of Text Books change with the change of Govt. at the Centre? He referred to a major omission in the address of President on the growth of population. I appreciate the way our MP reminded the President of India to take notice of growing Indian population at the rate of 3.5% when the target fixed by his Govt. is 2.1% only. He quotes how China has controlled population and made a tremendous progress in all spheres where as India is far behind in matters of health and nutrition.

Tarlochan Singh deserves the credit for delivering his speech

in Punjabi for the first time in the history of Indian Parliament. But this speech is not published in this book, we find its English version only. Hope the university records it in the revised edition. Another Bill of historical importance for the separate identity of the Sikhs in India moved by TS is the Constitution Amendment Bill (2005), in which the Clause 25 has been amended in such a way as to declassify Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists from the definition of Hindus. Being a private member's Bill, it is still pending for clearance in Parliament despite the strenuous efforts made by TS.

In the section on Agriculture, TS speeches highlight the problems of agricultural sector in Punjab and Haryana. He is critical of Central Govt. policies of not providing remunerative support prices of crops commensurate with the cost of Inputs by providing data collected by PAU scientists to hammer his point of argument. He brings to the notice of Govt. the suicides being committed by marginal farmers due to non-payment of crop loans and asking for some mechanism to find a way out of this situation. He has pointed to the serious problem of water depletion in Punjab/Haryana due to wheat/paddy cycle. Recently, I reported this in my article: "Punjab in the grip of an Ecological Disaster: Is there a Solution" on Researchgate.

In section on Railways, TS points out lack of facilities for Senior Citizens, promotion of Punjabi language for use on Railway stations in Delhi/Haryana, and running of special trains for Nander in view of tercentenary celebrations of Guru Gobind Singh. TS makes a fun of Govt. claim to create World class railway stations in India when there is utter lack of basic facilities for handicaps and old people at our stations. TS was instrumental in getting the name of Nander railway station changed to Hazur Sahib Nander during tercentenary year.

Participating in the debate on Information and Broadcasting Ministry in Parliament, TS points out the mischief of a private TV channel in blaming the Sikhs for division of India. He made suggestions to make a special film on Sikhs to project their

true Identity at global level as they are being mistaken as Talibani or other brand of terrorists. To promote communal harmony and unity, TS suggested to relay programs on holy Guru Granth Sahib, as it has a universal appeal for the humankind. Last but not the least, the frequency of quality Punjabi programs needs to be enhanced on Doordarshan, which can be attractive in Pakistan and for Indian diaspora.

In section on Sports, TS brings to the notice of the Members the problems faced by the sportsmen and the sports bodies. He is also critical of too much patronage given to Cricket at the cost of other national sports. The section on Miscellaneous Issues shows the range of issues raised by TS concerning the state from which he got elected. He participated in debate on Urdu language, Health issues, role of Khap Panchayats in Haryana, role of Human Rights Commissions, debate on Terrorism, Women Reservation, Saving Girl Child, and Senior Citizens Bill. He is critical of working of Home Ministry for keeping a Black List of Sikhs.

The last section, Special Mentions and Questions in Rajya Sabha, is the longest one and deals with several dozen issues mostly related to sections already covered. TS raised the issue of conservation of monuments of Sultanpur Lodhi in Punjab with the Minister of Culture, Indian citizenship to Afgan nationals who migrated to India, Amritsar Airport as an International airport, TADA prisoners, Problem of Indians abroad without legal documents, recruitment of Punjabi teachers for Delhi/Haryana, problems of Punjabi farmers uprooted from villages of Union Territory Chandigarh whose land was acquired to rehabilitate Jhuggi dwellers, and many more issues of National and International importance. I was amused to find his concern for the illegal occupation of the land of Dr Hargobind Khurana, the Nobel Laureate of Punjab, in the state of Haryana.

I appreciate the efforts of Editor Kehar Singh and the help provided by Ujagar Singh in organising the complex and

complicated material of debates into proper sections. However, I find some minor discrepancies in rendering the original text of speeches from Hindi to English. There is lot of repetition which is natural as the debates concern issues which were raised on different occasions but on identical themes. I guess spell check has not been used by the editor/publisher, leaving some serious mistakes in the text. The book is free from howlers except on page 3 (Introduction), where it is stated: "President of Bosnia is held responsible for massacre of Muslims in Bosnia and being questioned in the World Court". In fact, it is Radovan Karadzic, President of Republika Srpska (Serb Republic), who has been held responsible for this massacre and sentenced to 40 years in prison.

I wish the Author (TS) to get this book translated into Punjabi and other Indian languages for the benefit of students of Political Science and general public, who may be interested to get a peep into the working of Indian Parliament.

# PUNJABIYAT

By **Jasbir Singh Khurana**

Published by Hemkunt Publishers (P) Ltd, New Delhi, 2013

Pages: 248; Price: Rs. 795.00; H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

The author, Col. Jasbir Singh Khurana (Retd.), is well settled in Penn Valley, Pennsylvania, USA. He took to writing as his pastime and has already authored two volumes. As the title suggests, the author has prepared this book based on history, culture and ethnicity of people of Punjab. I was looking for definition of *Punjabiya*t in the book under review but failed to find one. Author tried to justify its title on the blurb: *Punjabiya*t – The Cultural Heritage and Ethos of the People of Punjab – describes the attributes, moods of the people of Punjab as brought out in the form of their history, folklore, dances and songs, their festivals, the music of their region and their philosophy as expressed in their proverbs and sayings. The book also brings out the vitality and exuberance of the Punjabis with the exposure to their legends of romance and bravery.

Keeping in view this definition of *Punjabiya*t, the author has divided the book into 8 chapters. Chapter 1 covers the history of Punjab from ancient times to modern period, with a bird's eye view of origin of Sikhism in Punjab, Ranjit Singh's rule, annexation of Punjab and partition of Punjab and its aftermath. The author has conjectured that spread of Sikhism

was restricted to Punjab because the Sikh Gurus adopted Punjabi as the medium of their expression. He further elaborates (p. 22): "It had all the elements of a national faith until it crystallized into a distinct sect with a political purpose." I can call it merely a 'loud thinking' by the author. On page 24, the author miserably fails in his historical review of Banda Bahadur's rule. He writes: "Under Zakriya Khan, the Mughal Governor of Punjab, Mughal armies inflicted a crushing defeat to the Banda Bahadur's army in 1815." In fact, Banda Bahadur was defeated by Abdus Samad Khan, who was Governor of Punjab in 1715 (not 1815).

Chapter 2 is well written without much hassles. It gives spread of Punjabis all over the globe, their dialects and cuisine. A map is added to show geographical areas of spoken dialects of Punjabi. The author mentions some areas of Haryana under Malwai dialect but fails to mention specific areas of Punjab under this dialect, explicitly.

Chapters 3 and 4 describe 'Festivals of Punjab' and 'Folk Songs, Dance and Music' of Punjab, respectively. Festivals are classified under religious denominations (Hindus, Muslims, and Sikhs). There are pictorial illustrations to show musical instruments, festivals and other aspects of Punjabi culture in Punjab. Under *Holla Mohalla* (p. 80), the author offers a wrong explanation in the end note, linking it to Guru Hargobind's release from the Gwalior fort. He is confused and misquotes 'The Encyclopaedia of Sikhism' in the end note. It is the author who is to blame for this pitfall and not the Encyclopedia entry, which is correct!

Chapters 5-7 are devoted to legends of romance and bravery, proverbs, folk beliefs, superstitions and omens. Legends of romance cover Heer-Ranjha, Mirza-Sahiban, Sohni-Mehiwal and Sassi-Punnu. In addition, legends of Puran Bhagat, Sakhi Sarwar and Dulla Bhatti also find a slot in Chapter 5. These legends are a part and parcel of Punjabi culture and influence the old and the young Punjabis alike. Some spelling mistakes need to be rectified, e.g. 'surt sambhal' is written as 'sust sambhal' (page 103, 1<sup>st</sup> para).

Chapter 8 on *Phulkari* is quite informative though very brief. The origin of *Phulkari* is traced back to Vedic times in Punjab. *Phulkari* motifs are illustrated in Chapter 3 under Patiala *Phulkari* and Pakistani *Phulkari*. “Fusion *Phulkari*’ may replace the age-old tradition of *Phulkari* in Punjab.

The author has devoted almost 90 pages to 4 annexures of the book. Annexure 1 covers some prominent people of Punjab. Images of prominent Punjabis are given from both India and Pakistan. The author writes that Abdus Salam, Nobel Laureate physicist from Pakistan, directed the research and development of Atomic Bomb project of Pakistan in 1972. No doubt, Abdus Salam was advisor to Govt. of Pakistan but he was never trusted being an Ahmadiyya to direct the Atomic Bomb project. To my knowledge, as a Nuclear Physicist and a friend of Abdus Salam, it was Abdul Qadir Khan who was instrumental in making an Atomic Bomb for Pakistan; after he transferred know – how clandestinely from his research laboratory in Netherlands to Pakistan.

Annexures 2 and 3 are most valuable features of this volume. I enjoyed reading these annexures as they contain old Punjabi songs (*bolian*, *jugni*, love lyrics) and Punjabi proverbs and ‘non-sense’ poetry. The author has made a good collection of these songs from both Punjabs. Annexure 4 is a useful addition on glossary of Punjabi terms/words for non-Punjabi readers.

In my view, the most valuable part of this book is its End Notes. I found meanings and origin of some words of common usage, for example, ‘*Misls*’ and ‘*Tawaif*’ in the end-notes. Author has translated all folksongs, proverbs and ditties from rustic Punjabi into simple English for the convenience of non-Punjabi readers of his book.

Hemkunt India has done a wonderful job in the production of this book in a deluxe format. This book will prove to be an asset for researchers of Punjabi folk lore and culture in the Universities of India and abroad. It is a useful resource book on *Punjabiyyat*. I advise the author and publisher to remove the howlers and other discrepancies pointed out in my review in the second edition.

# LIFE OF A GURMUKH: SANT TEJA SINGH

By **Khem Singh Gill**

Published by Khalsa Diwan Society, New Westminster,  
BC, Canada, 2016

Pages: 767; Price: Rs. 500.00; US\$16.95, H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Khalsa Diwan Society was established in 1906 in Vancouver through the efforts of the visionary Saint Scholar, Sant Teja Singh. The author, Dr. Khem Singh Gill, has made a tremendous effort to prepare this volume running into 59 Chapters covering the whole spectrum of life and services rendered by Sant Teja Singh to Sikh community globally. In the preface, author writes: "I had the privilege of kinship with Sant Teja Singh Ji since 1949 when I was a student of B.Sc. (Agriculture) at Khalsa College, Amritsar. I, therefore, have taken up the task of writing a biography in English of this highly educated, great Sikh scholar and Perfect Gur Sikh, Sant Teja Singh Ji." In my view, this kinship makes the author highly qualified to write this volume. In other words, a *Gurmukh* is writing about another *Gurmukh*. It is an uphill task to review this Volume of 767 pages; hence I took liberty to read salient features of this volume to make short shrift of my review.

Chapter 1 "Towards God consciousness" is rather too long for an introduction. The author has tried to elaborate *Sikhi* concepts introduced in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) by profusely quoting references from SGGS. In my view, author wanted to establish his thesis: Who is a Gurmukh? to justify the title of this volume. He has succeeded in his mission by juxtaposing the qualities of *Gurmukh* vis a vis *Manmukh*. Meditation on divine name and methods of meditation are elaborated (pp. 96-106), and *Waheguru Gurmantra* is recommended by the author on the basis of Gurbani. A critical examination of SGGS reveals that *Waheguru Gurmantra* is not recommended explicitly by any Guru author of Gurbani but by the scribe of SGGS, Bhai Gurdas, the great Sikh savant. The Bhat authors of Bani in SGGS use it explicitly but as a eulogy in praise of Sikh Gurus.

Sant Teja Singh was born on March 17, 1877 at village Bolowali, not far from my village Kamoke, district Gujranwala. Teja Singh was betrothed to Bishan Kaur while he was still an innocent looking middle school student. His father was a Doctor who could support his education even up to the University level. But his step mother proved to be a sore in his married life. Teja Singh passed his M.A. and LL.B. examinations in 1901 from Punjab University, Lahore. He had a brief stint as a practicing lawyer in Gujranwala; then served as Headmaster of a High School in Bhehra, before joining as an officer in North Indian Salt Department at Samber Lake, in present day Rajasthan. In 1904, Teja Singh moved to Khalsa College, Amritsar to enter his chosen vocation of teaching. Khalsa College proved to be a turning point in the life of Teja Singh, as the magnetic power of Gurbani changed him from a materialist (atheist) to a seeker of spirituality. Thus Teja Singh underwent a profound spiritual experience during his service in Khalsa College. The author has described the ecstatic state of Teja Singh's mind overflowing with divine love. He was yearning to meet a divine person and ultimately succeeded in finding the most revered saint of India, Sant Attar Singh Ji of Mastuana.

The spiritual journey of Teja Singh started after he took Amrit from *Panj Pyaras* arranged by Sant Attar Singh Ji; he was reborn in the Khalsa fold and his name was changed from Niranjana Singh Mehta to Teja Singh under the command of *Panj Pyaras*. Teja Singh was a completely transformed personality, his association with saints like Baba Kesar Singh was motivating, who prophesied that Teja Singh will be blessed to visit England to spread Guru Nanak's message of *Naam* in the west. This prophecy came to be true when Teja Singh was mandated to visit England and America for higher studies and spreading the message of Sikh Gurus in those lands.

**Education and Community Service:** Teja Singh sailed for England on 6th August 1906 and joined University College London to obtain D.Sc. degree. After 2 months, he moved to Cambridge university and became the first turbaned Sikh on its campus. Mr Jackson, his tutor in the famous Downing College, allowed him the choice to keep his turban intact, against the rules of University, where black gown and cap were part of the dress code for both students and faculty. Teja Singh joined the degree for Science Tripos, started living in a rented accommodation with his family and performed the *Parkash* of Sri Guru Granth Sahib at his residence. He wanted to set up a Gurdwara in England and for this purpose he established Khalsa Jatha of the British Isles, London in 1908. The first Gurdwara in UK (and Europe) was started by Teja Singh in Shepherds Bush, West London. Teja Singh completed 5 terms out of 6; hence he fell short of the requirement to obtain Tripos degree at Cambridge. Leaving it midway, he moved on to USA to study for a PG degree at Teachers College, Columbia University, New York on July 5, 1908. He had a chequered career as a student and failed to finish his education in both Cambridge and Columbia University. Ultimately, he was allowed to join the Harvard University, USA, from where he took the Master's degree in School education in 1911 before his return to India.

Why Teja Singh failed to perform well in education? The author has tried to justify his failure due to circumstances

prevailing at that time. Before he left, he was promised some financial help by Sant Attar Singh Ji, which never came through during his stay in England. He was living from hand to mouth most of his time with his family. Once or twice, he was reduced to a pauper with just 5 cents left on his person! But his faith in God and Guru helped him overcome such situations where survival looked remote. To pay high tuition fees, to support a family of 4 in a foreign country and to help his community in troubled waters was a herculean task which no one else except Teja Singh could do with grit and faith in God.

Sant Teja Singh was a good orator. He was invited to deliver lectures at Columbia University. His lectures created awareness about India and some Whites started learning *Gurmat* for their spiritual upliftment. His fame reached Canada and he was invited by Sikh *Sangat* of Vancouver for *Gurmat Parchar*. Teja Singh reached Vancouver on October 2, 1908 and participated in the activities of newly constructed Gurdwara. He visited Sikh community in Lower Midland and Port Moody during his one week's stay. He had to discontinue his studies at Columbia University for helping the Indian immigrants in getting PR (permanent residency) rights in Canada. Due to his social service for Indian community, he became an eye-sore in the imperial British circles; hence he was denied admission in Cambridge and Columbia University to complete his education.

Teja Singh was destined to play a sterling role in Canada to protect the rights of Indians. The Canadian Govt. had planned to settle all Indians in British Honduras and a committee was constituted to make plans for exporting Indians. Teja Singh had to fight on behalf of Indians a legal battle and delivered public awareness lectures to counteract the propaganda of Canadian government against Asians, particularly the Sikh immigrants of India. Attitudes of Whites in Canada were captured in a popular song:

*For white man's land we fight,  
To oriental grasp and greed  
We shall surrender, no, never.  
Our watchword be "God save the King",  
White Canada for ever.*

The Indians were not allowed to bring their families to Canada. To overcome this hurdle, the *Sangat* of Vancouver sent a telegram to Teja Singh on July 17, 1911. He convened a meeting of prominent Sikhs of Vancouver and a resolution was passed to send a deputation to Ottawa. This deputation consisted of 4 members: Teja Singh as its Leader, Dr Sundar Singh, Raja Singh and LW Hall, a missionary, as its members. This delegation met the concerned Ministers of Canadian Govt. and pleaded for removal of restrictions imposed on Indian immigrants to bring their families to Canada as British-Indian subjects. Teja Singh delivered public lectures in Ottawa to highlight this problem faced by Indians.

To help Mr. Crawford of New York, a devotee of Guru Nanak, to tide over his business crisis, Teja Singh registered a mining company "Guru Nanak Mining & Trust Company Limited" after purchasing 25% shares of Jacksonville gold mining company of California. He wanted to establish that Sikh immigrants are not poor and a burden on Canadian society, rather they can create jobs and bring business to Canada. Teja Singh was so successful in his exhortations in favour of Indians that he was considered a Mahatma and recognized as uncrowned King of the East Indians in British Columbia. He was instrumental in registering Khalsa Diwan Society, Vancouver on March 13, 1909 under the Society Act of BC, Canada. This Society is still active in Vancouver for promotion of Sikhism in Canada. It was a morale booster not only for the Sikhs but also for other Indian groups. Professor Teja Singh acted as the Head Priest and selected *Panj Pyaras* for *Amrit Sanchar* in British Columbia. This group was invited to UK for the same purpose and it left Vancouver to propagate Sikh religion.

However, as the divine message in Gurbani ordains: "Adversity is a medicine whereas prosperity leads to maladies; for, where there is pleasure, there is no desire for God (*dukh daaroo sukh rog bha-i-aa jaa sukh taam na ho-ee*)". The English poet, Oliver Goldsmith, also exhorts in a similar vein in his poem "Deserted Village":

*Ill fares the land, to hastening ills a prey,  
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay.*

When the Sikhs started bathing in the prosperity, there was a split and the opponents of Teja Singh wanted to implicate him in a case of embezzlement of company funds. He was called back from London and when the audit was done the charge of bungling proved to be false. The shares of gold mine were surrendered to Mr Crawford and the dream of Teja Singh to establish a Sikh University in Vancouver remained a far cry.

Teja Singh presented his paper "The Sikh Movement in India and its relation to Free Christianity" to highlight the contributions of Sikh Gurus in a Berlin Congress of Free Christianity held on 5-11 August, 1910. After completing his Masters degree in Harvard, he moved to California on the invitation of Baba Jawala Singh and Baba Wasakha Singh (Gadari Babas) of Holtville Farm and first Sikh Gurdwara in USA was founded in Sept. 1911 at Stockton. The Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan Society, Stockton was registered on 27 May, 1912 to avoid any legal troubles. Teja Singh was elected as its first President. I happened to visit Sikh Museum at Stockton and found that Sikh Sangat (congregation) was allowed to sit on chairs as in a Church, while Guru Granth Sahib was installed on a podium. Before his return to India, a new Gurdwara was established in Victoria, BC, Canada on 6 October, 1912.

Teja Singh boarded the ship Mont-eagle at Vancouver towards the end of March 1913 and journeyed back to India via Japan, China, Hong Kong, Singapore and Malaya. He faced lot of hardships, for example, he boarded the ship from Kobe (Japan) without tickets for his family, but his faith in Guru was unshakable. Before he disembarked at Shanghai, a procession of 35,000 Sikhs was waiting for his reception at the port and they paid for his journey. He was overwhelmed by the welcome received from the Sikh *Sangats* of China, Hong Kong and elsewhere, who offered him gifts and paid for his journey onwards to India. Teja Singh delivered lectures, organised *Keertan samagams* and held *Amrit Sanchar* programs in Gurdwaras. It shows Sikhi was flourishing in South-East

Asia before his arrival and he became an instrument to further boost it. He returned to the holy presence of Sant Attar Singh Ji at Mastuana Sahib after almost 7 years to receive his blessings.

**Sant Teja Singh as an Institution Builder and Preacher:**

Teja Singh was subjected to rigorous spiritual training by Sant Attar Singh Ji. His daily routine started at 2 AM in the ambrosial hour (*Amrit vela*), joining religious services till sun rise and then doing manual work (*Seva*) as ordained by the Master. After 3 years (1913-16) of training and passing rigorous tests, he was allowed to serve the Society in the field of education. His first assignment was as Principal, Khalsa Girls High School, Bhasaur set up by Babu Teja Singh, a Sikh reformer. He resigned from Bhasaur and joined Khalsa High School, Kallar (Dera Khalsa). On the bidding of his Master (Sant Attar Singh), he joined as Founder Principal of Guru Nanak Khalsa College, Gujranwala (1917); laid the foundation stone of Akal College at Mastuana (1918), and then joined as Principal, Teachers Training College, Banaras Hindu University (BHU) (1919), the premier institution of India. It may be of interest to readers of the Sikh Review that foundation stone of BHU was laid by Sant Attar Singh Ji on 24 December, 1914. After a year of stay in BHU, Teja Singh was called back to Mastuana in 1920 by his Master to run the Akal College. He arranged donations for the college building in Calcutta and mortgaged his own house in Gujranwala to raise funds. Such was his devotion and dedication for the cause of rural education in Punjab. He served as Principal, Akal College for 3 years and when group jealousy raised its head, Teja Singh went back to Guru Nanak Khalsa College Gujranwala as its Principal (1923). He resigned in 1926 to join his Master on a spiritual mission for life.

Sant Teja Singh remained attached to Sant Attar Singh Ji as a devoted comrade on his missionary tours in Kashmir and Punjab. He was engaged in the spiritual uplift of Sikhs and other communities in Punjab as advised by his Master. When the Master left his mortal frame, Teja Singh raised Gurdwaras at Cheema (Sangrur) and Tapiana Sahib, Kanoha (now Pakistan) in his memory. Sant Teja Singh undertook extensive missionary

travels to East Africa, Burma, Thailand, Singapore, Malaya, Japan, USA and Canada to preach and promote the mission of Sikh Gurus. Finally, Sant Teja Singh moved to the scenic valley of Himalayas and built the first mud Gurdwara at Baru Sahib (Solan, HP) in 1960. It has now grown as the hub of Akal Academies throughout India under the Kalgidhar Trust registered in 1982 at Simla. The ideal of Sant Teja Singh and his Master to provide value-based education has been put into practice at Baru Sahib by Baba Iqbal Singh, the patron of Akal Academies, and the author of this book, Dr Khem Singh Gill.

It may be pointed out that I have to leave many episodes untouched in the life of Sant Teja Singh and his Master (Sant Attar Singh Ji). For example, Sant Teja Singh was a *Gurmukh* saint-scholar par excellence but was not a social recluse, like our traditional Indian *Rishi-munis*. He was fully conscious of his responsibilities towards his community. He was involved in Gurdwara Reform Movement during 1920s. He was so much respected in Sikh community that he was chosen as first interim Jathedar of Akal Takhat, a fact unknown to many Sikh historians. But it was not of his ilk to join Sikh politics of Gurdwaras.

I congratulate the author for his labour of love. It must have taken years of strenuous research to dig up scattered archival materials. Despite all efforts by the author, some minor mistakes and howlers may be pointed out as follows: some Gurbani quotes have a mismatch with the text (page 37); corrections in Gurbani quotes required in footnotes (pages 71 & 85); tell-tale information about Baba Banda Singh's martyrdom is not trust-worthy (page 223); information about second Sikh war happening in 1819 is wrong (page 268); Boon (Bonn?) university in Germany (page 321), and some minor typos which need to be corrected.

# JAPUJI: EXEGESIS & POETIC RENDERING

By **Dr. S.S. Bhatti**, Chandigarh

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*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr. SS (Surendra Singh) Bhatti is a celebrated author with three doctorates in his kitty on three different subjects of his intensive life-long study. He is a multi-dimensional personality who does not believe in specialization, as understood in modern world dominated by Science & Technology, but who imbibes the spirit of “Holism” in his life and letters. In the Preface to Japuji, he writes: “My professional involvement in *Creativity* does not permit me to believe in *Specialisation*. My credo is *Comprehensivity* not *Specialisation* which, with its characteristic emphasis on knowing more and more about less and less, ends up by distorting, in my view, the personality and perception of the specialist.”

In my review of literature, I found Japuji had been rendered into different languages; translated or used as a tool for exegesis more than 250 times. The first exegete of Japuji was Udasi Sadhu Anandghan, whose *Tika* was challenged and replaced by Garb Ganjani Tika of Nirmala (Bhai) Santokh Singh on the

bidding of Uday Singh, the ruler of Kaithal. It was first published in 1910. In my view, this book under review is a by-product of the Ph.D. Thesis of the author on "*Creative Mysticism: A Study of Nanak Bani with Special Reference to Japuji*" submitted to Punjab University Chandigarh.

Author claims that his interest in Gurbani was inherited from his father. But he also claims in the Preface: "My research is thus the outcome of an assiduous application of the tools and methods of Architecture I have developed as teacher, theorist, researcher, and practitioner to the exegesis of Gurbani". I will like to call the technique used by the author as Architectonics of Gurbani. His assertion is valid that this approach has not been applied before to the study of Gurbani; to see Guru Nanak's Bani in a new light – holistically. Dr Bhatti has shown deep reverence and gratitude to the author of Japuji; "Guru Nanak is a prophet class apart because he brought 'religion' on a platter to the doorstep of the masses – illiterate, uninitiated, and without patronage of the clergy".

The Prologue and Epilogue follow the preface and are helpful in delineating the technique used by the author in this exegesis. The author visualizes the Guru Nanak's vision in the following terms: "Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism lays the foundation for a non-denominational, non-communal, non-sectarian, non-ethnic system of Holistic Humanism whereby anyone and everyone is urged to an optimistic view and a fulfilling Way of Life". The author defines a Sikh in the Epilogue as follows: "A Sikh is not a ruler. He is created to be servant of all humanity without any discrimination on the basis of caste, creed, colour, or race. And yet he rules the world by winning everyone's heart with love, humanity, compassion, selfless service that may be consummated in sacrificing his life for the sake of Dharma and the freedom to practice it in his own special way".

In the introductory paras to Japuji: Exegesis, the author embarks upon his journey by calling Japuji, universally called

Japuji Sahib, as the divine message received by Guru Nanak in his Revelation. This Revelation is communicated to common folks, who have been most cruelly oppressed and most wily exploited throughout the course of human history, in a staggering variety of metaphors to deliver the message. The author has himself used a beautiful metaphor of 'artesian wells' to explain the spontaneity of language used by Guru Nanak to preach his message. Most of foreign scholars are in a trap when involved in the exegesis of Gurbani. The author removes this trap by his exhortation: "Guru Nanak Bani is fresh and original, and by no means, a rehashing or syncretism of prevalent Hindu or Islamic religious thought".

In his characteristic style, the author elaborates the Architecture of Japuji in terms of (a) Design, and (b) Structure and Form. Japuji is considered to be the epitome and magnum opus of Guru Nanak in the sacred Bani of Sri Guru Granth Sahib compiled by Guru Arjun. It is not set in Ragas. This *Dhur ki Bani* was revealed to Guru Nanak and transmitted to people who came in his contact during his odysseys over long periods of time in India and abroad. It consists of 38 *pauris*, called levels by the author using his professional terminology. On the one hand, author claims that he does not believe in *Specialisation* but on the other, he has interpreted Japuji using tools of his own *Specialisation*. For example, he writes: "Guru Nanak's Japuji is an Edifice (Architecture) of the Soul whose Concept has been stated in the *Mool Mantra* (the creedal proclamation)".

Under the heading 'Design of Japuji', author shows his *Comprehensivity* (pages 22-24) based on his knowledge of geometry, archaeology, history, seismology and physics (nuclear reactors, optics and gravitation). In the history of exegesis of Japuji, no other author has ever used the concept of geometry with such a distinction as the present author. He has used the metaphors of geometrical solids for interpreting concepts of Japuji. Some of the examples are as follows: "The Architecture

of God's Temple, as revealed by Guru Nanak, is an absorbing Construct of Time-Space Continuum employing all the basic geometrical solids: cube, pyramid, cone, sphere, cylinder, tetrahedron, and prism". Further, the author uses metaphor of cylinder to explain *Naam-Simrin*: "Cylinder capped by a hemisphere, gives the shape of the Nuclear Reactor in which fission builds up a chain reaction to produce enormous quanta of energy from a tiny nucleus. *Naam-Simrin* is akin to bombardment of the nucleus with neutrons in that *Naam* is repeatedly aimed at the nucleus, the crucial centre of soul-consciousness (*Surt*), lodged within the cranium cavity". The author has used the metaphor of Prism to explain the Transcendence and Immanence of God beautifully. As a physicist, I fail to understand and appreciate how the author has used the concepts of Physics with such alacrity and accuracy. The only other author who comes to my mind is Professor Puran Singh, who used scientific terminology with eclat in his prose.

Under the heading 'Structure and Form of the Japuji', the author displays his knowledge of Relativity Theory of Einstein and makes use of it to interpret Japuji. "The Time-Space Continuum, in Guru Nanak's Revelation, holds the interdependence, inter-relationship, and interaction between Time and Space as *sine qua non* to their unique function as the two Elements of which the Architecture of Cosmos is made. The one and only one evidence of God's Incomparable and Inalienable Architectonics is the existence of Nature in its bewildering Bounty and breathtaking Beauty". The author compares the Edifice of Japuji to a 38-Storey Skyscraper starting from the Four-Pillar foundation of *adi sach jugadi sach; hai bhee sach, Nanak hosee bhee sach*. Literally *pauri* corresponds to step, stair or more precisely, level or floor. Hence the author starts his study of Japuji using 'level' for *pauri*.

From page 25 to 64, the author has interpreted Japuji level by level in his own unique style following no beaten track.

According to author, Guru Nanak's discourse has elements of directness, daring and interaction. Guru Nanak poses a question: "How to be a *Sachiar*"? He demystifies and almost condemns the four techniques adopted by orthodox Hinduism for obtaining liberation (*moksha*) in life and advocates his own method: *hukam raja-eechalna, Nanak likh-aanaal* "Submission to His Edict-Fiat Who's Master of His will". At level 2, Guru Nanak explains His Edic-Fiat and stresses that Humility is the Cardinal Principle and indispensable to the life of a Sikh. At level 4, the author has created some flutter by interpreting the first stanza: *saachaa sahib saach naa-ay* as follows: "Guru Nanak stresses and reiterates that True is the Master, True His Justice". Almost all other exegetes of Japuji interpret it: "True is the Master, True is His Name". Why the author interprets '*naa-ay*' as 'Justice' is beyond my comprehension. It needs some justification by the author but it is missing in the text.

It is well known assumption in the Sikh Tradition that Guru Nanak's Japuji is an abstract of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, and Japuji is an elaboration of *mool mantra*. At level 5, Guru Nanak rejects Idolatry which has been Hinduism's mainstay. At level 6, ritual bathing is considered futile if it is without the God's express approval. At level 7, Guru Nanak is taking up other issues like inordinately-long life, the prestige and power of glory in this world but without God's grace, all these traits and acquisitions of power and pelf are worthless. From level 8-11 are next four *pauris* devoted to the virtues and fruits of hearkening (*suniai*) the Holy Word. Next four *pauris* from level 12-15 are devoted to *manne/mannai*, which connotes that every idea needs to be put to the intellectual rigours of deep reflection (*vichar*) before accepting it at its face value, to avoid falling into trap of blind faith. Guru Nanak disapproves the life of mendicants, ascetics, fakirs, as they are an unsavoury burden on human society.

At level 16, Guru Nanak moves on to take up the question of Cosmogony. Guru Nanak explodes the prevalent Myth of a

Bull supporting the earth on its horns – with logical and scientific reasoning. The author reiterates that Guru Nanak Bani is neither Mythology, nor Metaphysics, not even Poetry (Muse) - nor Mysticism or Creativity treated as be-all and end-all of intellectual and/or psycho-emotional pastime. Then how to grasp the distinctiveness of Guru Nanak's approach? In my own writings, I labelled Guru Nanak's approach as *Scientific Vision* but Dr Bhatti has called it a *unique Revelation*. The author is a firm believer in Guru Nanak's Revelation when he writes: "By virtue of Creative Mysticism, Guru Nanak *sees* what is happening in the Universe. Where is the Mythical Bull standing when, in the vast emptiness of Space, countless worlds twirl about – unsupported? Nobody – absolutely no body, anywhere in the world – had proclaimed the Truth in such categorical and convincing terms, in the 15<sup>th</sup> century! Does one still need a proof of the Guru's unique Revelation"? Some scientists, who indulged in exegesis of Japuji, try to ignore the Revelation theory in Gurbani and call it Guru Nanak's empirical observation, as a scientist makes it in a laboratory. There are others who project Guru Nanak as a fore-runner of Renaissance Scientists in Europe. But Dr. Bhatti has proved it logically in his own way in Japuji.

Guru Nanak talks of himself as *neech* (depraved and lowly) while recounting millions of purblind fools, liars, cut-throats and sinners in this world in *pauri* 18. If we leap frog to level 22, we find Guru Nanak presents a bewildering glimpse of the Cosmic Expanse such as not hitherto been attempted by any Prophet. It speaks volumes for the authenticity and magnificence of his Revelation, which is made of an altogether special stuff: Creative Mysticism wrought in the mint of the Soul, furnished, fuelled, and fired by the Divine Grace.

Towards the end of his discourse in Japuji, Guru Nanak is guiding the seeker to the final stages of his Spiritual Pilgrimage. According to author: "Ethics, *Dharma*, The Cosmic Moral Law, is the ineluctable matrix of Guru Nanak's Creative Mysticism

whereby he insists that Life is a rare and difficult performing art which can be aesthetically appreciated and artistically created only by living it fully, deeply, and inspired. In the last four *pauris*, Guru Nanak speaks of 5 Spiritual Realms: *Dharam Khand*, *Gyan Khand*, *Saram Khand*, *Karam Khand* and *Sach Khand*. In Sikh praxis, Guru Nanak established: "Truth is the highest of all forms of Reality, but higher than Truth is Truthful Living". The Japuji text ends with a *Slok* attributed to Guru Angad, which according to the author is the most concise, succinct and stupendous of all summaries and commentaries on Guru Nanak's Japuji.

In the second part of the book, Japuji: Poetic Rendering, the author has provided a translation of Japuji in Free Verse, along with its Transliteration for the readers who are not well versed with Gurmukhi Script. In the Inference, the author recounts how he was motivated to render the Japuji in to English after his study of Scriptures of major World Religions; as a consequence his fascination grew for Guru Nanak's divine lyricism. Author's experience of three-decade-long practice of writing poetry in four languages stood him in good stead.

I was looking for howlers in the text, to my surprise, there are hardly any except on page 33, where 'Holy Word' is written as 'Holy World'. Another trait of the Author is his fascination for use of Capital Letters in the Text. In my view, the original Text of Japuji needs to be juxtaposed along with explanation of *pauris* (levels) for sake of convenience. I congratulate the author for creating a unique exegesis of Japuji in conformity with the needs of younger generation well versed with Architecture, Science and Technology. However, the common reader will find some new concepts and English terminology used by the author, somewhat hard to digest.

# NOTES TO MYSELF

By **Dr. S.S. Bhatti**

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Pages: 114; Price: Rs. 150.00; Pocket Size

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr Surindera Singh (SS) Bhatti is a multi-dimensional personality, well known in academic circles of Chandigarh due to his professional accomplishments as an architect, founder teacher and ex-Principal of Chandigarh College of Architecture. He claims to have expertise in 55 areas of knowledge, which is mind-boggling indeed! In my field of research in Physics, we talk of hidden variables and hidden dimensions, not intelligible to common man, but existing as true mathematical constructs to understand Reality. I discovered Dr Bhatti's hidden dimensions while writing a review of his book on Japuji. I was wonder-struck that an architect is using the analogy of fast breeder reactor to interpret the text of Japuji. He can write on any topic under the sky with the skill of a professional artist. I am aware of his outpourings on Art, Literature, Philosophy and Religion. He is always on an unending spree riding on a wave of creativity and flowing like a perennial stream.

'Notes to Myself' is a pocket size, popularly called a coffee table book. This is an unusual book without any chapters or list of contents. It opens suddenly with "Me and My Writings"

where the author introduces himself. I may call it his brief bio-data. He started his educational career as a student of Science (F. Sc.) in Khalsa College Amritsar but moved on to join Sir JJ College of Architecture in Bombay. I may point out one discrepancy: F. Sc. stands for 'First in Science' and not for 'Faculty of Science' as interpreted by the author.

In the next Chapter 'Introduction', Bhatti explains how he chose this title for his outpourings called "Notes to Myself": "On 10 November 1986 I received a copy of Hugh Prather's book *NOTES TO MYSELF [My struggle to become a person]* sent to me as a gift by Sudarshan Dheer who was my closest friend and roommate in Government Hostel, Land's-End, Bandra, Bombay during 1955-1960 when I was studying architecture and he art at Sir JJ School of Art there. The gift book has been with me all these years as a live companion and I have read and reread it several times over. Although I have published half a dozen books under different names by compiling material from my diaries yet when I came to finding a name in the present case I was hopelessly stuck up. Sustained struggle over several days finally brought me to the stated gift book and I decided to adopt its name for mine".

As claimed by the author explicitly, the book is a reproduction of notes recorded by him in his diary which he started writing during his student days in Bombay. One advantage (or disadvantage?) of the book is one can start reading its text from any page as there is no continuity of theme. It is based on RANDOM THOUGHTS of the author. I started reading it from the opening page but then made a short-shift to finish my assigned job to review this book. I have tried to peep into the mind of the author by reading some of his selected quotes. Like a musical symphony, these quotes create music of sorts and start resonating in the mind of the reader. I find creativity of Bhatti and amplitude of his mental gymnastics at its best in this book composed of his random thoughts. For sake of illustration, I pick up quotes of

my liking and leave it to the reader to discover the beauty of his mind's flight into the realms of unknown territory.

- Bhatti has expanded the definition of addiction by his wonderful quote: *"Addiction is not confined to the consumption of drugs, liquor or beverages. It comes in myriad other forms: gossip, back biting, jealousy, leg pulling, professional rivalry, lust for power, habitual lying, bullying, obsession with property making, anxiety about profit and loss, and so forth. It may not be reckoned to be a disease, but it is an incurable one just the same"*.
- Bhatti is not an agnostic but a believer in the Creator of this Universe: *"Adore the Creator; admire His creation; and love humanity—to justify your life as an awakened member of the Homo sapiens [which means Man the Wise] species"*.
- Bhatti defines EGO in his unique way: *"I call 'E-G-O' an 'Energy-Generating Organ' that is 'Divine', 'Unique', 'Ambitious' and 'Live'. Furthermore, E-G-O is Environment-dependent, Gregarious by nature, and Outward oriented. 'Ego' is not an enemy, as is customarily supposed and erroneously accepted in religious discourse. It is an indispensable link between Man (the created/creature) and God (The Creator) that makes realisation possible as an experience of mystic absorption in which 'Becoming' eventually and ultimately acquiesces as 'Being'"*.

I perfectly agree with his definition of EGO. Guru Angad has beautifully defined *Haumei* (EGO) in his Bani as follows (Raag Assa, SGGS, page 466): *"Ego is a chronic disease, but it contains its own cure as well"*. Bhatti has removed the negativity attached to the concept of EGO as prevalent in the Indian religious and cultural traditions.

I find some of Bhatti's quotes as pithy, the others as touching and witty. Depending upon his mood, there is a staggering variety in the spectrum depicting the panorama of life in these

quotes. For sake of illustration, I find the following quotes both pithy and witty:

- *An average Indian has the highest IQ in the world. Only it means “Intelligence Questionable”, not “Intelligence Quotient”.*
- *ANGER is Psycho-Emotional Short Circuit.*
- *Applause a day keeps the doctor away—and it is far superior in efficacy to “an apple a day” though, unlike the latter, it costs nothing. Miserliness in the dispensation of applause is tantamount to obduracy.*

I was amused to read his comment on learning and teaching as it applies to all teachers of my genre (profession). He goes on to make a distinction between an expert, specialist and a scholar, and ridicules the ‘Historian’ in his own inimitable style:

- *Learning is awakening. Teaching is an acquisition. Learning lights up the inner world by the glow of the student’s native energy and eventually sets the soul free. Teaching accumulates more and more burden of matter until you become so ground-bound as to be incapable of air-voyages into the Spirit World.*
- *An ‘Expert’ is one who can confuse others. A ‘Specialist’ is one who is himself confused. A ‘Scholar’ is desperately looking for something in books to restore his mental balance. A ‘Historian’ has the unique, if unenviable, distinction of making a pot-pourri of stray facts and domesticated fiction to tell cock-and-bull stories. He survives and thrives on the people’s lust for entertainment even when it is cheap and false.*

The author has created his matchless definitions for most of the professionals, including politicians and bureaucrats, based on his rich experience of social and cultural life in India:

- *A Pollutician’s career lies in lies and promises. A*

*Bureaucrat's (actually, 'bureau-crate' i.e. a crate full of bureau files) job lies in procrastination and bungling. A Lawyer's (read – 'Liar's') profession lies in assumptions and arguments built around distortions of facts. A Judge's judiciary goes on because he writes inordinately lengthy judgements which confound prevalent confusion so that litigation may become perennial. A Doctor's calling is sustained by empathic perpetuation of disease. A Priest's (who is actually a societal 'pest') business runs on myth-making and misleading the simple and the gullible. A Trader's trade flourishes on swindling by exploiting what is trending. An Industrialist's industry survives on manufacturing the spurious but saleable. An Architect thrives on building castles in the air that cost his client millions. An Engineer earns his livelihood by building structures that will last reassuringly until his professional fees are fully paid. In short, the human race lives on endlessly because we live off (albeit subconsciously) each other's private mental, moral, and material resources. In other words, you could say that the 'Commerce of Life' subsists on creating ever-new wants without fulfilling needs".*

It is difficult to leave his quotes from quoting (in my review) which appear as sparks of his brilliant mind as they appear from bursting of a cracker on Diwali night. His definitions of creativity, democracy, development, diplomacy, blind faith, time, space, forms, genius, intuition, emotion, imagination et al. are quotable quotes. I give only a few to illustrate my point of view:

- *CREATIVITY is when your work speaks for you. Marketing is when you speak for your work. Profiteering is when you speak for others who have little work to their credit. Patronising is when you speak for others' work—pretending that you are a philanthropist for creative souls famished by callous communities.*

- *DEMOCRACY, actually DEMONOCRACY, is government off the people, buy the people, far the people, in which the so-called governance by Majority is Misrule; by Minority, No-Rule—only roguery, thievery, and robbery.*
- *DEVELOPMENT is from within to without. Meditation is from without to within.*
- *DIPLOMACY is the art of marketing lies for the success of globalisation.*
- *Blind Faith is the eyeless monster—brute and ruthless—forever on the pry for hunting innocent prey!*
- *FORMS exist because of Space; not SPACE because of Forms.*
- *GENIUS is born adult with insatiable curiosity and un-ageing innocence of the untaught child.*

Dr Bhatti is fully aware of corruption in Indian society but his take on the evil of corruption is absolutely original. He has dug up the roots of corruption and linked it with Indian divinity, a hoax being created by the present regime. In a similar vein, he ridicules the presence of a JOGI (a practitioner of yoga) in politics:

- *How could anyone or any system root out corruption when we flood the houses of worship with black money as divine bribery to the gods for earning their underserved favours? This curious thought has been with me for many years. However, today, it is coming to my mind with a haunting persistence.*
- *JOGI in politics is a mischievous marauder of the mirth and majesty of life. He confuses development with deviant departure from decency and decorum as norms of civilised conduct. Believing that he is above law owing to what he perceives to be exalted life he ends up by destroying what is of enduring value in human heritage.*

There are thousands of quotes by Dr. Bhatti which I cherish to go on quoting endlessly but I am constrained by the time

and space available for a review. Look how he defines Love, Sex, and Nature:

- *LOVE is the staple diet of SOUL – the only empirical evidence available to man that all Living Creatures [humans, animals, birds, reptiles, even plants] respond to and cherish it.*
- *SEX is a simmering reminder to adults that “Union is Strength”.*
- *SEX is what makes Life curious before marriage and spurious afterwards.*
- *NATURE conquered is Nature ruined to Man’s own peril.*
- *NATURE understood is Nature befriended to ultimate human advantage.*

The “Notes to Myself” is a compendium of rare quotes, which I call as ‘Random Thoughts’ of the author. On page 53, I found a dozen such thoughts listed under this heading [Friday: 08 April 2016; 12:05 pm to 12:20 pm]:

- 1) Greatest blessing is to be loved and wanted.
- 2) Greatest honour is to be trusted.
- 3) Greatest heroism is to defend the weak against oppressors.
- 4) Greatest wealth is to be fit and healthy.
- 5) Greatest service is to help the helpless.
- 6) Greatest religion is to trust in God and do the right.
- 7) Greatest meditation is contemplation of the Holy Name.
- 8) Greatest creation is compassion for all forms of life.
- 9) Greatest disease is nationalism and patriotism.
- 10) Greatest roguery is politics (properly spelled as “Pollutics”).
- 11) Greatest possession is humility.
- 12) Greatest achievement is wisdom.

I end my review with the question posed by Dr. Bhatti to one of the best communicators of Science in India, namely

Prof. Yash Pal. This question was posed in the form of a Poem and discussed on the TV programme 'Turning Point' on the Doordarshan:

*What is Scientific Temper?  
Does it help or does it hamper  
The acquisition of unruffled Sanity  
With regard to Objective reality?  
What must one do to always use it:  
What must one do never to lose it?*

I wonder why Yash Pal avoided answering this question and another Indian giant of Physics, Prof. MGK Menon, failed to satisfy Dr. Bhatti. I promise to answer this query to the entire satisfaction of the author as he has not spared to look askance at both the eminent Physicists who belong to my area of specialisation in Physics. In 2016, I published a note "*The need for developing scientific temper in India*" in Current Science (25 September, 2016), an Indian journal published in Bangalore. My conclusion was highly critical of the present regime in India and the Editor warned me that my note had political overtones!

"Notes to Myself" is a unique contribution by Dr. SS Bhatti. As a Scientist, occasionally, I came across the famous sayings or quotes of Albert Einstein, Thomas Alva Edison and CV Raman. Puran Singh is the only Punjabi Scientist who impressed me by his quotes cited in my book "Puran Singh: Scientist, Poet and Philosopher" (Tarlochan Publishers, Chandigarh). In my estimation, Dr SS Bhatti can be rated among the topmost authors of this genre at global level. I wish him astounding success as an author of brilliant ideas in his chosen fields.

# BANDA SINGH BAHADUR: Persian Sources (Text in Punjabi)

By **Dr. Balwant Singh Dhillon**

Published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2011

Pages: 227; Price: Rs. 350.00; H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr Balwant Singh Dhillon, Director, Centre on Studies in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, who retired as a Professor from Guru Nanak Studies Department of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar, is a well established author in Sikh literature. He has published almost a dozen books on Sikh history and Sikh religion. Banda Singh Bahadur is an edited volume based on 21 original historical sources in Persian. After reading the text in Punjabi, I have come to the conclusion that no historian of Sikh history has taken so much trouble to search for original evidence about the struggle of Banda Singh Bahadur to establish the first Sikh rule in Punjab. Dr Dhillon has retrieved facts and figures from all reliable Persian sources, both contemporary and not so contemporary, written in the era 1708-1800 (CE).

Karam Singh historian wrote his account of Banda Singh Bahadur in 1907. He was the pioneer to use Persian sources as evidence to record his historical account. Dr Ganda Singh, the doyen of Sikh historians, published his well researched book,

"Life of Banda Singh Bahadur" in 1935. Dr Dhillon claims that most of the Sikh historians, including Dr Ganda Singh and Dr J S Grewal, fail to provide full references to available Persian sources. He therefore extended his domain of research to most extant Persian sources available in the libraries of India, Pakistan and England. These sources are Tarikh-i-Jahandar Shah, Ibratnama (Kamraj-bin-Nain Singh), Shahnama Munawar Kalam, Fatuhatnama-i-Samadi and many more which refer to rise and fall of Banda Singh Bahadur.

The author has given an elaborate introduction to his edited volume which is an abstract or summary of his findings. He appreciates the Mughal system of collecting news. These reporters were sending all information to the central authority at Delhi. These classified news diaries were known as 'Akhbar-i-Darbar-i-Mualla'. The only contemporary Sikh source used by the author is 'Amarnama' of Dhadi Nath Mal. It is written in Persian verse and gives an account of Guru Gobind Singh's meeting with Banda Singh Bahadur and dispatching him to Punjab as leader of a mission to destroy the Mughal empire root and branch.

The copies of these reports were secretly collected by Rajput Maharajas through their courtiers (agents) in the Mughal Darbar. The author has made use of Jaipur Records kept in the state archives in Bikaner. A letter addressed to Mirza Raja Swai Jai Singh by Baba Banda Singh on September 11, 1711, with a plea to join his mission is cited by the author. I found almost all Persian sources relate the story of Banda Singh Bahadur in a similar vein, with a little variation here and there. It is better to give a brief account of salient features of this story under different headings.

**1. Crusade of Baba Banda Singh Bahadur:** The first meeting between Guru Gobind Singh and Bairagi Madho Das took place at Nander, on the banks of the river Godavri, on 3<sup>rd</sup> September 1708. He was baptized by the Guru and called Banda Singh. After his conversion to Khalsa fold, he was asked to proceed

to Punjab to fulfil Tenth Guru's mission of liberating Punjab from the oppressive rule of the Mughals. The Sikh tradition believes that the main clause of his mission was to teach a lesson to Wazir Khan, the Subedar of Sirhind, who was responsible for bricking alive the two younger Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh. Baba Banda Singh entered Punjab at Kharkhoda, a place in between Rohtak and Sonapat. He collected his followers from Malwa region of Punjab and began his crusade at Sonapat. Their next onslaught was Thanesar, Mustafabad, Sadhaura, Ghuram, Samana and Chhat-Banur. The Sikh crusaders under Baba Banda Singh Bahadur's leadership occupied areas of Punjab lying between the rivers Jamuna and Sutlej. The Muslim chieftains of these areas were devastated and their land holdings were distributed to cultivators of their lands. This was a revolutionary step in the history of India when the feudal system was abolished in Punjab.

The Sikh army under Banda Singh was not a regular army but they were highly motivated to defeat and destroy the oppressive regime of Mughals. After winning some battles, they were itching to attack Sirhind. Wazir Khan confronted Baba Banda Singh at Chappar Chirri (near Landran and Mohali). Wazir Khan was an experienced commander and brought his elephants, artillery, cavalry and infantry, supported by the Nawab of Malerkotla and other Chieftains into the battlefield. The army of Banda Singh was uprooted in the first attack. Then Banda Singh himself jumped into the fray and led the Sikh army from the front. A ferocious battle took place in which Wazir Khan was killed and his army defeated. Chappar Chirri was a historical battle fought on May 12, 1710 in which mighty Mughal army was defeated by the Khalsa. Sirhind was occupied on 14<sup>th</sup> May by Baba Banda Singh Bahadur. The Khalsa army devastated Sirhind and killed all those courtiers who had voted for the execution of the two younger Sahibzadas of Guru Gobind Singh. The Persian sources have called the Khalsa

army as the butchers of Sirhind as they destroyed the city and killed its entire population. Some sources claim that even pregnant Muslim women were not spared. The Khalsa army wanted to avenge the killing of younger Sahibzadas and Sirhind was demolished brick by brick (ਫਿੱਟ ਨਾਲ ਫਿੱਟ ਖੜਕਾ ਦਿੱਤੀ). In Sikh parlance it is called Guru-cursed Sirhind (ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਰੀ ਸਰਹਿੰਦ).

**2. Foundation of Khalsa Raj:** After conquering Sirhind, Banda Singh occupied Saharanpur, Buria, Ambala, Shahbad Markanda and all areas upto Panipat and beyond. He chose a place called Mukhlisgarh (renamed Lohgarh) in the Shivalik hills of Nahan state as his capital. Khalsa flag was hoisted on the ramparts of Lohgarh fort and a coin was struck in the name of Guru Nanak – Guru Gobind Singh to commemorate the setting up of first Khalsa Raj in Punjab. But this Khalsa glory was short-lived. The Mughal emperor, Bahadur Shah himself led the Mughal army and attacked the Lohgarh fort. The Khalsa army suffered heavy losses, the fort was destroyed by the artillery but Banda Singh had a narrow escape and could not be captured alive. The Mughal chronicle writers believed that Banda Singh is a magician who can change his appearance and escape in any garb. There were many rumours in the Mughal army that he can escape as an animal, knows black magic and can disappear in no time. The Khalsa army re-assembled to conquer areas of Jalandhar Doab. Banda Singh set up his police station (*thana*) at Rahon. He re-captured Lohgarh again and hoisted the Khalsa flag.

Emperor Bahadur Shah died, Jahandar Shah was killed and Farukhsiyar occupied the Delhi throne. He appointed Abdus Samad Khan, the Subedar of Lahore, to capture Banda Singh alive. Abdus Samad Khan succeeded in his mission. He surrounded the Khalsa army in a fortress at Gurdas Nangal (near Gurdaspur) and cut off all food and fodder supplies. The Khalsa army was starved to death during this occupation of 8 months (7<sup>th</sup> April 1715 to 7 December 1715). Those who survived this ordeal surrendered before Abdus Samad Khan and made

prisoners of war. Banda Singh and 700 Sikh soldiers of his army were brought to Delhi in chains by Zakarya Khan and Kamrudin Khan. To humiliate them, they were made to dress up as clowns and wear sheep skin hats and presented to Mughal emperor in Red fort on March 1, 1716, who ordered the execution of captured Sikhs @ 100 per day at Kotwali *Chabutra* in full public view. The massacre of Sikhs started on March 6, 1716 and continued for one week. They were given the option to embrace Islam and save their lives. Persian sources reveal that not a single Sikh saved his life by accepting Islam. So much so that a young Sikh boy whose mother got reprieve for his son by making a false claim that he is not a Sikh, offered his head to the executioner telling him that his mother was a liar. Finally, Banda Singh and his comrades-in-arms, like Baj Singh and Fateh Singh, were executed on June 9, 1716 in Mehrauli. Banda Singh was ordered to kill his 5 year old son, Ajay Singh. When he refused to do so, the *jalad* (executioner) thrust a dagger into Ajay Singh's stomach, killed him and thrust his quivering heart into the mouth of Banda Singh. After that Banda Singh was blinded, his body was cut into pieces and he died as the Khalsa of Guru Gobind Singh Ji.

### 3. Highlights of Banda Singh Bahadur's campaign:

- a) Baba Banda Singh created the first Khalsa commonwealth of Guru Gobind Singh ji's dreams in Punjab.
- b) He abolished feudal system of Jagirdari and established democracy and Panchayati raj.
- c) He has been wrongly assigned the title of Guru by the Mughal chronicle writers. They created a myth that Guru Gobind Singh's spirit has entered his body. He was represented as Guru-incarnate for the Sikhs.
- d) All chronicle writers used most derogatory epithets for Banda Singh and his comrades. They call him God-cursed (ਰੱਬੀ ਕਹਿਰ ਦਾ ਮਾਰਿਆ), magician (ਜਾਦੂਗਰ, ਬਹੁ-ਰੂਪੀਆ), Kafir (ਕਾਫਿਰ), characterless (ਬਦ-ਕਿਰਦਾਰ) and

leader of low castes (ਬਦਜਾਤ), dogs and pigs (ਕੁੱਤਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੂਰ). Both Hindu and Muslim chronicle writers call Sikhs as dogs (ਸਗ, ਕੁੱਤੇ).

- e) Even when they hate Banda Singh and his comrades in strongest terms, Khafi Khan is all praise for their courage and bravery. They died to the last man rejecting all offers of saving their lives. Their dead bodies were hanged from tree tops on all entry points to Delhi to create a fear psychosis among the public.
- f) It is unfortunate that fissures appeared in followers of Banda Singh Bahadur. They split into two groups: Bandaais and Tat Khalsa. This may be one of the reasons of their defeat at the hands of Abdus Samad Khan.
- g) Jaipur Records establish that Banda Singh wrote letters to Rajput Maharajas to join his crusade for uprooting the Mughal Empire. He wrote a letter to Mirza Raja Swai Jai Singh on September 11, 1711 but got no moral or physical support.
- h) In campaign of Lohgarh and Gurdas Nangal, Hindu Rajas of Shivalik hill states supported the Mughal army by men and materials. They proved to be traitors to the noble cause of Banda Singh Bahadur. Banda fought for liberation of India but Indians preferred the slavery of Mughals!

**End Note:** No reliable information is available about the fate of Raj Kumari Rattan Kaur, wife of Banda Singh Bahadur. Khushal Chand in *Tarikh-i-Mohammad Shahi* (1740 CE) writes that she was put under the tutelage of Dakhani Begum in Red Fort. She embraced Islam and went on pilgrimage to Mecca. Conflicting accounts have been given by Dr Sukhdial Singh (*Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, Vol. XIV, Issue 2, 2012) and Simarjit Singh, editor of *Gurmat Parkash* (SGPC, Vol. 56, Issue 3, Page 16, June 2012). Sikh historians must trace her roots to bring out the truth.

# AMERA JEEVAN SAFAR

## (My Life's Journey)

By **Hardev Singh Virk**

Published by Gracious Books, 23 Shalimar Plaza,  
Opp. Punjabi University, Patiala  
Pages: 160; Price: Rs. 250.00

*Review by D.P. Singh*

*"Mera Jeevan Safar"* is an autobiography by Prof. Hardev Singh Virk, revolving around his experiences in scientific research, educational administration and literary fields. It consists of his recollections right from his childhood, passing through the turmoil and after effects of India's partition. As a hard-working student wanting to pursue his dreams, he had to pass through the rigmarole of India's judicial system to get his legitimate claim settled over his maternal and paternal properties. In addition, he lets us know about his challenging career spanning more than 40 years. Even after his retirement in 2002, he is still serving his much cherished goal of spreading the beacon of education. The events are not necessarily described in a chronological order and, in fact, can be read independently of each other, though it is recommended to read them from beginning to the end.

Though autobiographical books are galore in Punjabi literature but this is the first autobiography written by an

International Punjabi Scientist in his mother language. The book in addition to preface and appendix, contains 10 chapters. The first two chapters: "Memories of my childhood" and "Tragic years of my life" elaborate on the topsy-turvy period of his childhood and youth.

*Mera Jeevan Safar* begins in Majhiwala Bhuler (Chak No. 270), Dist. Lyallpur (now Faisalabad), erstwhile-India during Hardev's childhood. The first section of the autobiography tells of his upbringing in a loving and well-to-do family. He recounts vividly the vision of his mother. His memories of childhood in West Punjab evoke rural customs and religious practices consistent with recent scholarship on 'Punjabi religion'. He delights in telling us of his numerous adventures in his student life. While he is in school, he willingly tells us he was inclined to opt for English literature, in which he scored 90% marks in High School, more than his score in Mathematics. He acknowledges with great gratitude the help and guidance rendered by his many teachers and fellow students.

Next two chapters: "Fourteen Years at Punjabi University" and "Twenty Three Years at Guru Nanak Dev University" describe the ups and downs of his professional life as a teacher and a researcher. In October 1965, he joined Punjabi University, Patiala as a teaching instructor. Soon he jumped into the fray of University politics, and became President of Punjabi University Teacher Association in 1970. However, scientific pursuits were much nearer to his heart. Thereby, as soon as, he got an opportunity to pursue his research interests in France, he immediately decided to follow his chosen bailiwick. As young Hardev was ready for his journey to Paris to pursue his dream of scientific research, he had to leave India with a mind full of uneasy emotions about his young wife, little sons and old mother. Working hard, he completed his research work, in a short duration of just over two years. With his extraordinary accomplishments in his research pursuits, he obtained the ability to challenge even his supervisor's scientific attainments. For

this extraordinary feat, Paris University, Paris, France awarded him the degree of D.Sc. Though, while in Paris, he barely spoke French, and yet he was able to defend his research thesis vehemently in French. His audience was surprised by his fluency in French. Later on, he landed in Panjabi University, Patiala and started a Geo-Physics research group there. He then made his way to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in 1979, where he played an instrumental role in establishing Physics Department, which later on became an internationally recognised research centre of Physics. This brought him many laurels in the form of memberships/associateships of prestigious international research academies, such as International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Italy and Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS) etc.

In the chapter titled “My Foreign Visits - A Bird’s Eye-view”, Prof. Virk summarizes his interactions with International Scientists, in his areas of research interests, be it SSNTDs, High Energy Physics, Earthquake studies or Nanotechnology. With publication of about 400 research papers in various research journals of international repute and about 60 foreign visits related to his research and educational activities, he emerges on the world scenario as a great scholar, an eminent educationist and a professional scientist. In the chapter “My Scientific Journey”, while describing the journey of an ordinary rural youth to the making of an International scientist, he expresses his deepest admiration and gratitude to many great scientists. Some of these include : Prof. Piara Singh Gill, Prof. Max Morand, Prof. Abdus Salam, and Prof. George Marx, etc.

In addition to being a scientist of International stature, and a teacher par-excellence, Prof. Virk is a prolific writer, with a strong commitment to popularization of science in Punjabi medium. With about two score books and hundreds of articles to his credit, in the diverse fields of science popularization, history of science, religion and spirituality, he is a well known author in India and abroad. He has been

awarded *Shiromani Sahitkar Purskar* by Govt. of Punjab for his outstanding contributions to Punjabi language in the field of science and literature. His literary interests and pursuits are described in the chapter titled "My Literary Journey". He has the expertise to write in various forms of literature, such as prose, travelogue, and poetry.

The chapters: "Story of my family", "Some women in my life" and "Some amazing incidents of my life" shed lights on various hidden aspects of the author's life. Throughout the book, Prof. Virk seeks to explain that the difficult times of one's life, with a pragmatic approach, can turn into great learning experiences. A notable feature of the book is the unblemished truth and universal approach that Prof. Virk adopts to science, religion and spirituality.

I found his writing style to be genuine and engaging, and also appreciated the human element in it. For example, at the time of partition of India, when his family had to leave their paternal village to reach India, on the way, his father left his other family members, in search for his mother (Hardev's grandma), who was left behind. This reflects an unparalleled mother-son bondage.

I find occasionally some quantum jumps in the narrative, perhaps to avoid unnecessary details. However, this does not distract reader's attention, nor does it detract him/her from enjoying it. I can only admire Prof. Virk for having the courage to write his memoirs and sharing his experiences with us truthfully. This is a great read that I would highly recommend. The much illustrated autobiography describes Prof. Virk's seventy five years' life journey in good detail.

It is difficult not to like the author with his unpretentious style. To be sure, there are some weaknesses in the book. The structure is a little unpolished, and there are a few printing errors. Also while the author answers many questions, he invites even more. For example, What is the impact of his research on everyday life? How has his Radon and Uranium studies led to

a better understanding of prevalence of cancer in certain areas of Punjab and elsewhere? Nevertheless, the book provides a valuable and absorbing window into scientific research and education system, that for most of us is generally inaccessible.

Prof. Virk is a shining example of an educationist, who not only portrays an interrelationship among the search of truth, science of discovery, literary activities, rationality and spirituality but exemplifies the underlying unity of these diverse fields of human thought and action. Whilst explaining a scientific issue, he is as lucid as if he is telling an interesting story. In fact, we feel a sincere attempt on his part to describe it in more detail or to reveal the relevant facts or ideas. Prof. Virk's autobiography is a lively, spellbinding account of his unique and eventful life. Stylistically it is his best work to inspire and delight readers everywhere. Prof. Virk is unstintingly honest and unafraid as he excavates his motivations and reservations, his fantasies, and the implications of the choices he has made – and those he has yet to make. Insightful, provocative, and fearlessly frank, Prof. Virk attracts readers with his warmth, wit, and wisdom.

The autobiography passes on to us much of the wisdom of this compassionate and gentle teacher. Whether you believe it or not, all this makes for wonderful and glorious adventure in reading. Even if you are not a physicist, this is an enjoyable read. *Mera Jeevan Safar* has the potential to inspire countless readers / learners around the world and give them a unique insight into the life of an international scientist cum litterateur. It is a timeless book, to be rightly treasured by all learners and truth seekers.

**End Note:** The book is available in Shahmukhi (Persian Script) as E-Book on APNA website: <http://apnaorg.com/books/latest.shtml>; loaded on 23rd June, 2017. It is transliterated for convenience of Punjabi readers living in Pakistan and elsewhere.

# MY JOURNEY IN SCIENCE: Autobiography of an Indian Scientist

By **Hardev Singh Virk**

Published by Gracious Books, Patiala, India, 2018

Pages: 234; Price: Rs. 300.00; H.B.

*Review by D.P. Singh*

Autobiographical books of Punjabi Scientists are a rare genre. "My Journey In Science" by internationally acclaimed scientist Professor Hardev Singh Virk is a welcome addition in this category. Prof. Hardev Singh Virk, a multifaceted personality, is an eminent Physicist, an ardent researcher, an eloquent orator, a passionate poet, and a globe trotter. In addition he is a devout Sikh, a renowned Sikh theologian and a prolific writer in many areas of Science, Religion and Literature.

On reading "Up Against Odds", the autobiography of Piara Singh Gill, a world famous Physicist, Professor Virk was motivated to write his autobiography "Mera Jeevan Safar" in Punjabi. Later, the book was transliterated in Shahmukhi and published as an e-book by Academy of the Punjab in North America (APNA). In addition, for the benefit of young people, who are born and brought up in the West, and are not well versed in Punjabi language, Professor Virk took the arduous task of publishing his autobiography in English. His

autobiography titled as “My Journey In Science” with a subtitle: “Autobiography of an Indian Scientist” contains a lot more detail about his scientific endeavours, as compared to its Punjabi version.

The purpose of “My Journey In Science” is to inspire younger generation to pursue their chosen fields of study, with full dedication against all odds. This ensues from the fact that he has dedicated it to his grand children, who inspired him to write this book. Additionally, the author uses the forum to express his extreme gratitude to all the mothers, the teachers and the seekers of Truth, who inspired him in his life journey, by dedicating it to them as well.

This autobiographical work of Prof. Virk, showcases various aspects of his life. The book is divided into two parts. The first part titled, “Making of an Indian Scientist”, contains eight chapters and the second part titled “Scientific Journey of My Life” contains six Chapters. Deliberations in the first part, focus on his personal life, whereas the second part describes the diverse areas of his research, and his trials and tribulations in their perusal. The last Chapter of the book describes his forays in the domains of History & Philosophy of Science, Physics Education, Sikh Religion, and Punjabi Literature. An exhaustive list of his research publications and books, along with his research report on the “Ecological crisis in Punjab”, are appended thereafter.

In the chapter “Memories of My Childhood and Family”, the author has vividly described events and experiences of his early life. The events included are the story of his birth, the partition of India, his early school education, and vicissitudes of his mother’s and his own life. The heart-rending tales of partition, glimpses of his maternal and paternal families, and a chance meeting with his fiancé in Chandigarh are also a part of this chapter. In the narrative, the characters description, is well developed and true-to-life.

The arduous part of author’s life journey is reported in the

chapter “My Student Life: Up Against Odds”. The heinous murder of his maternal grandmother (*nani*), resulting in a severe adversity to him and his mother, is described herein. In addition, the indifferent attitude of his father, apathetic disposition of his step mother, and open hostility of his step brothers, caused him acute anxiety and great impediments in his life. The author has been successful in portraying, with a stunning accuracy, the hostile attitudes from both collateral and lineal descendents (*shariq*) in a Jatt family of Punjab. Despite such adversity, young Hardev’s ambition and strong determination to pursue higher education, and going ahead for this purpose, with the help of his mentors and well wishers, reflects author’s firm resolve to face his situation with great fortitude. Facing such adverse circumstances, spanning over a decade, young Hardev emerges as a steadfast person, who is sturdy enough to face the dire situations of his future life.

The author describes his “Memories of Punjabi University, Patiala and Paris” as the golden era of his life. This period of author’s life is replete with several life changing events; e.g. his professional success, enjoying marital bliss, attaining fatherhood, obtaining doctorate in Nuclear Physics, initiating scientific research as an independent expert, publishing textbooks for B.Sc. students, and pursuing his research interest in Sikh cosmology. His indulgence in teachers’ politics, and parliamentary elections in India, is also described briefly herein. In this riveting tale of his struggles, successes, glories, failures, and frustrations, Hardev emerges as a visionary, hardworking, experienced, and dedicated scientist.

During the 1979-2002 period, his scientific and educational expertise was put to test, when he was invited to establish a new Department of Physics at the Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Therein, he played a vital role in laying down infrastructure for conducting scientific research, initiating research collaborations, participating in several national and international conferences and meetings. He had been instrumental in setting up an earthquake prediction studies

center at the university. The chapter “Memories of Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar” covers it all. Operation Blue Star, and its impact on the University, author’s foray in Punjabi literature, his efforts for popularisation of science, and his affiliation to ICTP, Trieste (Italy) are all recounted in this chapter. The successful culmination of these multifarious activities, points out his versatility as a multifaceted personality.

Prof. Virk emerges as a Globe trotter in the Chapter; “My Travels Around the Globe: A Synoptic View”. In 2008, he had published his travelogues (three volumes) in Punjabi. A brief description of his travels to Hungary, China, Singapore, Malaysia, and Thailand is included in this chapter. Prof. Virk’s inherent nature, having an immense respect for women, is reflected in his impressive encounters with a wide spectrum of ladies during his life. He has portrayed a deep respect and appreciation for his mother, whom he adores as the image of God on earth. He has expressed a similar feeling for his *Bhua* (Father’s sister), whom he describes as an iron-willed lady. The author recounts several remarkable incidents of his younger days in the chapter “Role of Women in My Life”. For his candid description of his romantic entanglements, he concedes to having inspiration from the autobiography of Prof. Pritam Singh, a doyen of Punjabi literature. Musing on the solid foundation of a marital relationship, he opines, “It is my belief that husband-wife relationship must rest on pillars of mutual faith and understanding”. The situations revealed in the chapter, confirms the author as a living example of such a wonderful relationship and he emerges as a devoted Sikh, with high moral and spiritual principles.

Some mystical incidents of author’s life are described in riveting detail, in the Chapter “Some Memorable Events of My Life”. The chapter ‘An Unfulfilled Wish of My Life’ elaborates the professional hurdles faced by the author, to secure the most deserving position as a Vice-Chancellor of a University in Punjab. In a candid portrayal, he unveils the sad spectacle of bribery, corruption, nepotism, and sifarsh (inappropriate

recommendation) prevalent in educational system in India in general, and in Punjab, in particular. Thereby, meritocracy is sacrificed at the altar of many crooked practices of hypocrisy, avarices, and abuses of political powers. In his explicit description of the situation author's audacious nature of calling a spade a spade is evident.

Poetic spirit of Prof. Virk finds its expression in the Chapter "Literary Journey of My Life". In his college days, under the influence of his friends; U. S. Kanwal, K. Grewal, and N. Bharti, who were adept at writing poetry in Punjabi, he too started writing poems and songs in Punjabi. But this phase ended in a short time, as responsibilities of his teaching job took over. The pursuit of his scientific research activities also took its own toll on his poetic characteristic. But, this latent talent, resurfaced during the phase of his romantic entanglements in Paris. The author reports; "As it is almost impossible to translate Punjabi poetry into English, due to different cultural ethos and nuances, so only a few selected poems and folk songs have been translated in English". But even this limited sample of poems and songs, provide a vivid depiction of his sensitive nature. The poetic outpourings of Prof. Virk are full of natural symbolism, cultural ethos and scientific terminology.

The second part of the book consists of six chapters. The chapter; "Moving from Cosmic Rays to Elementary Particles", appraises the story of the author joining Aligarh Muslim University, his search for a research supervisor in Paris, suffering harassment at the hands of his research supervisor, his return to India, and frustrations of pursuing scientific research in India. In "My Journey in Earth Sciences and Creation of Physics Department", the author elaborates on changing his research field from Particle Physics to Earth Sciences, playing a leading role in creation of Physics department at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. The monotonous problems of university administration, tribulations of creating infrastructure for teaching and research, and the presentation of his research results at International forums, are part of the tale shared here.

The chapter “Radon Studies for Uranium Exploration and Earthquake Prediction” revolves around author’s research activities, using Radon as a tool for biogeochemical exploration of uranium, and as a precursor in the prediction of earthquakes in Punjab and Himachal Pradesh. The author’s research team was successful in creating an extensive database on Radon measurements in soil, air, and water in India. In the next Chapter; the author describes his investigations in Solid State Nuclear Track Detectors. Being pioneers in using ‘Heavy Ion’ beams for irradiation of SSNTDs in India, author’s team was able to formulate a ‘Single Activation Energy’ model of radiation damage annealing in these detectors. “My Encounter with Nanotechnology” is the story of author’s post-retirement research activities, taken up at DAV Institute of Engineering and Technology, Jalandhar. At the institute, the author’s research team attained success in the fabrication of nanowires and nanoflowers of exquisite beauty.

In the last chapter; “My Forays in History of Science & Other Areas of Interest” the author presents a panorama of his life, with his research interests, in diverse areas such as History and philosophy of science, Physics education, Sikh religion, Ecology, Nature of Reality and Punjabi literature. His notable contributions in these diverse fields of research brought him several accolades from various Government and non-Government organizations.

With publication of about 450 research papers in various research journals of international repute, 40 books and over 70 foreign visits related to his research and educational activities, he emerges on the world scenario as a great scholar, an eminent educationist and a professional scientist. Thus an ordinary rural youth, with his sheer hard work, brilliance, and intelligence, distinct and unique accomplishments, arose to join the company of elite scientists and scholars of national and international prominence such as Nobel Laureate, Prof. Abdus Salam of Pakistan, and a galaxy of world renowned scientists mentioned under acknowledgements. “My Journey

In Science “ is the story of that young man.

Prof. Virk’s autobiography is quite fascinating and engrossing. Once you start, it is very hard to put it down without reading it till the end. He has a great mastery of presenting his life experiences in a lucid and authentic style. The whole autobiography is replete with open and honest reflections. He is unstintingly honest and unafraid as he excavates his motivations and reservations, his fantasies, and the implications of the choices he has made. Insightful, provocative, and fearlessly frank, Prof. Virk attracts readers with his warmth, wit, and wisdom.

Despite numerous challenges and obstacles in his life, the author has presented a great zest for life in his autobiography. Stylistically it is his best work to inspire and delight readers everywhere. The whole book is easy to read and comprehend. It provides a valuable and absorbing window into scientific research and education system, that for most of us is generally inaccessible. En passant, I am truly amazed, how Prof. Virk has shared all the information so meticulously and with such minute details of dates, times, and places. The much illustrated autobiography describes Prof. Virk’s seventy five years’ life journey in good detail.

Prof. Virk is a shining example of a scientific researcher, who portrays an interrelationship among the search of truth, science of discovery, literary activities, rationality and spirituality. In addition, he exemplifies the underlying unity of these diverse fields of human thought and action. “My Journey In Science” passes on to us much of the wisdom of this world famous Indian Physicist. Believe it or not, all this makes for wonderful and glorious adventure in reading. Even if you are not a Physicist, this is an enjoyable read. “My Journey in Science” has the potential to inspire countless readers / learners around the world and gives them a unique insight into the life of an international scientist cum litterateur. It is a timeless book, to be rightly treasured by all learners and truth seekers.

# SCIENTIFIC VISION IN SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB & INTERFAITH DIALOGUE

By **Hardev Singh Virk**

Published by Singh Brothers, Amritsar, 2007

Pages: 156; Price: Rs. 225.00

*Review by D.P. Singh*

Religion and Science represent two great systems of human thought. Both of these seek objective perceptions in their attempts to comprehend existence and reality. The fundamental distinction lies in the direction in which they look in pursuit of their aims. In both cases a subtle interplay between theory and observation is involved. Both approaches are intellectual as well as empirical. Professor Hardev Singh Virk's book titled 'Scientific Vision in Sri Guru Granth Sahib and Interfaith Dialogue' offers an exciting bridge between religious studies and natural sciences. He has made a splendid in-depth study of Sikhism and its relationship with science.

The book contains 12 Chapters. In the Prologue, the author traces a brief history of the kindling of his interest in Cosmology. Then he articulates the purpose of the book to show glimpses of Scientific Vision in Sri Guru Granth Sahib (SGGS) by

interpreting its text in the light of scientific theories.

Prof. Virk stresses that Interfaith dialogue is the need of the hour for promotion of world peace. He points out that twenty-first century will be a witness to two types of dialogues for the promotion of world peace and harmony: (i) Science-Religion dialogue, and (ii) inter-faith dialogue. The author has a strong faith and conviction that SGGS has the potential to play a leading role in both these dialogues.

Science and Religion are not polarized in the Sikh text. Sikh scripture brings us face to face with the concreteness and reality of the interdependence of all life, and of our own microcosmic and macrocosmic interrelationship. Science, with its observations and factual data, doesn't clash with Sikh sacred scripture; they reveal its intrinsic vigour, its far reaching insights and its contemporary relevance. These facts emerge most convincingly in Prof. Virk's interpretation of Sikh scripture in the light of scientific theories of evolution, cosmology, nature of reality and time.

In the 'Glimpses of a Scientific Vision in SGGS' author points out that the spiritual / mystical vision in SGGS is compatible with modern science in its approach to cosmology, nature of reality, relation of microcosm to macrocosm and consciousness. The concept of supreme reality as presented in SGGS is unique, scientific and revolutionary. It is not a mere abstraction. Its realization is possible through the practice of *Sabda* and *Naam*. SGGS envisages the Creation of the Universe out of *Sunya*, which is devoid of matter but not of energy. The author points out a beautiful analogy, with quantum concept of Creation - out of nothing, as a vacuum fluctuation.

Elaborating on the 'Cosmological Ideas in Science and Religion' the author has given an overview of the various cosmological theories and models proposed in both science and religion. The cosmological hypothesis, as propounded in SGGS, has been compared with other texts, both of oriental and occidental traditions. After a detailed analysis, the author

opines that Sikh Cosmology as enunciated in SGGS is most scientific and compatible with the modern cosmological theories of science.

In describing 'The Concept of Reality and its Physical, Metaphysical and Mystical aspects' the author has pointed out that there has been a dynamic change in the physical interpretation of Reality from Aristotle to Einstein. As the Reality is trans-empirical so it can be comprehended through intuitive experience rather than sense experience. Guru Nanak's intuitive insight into the metaphysical realm, presents an integrated view of the basic Reality that is monistic but whose manifestation is pluralistic. According to SGGS, Reality can be realized through Guru's *sabda*. The wonderful concept of *Sunya* was introduced in Sikh scripture by Guru Nanak to explain the pre-creation state of the universe. *Sunya* is not equated with void or emptiness rather it represents the state of equipoise where Absolute Lord exists in primordial trance.

The concept of Nature has played a predominant role in science and religion since ancient times. After discussing its development over the centuries and in Newtonian world-view, the author has elaborated on the impact of Relativity Theory and Quantum Mechanics on its various aspects. Talking about the Hindu and Muslim viewpoints about Nature, the author points out that Guru Nanak's vision of Nature is far more comprehensive than his predecessors both in the East and West. It is a holistic vision, which can act as a platform for a dialogue between science and religion. After a detailed deliberation about the Concept of time and its development, the author points out that the 'Creation of Time' as enunciated in SGGS is analogous to creation hypothesis of 'Big-Bang'. Time has a beginning and an end and it can't be treated as absolute or eternal as God.

On the basis of a comparative study of the various theories of the origin of life in the universe, the author concludes that the cause of this phenomenon is still a mystery for the scientific

world, although Charles Darwin's hypothesis of natural selection is the most successful theory of organic evolution till date. The author points out that according to SGGS, God is the creator of life in this universe. He adds that Guru Nanak accepts the theory of evolution in his own characteristic manner without taking recourse to the concept of natural selection in the Darwinian way.

A set of fundamental beliefs, attitudes, values etc., which constitute a comprehensive outlook on life and the universe is called a world-view. With suitable quotes from SGGS, the author describes that the world-view in Sikhism dialectically unites the idea of God and the world. God himself transforms into creation, which is changing His *nirguna* (Transcendence) form into *sarguna* (Immanence) form. The world is neither *maya* nor a perversion. It is a *dharamsala*, a place for righteous actions. Prof. Virk expresses that there is a perfect correspondence between the epoch of 'big-bang' and the creation out of *sunya* phase as enunciated in SGGS. The most important concept in the Sikh world-view is the creation of an ideal man, the '*Gurmukh*' of Guru Nanak or the '*Khalsa*' of Guru Gobind Singh. In this world-view, withdrawal, monasticism and asceticism are rejected and instead, a householder's life is accepted. Guru Nanak declares that liberation is possible even while enjoying bounties of life as a householder by living truthfully.

'Inter-faith dialogue' and 'Science-Spirituality dialogue' have an important role to play in this era of globalisation. The conflict between Science and Religion, which had started after Renaissance in Europe, has retreated during the new millennium. The author points out that we are now living in a world where a dialogue between Science and Spirituality has become possible. He emphasizes that a new 'holistic' view is needed to see Reality in its concrete wholeness - a view that would see the whole in the parts and the parts in the whole, envisioned as dynamic becoming and not static being. This would not mean a negation of reason but going beyond it, to

the realm of spirit. Recent advances in Quantum Physics support the idea of a cosmic spirit pervading the cosmos and inter-relationship of individuals in world society. Talking about the global perspectives in Sikh Philosophy, the author tells that it has a universal appeal for the mankind irrespective of its religious and cultural affiliations. In the holistic vision of the Sikh philosophy, God, nature and man are integrally bound to each other.

In the last section of the book, Prof. Virk elucidates the concept of Interfaith dialogue and its importance in present times. He stresses that such dialogue issues forth in a spirit of fellowship and recognizes the whole in each part. The author has described Interfaith dialogues in Sikh Religion, Christianity, Islam and Hinduism. He has elaborated on various common points in Sikh Religion and other religious systems especially about Concept of God, Creation of Universe, Concept of Salvation, Heaven and Hell, Ethics and Morality. The author points out that Sikh religion, despite its doctrinal newness and distinct identity, shares with the other religions certain recurring archetypes that have shaped different cultures and civilizations arising the world-over. The author has been successful in bringing out the unique identity of Sikh religion in relation to the Christianity, Islam and Hinduism, on the basis of some essential elements common to these religious systems.

Prof. Virk has summed up the discussion with an article titled 'Religion, Science and Mankind' (authored by D. P. Singh) to emphasize the inter-relationship in Science and Religion. It is concluded that, during present times, coherence of both these systems is a sine qua non factor for attainment of everlasting peace, prosperity and spiritual enlightenment of mankind.

Prof. H. S. Virk has done a momentous work in projecting the divine thought of Sikh Gurus to the modern world through this book. Scientific Vision of Sikh Gurus comes out brilliantly through this work. His thesis is strongly supplemented by appropriate quotes from SGGS. Though there has been some

repetition of Gurbani quotes and textual material in the book yet it does not take the reader astray rather it helps in making the things clear. Though the book is a gist of research papers prepared/presented at various conferences/seminars by the author, yet each article is complete in itself and is a treat to read. The younger generation of the Sikhs is likely to gain much from this treatise of scientific and spiritual knowledge. It is pertinent to add that this is one of the best books ever authored on this topic till date. I strongly recommend that this book should be on the shelves of all libraries and be distributed by all Gurudwaras. It is imperative that the Sikh youth of today are encouraged to read works of this nature.

# MUSINGS OF A SWISS SIKH: Essays on Sikh History

By **Dr. Jogishwar Singh**, Switzerland

Published by Sanbun Publishers, New Delhi, 2012

Pages: 128; Price: Rs. 150.00; US \$9.95; Paperback

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr. Jogishwar Singh (Cheema), the author of this book, is a multi-dimensional personality who came into my contact after he published his travelogue, "Journey to Sikh Shrines in Pakistan" in a series of articles in The Sikh Review. Most of the essays in this book have been published in 'Abstracts of Sikh Studies' and the 'The Sikh Review' during the last decade.

It will not be out of place to introduce the Swiss Sikh, author of this book. I was wonder struck after reading his career graph: M.Sc. (Honours) in Physics followed by Masters in History, both from Punjab University, Chandigarh. Dr. Singh qualified in the prestigious IAS examination (1976) and served as Deputy Commissioner in Himachal Pradesh before leaving for Switzerland in 1984, after the infamous Operation Blue Star. He began a new life and career in Europe. Presently, he is Managing Director with the world famous Edmond de Rothschild Group in Geneva.

The book under review consists of 6 Chapters. Its title is

some what intriguing, as almost half of it, comprising Chapters 2 and 6, is focused on Travels of the Author to Pakistan. Any way, he tries to mix up Travelogue and Sikh History under the same title. The other four Chapters cover different themes from Sikh History which reflect the musings of the author as a Sikh Historian. The author displays his knowledge of Sikh History but his perceptions seem to be quite different in comparison to established historical tradition. I may call it a paradigm shift in Sikh historical interpretation.

Chapter 1 is a well researched document on the theme, "Sikh Obedience Patterns in History". The main aim of the author is to understand and interpret the events of Indian Punjab during 1980s in context of Sikh history and tradition. He is a strong proponent of Miri-Piri concept or inseparability of religion and politics in Sikh religion. Author defends his thesis (page 7) as follows: "The whole historical experience of Sikhism reflects such inseparability. This intermingling of religion and politics was not something suddenly introduced by the sixth Guru, subsequently sanctified by his grandson, Guru Gobind Singh ji. This development was inherent in the evolution of Sikhism. The earlier Gurus were not apolitical holy men who turned a blind eye to the prevalent political situation around them. Guru Nanak Sahib comments extensively on the prevailing political rot of his age".

The author argues in favour of Khalsa Raj (page 10): "After bringing into being a revolutionary organisation, the Guru placed a revolutionary ideal before his men, the objective of the Raj Khalsa or people's democracy". He echoes the sentiments of Professor Puran Singh (*Spirit of The Sikh*, Vol. 1, p. 9): "The Khalsa is the ideal future international state of man: it is an absolute monarchy of the kingdom of heaven for each and every man, the absolute democracy. Guru Gobind Singh founded the true democracy of the people in which there were no dead votes or votes won by mental persuasion or interested coercion".

Sikh attitude to political authority is summed up by the author as follows (page 18): “Based on Guru Gobind Singh Sahib’s teachings, the natural political order preordained by the Zeitgeist of the Sikhs can only be a democratic polity. It cannot be a state based on absolute despotism of the individual, be he a monarch, a dictator, a Prime Minister or other. Regimes tending to be dictatorial evoke immediate resistance from the Sikhs”.

The author finds fault with the monarchy of Maharaja Ranjit Singh (page 25): “Ranjit Singh’s monarchy did not conform to the kind of democratic polity envisaged in the ideals of Guru Gobind Singh Sahib’s Khalsa. Obedience to a centralised political authority had no place in Sikh tradition”. The downfall of Sikh kingdom is attributed to the brahmanical practices introduced during his reign and his Dogra favourites who betrayed the interests of Sikh Panth without hesitation.

The author does not spare the present Sikh leadership in his criticism (page 31): “The present day situation in the Punjab more than amply reflects this tradition of personal pettiness prevailing over common interests of the Panth. No conscientious Sikh can afford to remain unaffected by the intellectual poverty, venality and sheer mediocrity of present day Sikh political leadership”.

In the last section of Chapter 1, the author traces the history of Sikh extremist movement. He squarely blames the Congress for this rot (page 33): “The Congress felt that so long as the Akalis controlled the SGPC, their hold on sizeable chunks of rural Sikh votes could not be broken. This policy did yield temporary gains in the sense of weakening successive Akali agitations but ultimately proved to be counter productive by sowing the seeds of extremism, when this policy was renewed in the 1980s”.

The author makes a clear distinction between pre-1947 Khalistan ideology and the present one. He disapproves the present ideology as it contradicts the Sikh obedience patterns

in Sikh history and is at variance with democratic Sikh practices (page 35): “Recent ideas of Khalistan, discernible in the utterances of some people in Punjab, seemed much more theocratic and fundamentalist in concept. A theocratic Khalistan cannot be in accordance with the principles of the Sikh faith. It would be at variance with democratic Sikh practices inherent in Guru Gobind Singh Sahib’s ideas, practised during the Sikh war of independence against oppressive rule”. The author laments that the Sikh youth have lost its moorings (page 36): “Only time will tell whether politicians will have the sagacity to avoid giving a *casus belli* to Sikh youth having lost their traditional obedience patterns”.

“Journey to Sikh Shrines in Pakistan” is the longest Chapter of this book running into 50 pages. Its text is based on author’s diary recorded from his date of departure on 10<sup>th</sup> March 2007 from Lausanne, his native place in Switzerland, to his return from Islamabad on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2007. During this trip, the author visited all historical gurdwaras, his ancestral villages (both paternal and maternal) in Pakistani Punjab. The author has given minutest details of his sentimental journey to Sikh shrines and his ancestral village. He is all praise for the hospitality of his Pakistani hosts. However, he tries to conceal their identity by calling them AR, SB, S etc.

Passing through Attock, he remembers Akali Phula Singh and Hari Singh Nalwa and recalls his heritage: “We were then real lions. We are donkeys today, led by miserable wretches”. On page 55, I discovered a historical blunder when the author writes: “Princess Bamba was the grand daughter of Dalip Singh, Maharaja Ranjit Singh’s youngest son”. In fact, she was daughter of Dalip Singh, who had no grand children. Despite these minor flaws, this essay reads like an adventure into some fairy land.

Chapter 3 “Do Sikhs Understand Sikhism” is a highly critical and thought provoking essay by the author. It poses many questions for further analysis of Sikh scholars. I found

some answers to my query: "Why Sikhism fails to impact at global level"? In author's opinion, the message of the Sikh Gurus is so oriented to liberation from all kinds of superstitions, rituals, baser instincts and baser follies that Sikhs are just not intellectually up to a level where they can understand its full import. The author is highly critical of role of various sectarian groups (Jats, Bhapas, Aroras, Khatris, Mazhbis) which joined Sikh society to ameliorate their status in Hindu society of India. He concludes his hypothesis (page 97): "I am convinced that the root cause of Sikh social morass today is the basic fact that large majorities of various social groups embraced Sikhism not because of conviction about its message but because of relative social advantages that they sought out of it. This was true in time of our Gurus and this is true today".

Chapter 4 "Maharaja Ranjit Singh: Zenith or Nadir" also demands a critical review by the Sikh historians. The author traces the present state of Sikh decline to Maharaja Ranjit Singh (pages 104-05): "Ranjit Singh's rule marked the zenith of Sikh political power but also marked the beginning of the nadir of Sikh social and moral decline. The present state of Sikh Panth: caste ridden, ritual ridden, bereft of any proper leadership, vaunted more for drunken, loutish behavior than any intellectual achievement, can be directly traced to trends that developed during Ranjit Singh's rule. His kingdom marked the antithesis of the Sikh political model envisaged in the Tenth Guru's teachings".

In chapter 5, the author appreciates the system of direct democracy in Switzerland. He finds a unique parallelism in the Swiss Landsgemeinde and Sarbat Khalsa concepts. The author has traced the evolution of Landsgemeinde from the remote origins to modern times. The author concludes this Chapter with his observations (page 118): "Most Sikhs live today in India which does not have its former Rajas and Maharajas. However, the fundamental importance of the Sarbat Khalsa as the fulcrum of community decision making has never

been restored amongst Sikhs. The Swiss managed to retain the essential ethos generated by their Landsgemeinde. The Sikhs have not managed to have similar success with their Sarbat Khalsa”.

Chapter 6 describes author’s recent visit to Chillianwala in Pakistan, the site of a famous battle during the Second Anglo-Sikh war. The reason for author’s visits to Pakistan is to link with his roots. He finds true Punjabi culture in Pakistani Punjab and calls Indian Punjab as ‘Bollywood Punjab’.

The author is highly critical of modern day Sikh society and laments the role of Sikh leaders, Sikh youth, Sikh deras and Sant Babas (page 121): “Leaders are motivated more by consideration of personal aggrandisement than service to the Sikh Panth; youngsters in Punjab with their brains addled by drugs and alcohol; people flocking to Deras and charlatans masquerading as Gurus, ignoring the sublime message of Sri Guru Granth Sahib; Sikh society riddled by casteism, arrogance, crass materialism and female infanticide”. The author gets rejuvenated after these visits to sites associated with the lives of our Gurus and Sikh heroes who act as role models for our Swiss Sikh author.

What I observe after reading this book is that the author suffers pangs of separation from Sikh homeland of his dreams. The book reflects his pain at what he observes as blemishes in Sikh society and Sikh leadership. He offers some suggestions to ameliorate the lot of Sikh youth (page 36): “Punjab has to be put on the path of rapid economic progress, thereby providing employment for Sikh youth not absorbed in gainful employment by the agricultural sector. Sagacious policies have to be pursued by those in power to convince Sikh youngsters that the Sikh way of life is not in danger”.

“Musings of a Swiss Sikh” is recommended for Sikh youth and Sikh scholars of history to critically examine the hypotheses put forward by the learned scholar. It also reflects the feelings of Sikh Diaspora who are emotionally attached to the welfare of Sikh society, in general, and Sikh Panth, in particular.

# WHISPERING WORDS: A MEMOIR

By **Omkar N. Koul**

Published by Authorspress, Q-2A, Hauz Khas Enclave,  
New Delhi, India

Pages: 319; Price: Rs. 595.00, H.B.

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

According to the author, “Whispering Words” is a Memoir and not an Autobiography. It consists of 8 Chapters, preceded by a Preface in front, and followed by ‘Views & Reviews’ at the end. In the preface, author narrates how the idea of writing this memoir matured after he contributed an article “My Permanent Address” to a website of a friend, Muneebur Rahman, from Boston (USA) related to Kashmir. The author is well versed in many Indian languages but I wonder his command of English language is also praise worthy. His narration is simple and fantastic, touching the core of heart of a sensitive reader.

Chapter 1 “The Valley” is of 50 pages and divided into several sections starting with village Bugam where the author was born and brought up. The author goes into a mystic reverie while he writes about his village: “I dream of the muddy virgin roads, the tiring walks on its uneven paths that zig-zag through its meadows, the silent brooks that hiss, the rushing streams that sing, the tall majestic mountains that preside over the area at a distance of a few kilometers away”. The author talks of Hindu-Muslim unity in his village which has been shattered

after 1990: “Muslims and Hindus and people belonging to different professions lived in peace, friendship and shared the joys and sorrows of one and all. There was perfect amity between the two communities”.

The author recalls his childhood events wistfully. For example, he writes about his family and neighbours, the primary school in his village and high school in Kulgam, the demands of teachers to bring vegetables from students’ home gardens and the pranks played by the students to fulfil such demands. The author pays high tributes to his father, Pt. Prem Nath Koul, who was a Kashmiri poet and respected as a gentleman in his village. His description of his college and University days is equally poignant. The author recalls about his childhood Muslim friends with nostalgia. But the most moving section of this Chapter “Village Revisted” brought tears to my eyes while reading the tale of human emotions: “ Zaina hugged me and narrated the anguish she had gone through on the loss of her son at the hands of terrorists. I couldn’t control my emotions, my tears rolled down my cheeks. It was an embarrassing situation for me”.

In the 2nd Chapter “Beyond The Valley”, the author narrates his experiences of going out of the valley for the first time. He had a short stint in Delhi but he got fed up with this city and moved to Agra, the city of Taj Mahal. He started working for his Doctorate on Kashmiri Ramayana in K. M. Institute of Hindi Studies and Linguistics, Agra University. By his diligence and hard work, he impressed his research supervisor and made a number of friends both from north and south India. He visited Allahabad and Varanasi in connection with his research work. His encounter with a Kashmiri Kunzru family in Agra can be deemed to be a study in human affairs.

In 3rd Chapter “The First Flight”, the author narrates his arrival in Urbana and his experiences of study of Linguistics in the University of Illinois at Urbana. The author speaks highly of his teachers in Urbana: “Among other teachers who impressed me most were Dieter Wanner who taught Historical Linguistics. He was a European scholar well-versed in a number of European

languages". On his first visit to Chicago, he encounters Sherry in the bus and they become life-long friends. Dr Omkar Koul is well versed in the art of making friends, especially with farer sex, hence we find his encounters with Martha, Tamara, June and Sona interesting episodes of his life in Urbana. He developed family-like relations with Kachrus, entertained many guests from India during his sojourn in USA, and participated in conferences to deliver lectures. Before his return to India, he landed himself a job in Northern Regional Language Centre at Patiala.

In 4th Chapter "Patiala", the author recalls his experiences of social and academic life on the Punjabi University, Campus in an amicable way. He developed a circle of friendships on the campus, including this reviewer, and devoted his full energies to development of the NRLC at Patiala. The author writes: "As the Principal of the Centre my duties included carrying out all the academic and administrative functions of the Centre. I enjoyed teaching Kashmiri and Urdu on a regular basis". He recalls his intimate relationship with University employees in the following words: "I enjoyed wide-ranging discussions especially with H S Gurm, H S Virk, Gurbux Singh, Gurpal Singh, and others who belonged to varied disciplines of physics, history, law etc. I could walk into their houses anytime without any hesitation and vice-versa". He organised many conferences in NRLC and invited renowned Scholars of Linguistics from abroad. On the whole, Professor Koul had the best of relations with his colleagues in the centre and University authorities, including eminent academicians from the Language faculty. He also made trips to Australia, Singapore and USA for academic purposes.

In 5th Chapter "The Queen of Hills", the author narrates his experience of working in LBSNAA, the national academy set up Govt. of India for training of Indian bureaucrats. As usual, the author created a new circle of friendships in Mussourie, including the celebrated author of English fiction, Ruskin Bond. The author concludes this chapter: "I would like to finish this chapter with some personal notes. Living in

Mussoorie had somehow energised my creativity to a large extent. I believe the nature, flora and fauna, mountains, jungles worked as stimulants. I was able to appreciate the creative activities, which would take place in and around the Academy. I participated in the activities of all the clubs and societies of the Academy. I loved to take long walks in the woods occasionally”.

In 6th Chapter “Manasagangotri”, the author describes the beauty of Mysore, the seat of Central Institute of Indian Languages (CIIL). It is here the author learnt the art of diplomacy to deal with seniors and juniors. He was ultimately made Director of CIIL by UPSC under the directions of Govt. of India, a coveted position for any academician in India. His comments on social life in Karnatka are noteworthy. He made trips to Zimbabwe, Mauritius, South Africa, Japan and Nepal during his posting in CIIL, Mysore.

In Chapter 7 “Free from Bonds”, the author describes the pangs on the eve of retirement: “The year 2001 was a turning point. There were a lot of apprehensions, anxieties, and expectations to manage. It was time to retire from government service after working for years in regular jobs with a lot of challenges, smooth or not so smooth journeys and mechanical well-defined working hours and duties in different capacities. All of a sudden I was free from the assigned responsibilities, duties and obligations”. Anyway, the author adjusts himself very well in the new situation and finds lot of interesting work to keep himself busy. He writes: “I continue to receive invitations for participation in various meetings, workshops, seminars and conferences held at various institutions across India and abroad. I exercise my own choice whether to participate or not”. The author has participated in various meetings and conferences held in France, Belgium, Russia, Kenya, UK and USA during his years of retirement. The bulk of this chapter is devoted to author’s visit to Pakistan, where he went on an invitation by the organisers of the 1st Kashmir International Conference of Linguistics held at the Azad Jammu & Kashmir University, Muzaffarabad from May 15-16, 2013. He was overwhelmed

by the hospitality of Pakistani friends, especially the Kashmiri hosts, with whom the author shared the common bonds of language and culture. Due to this affinity, the author went again when invited as a keynote speaker in the Second International Conference of Linguistics organised by the Azad Jammu and Kashmir University (AJKU) at Muzaffarabad on May 4-5, 2015. He visited some monuments in Lahore and met old friends in the conference.

In Chapter 8 “My World of Words”, the author goes back into his memory lane and writes: “While doing my master’s I composed poems in Hindi and a few of them were published in local journals *Prakash* and *Kashyap*. I wrote a master’s dissertation on *Prakash Ram* and his Kashmiri *Ramayana* and was happy to do field work on the subject”. This chapter reveals academic traits of the author even during his early life. In a way, this Chapter is a wrap up of his academic activities and research publications. The Chapter gives a detailed list of Books and Papers published by the author during his life-long pursuit in the study of Languages and Linguistics.

The book Chapters are followed by ‘Views and Reviews’ by the learned academicians about the work of author. For sake of illustration, I just give views of D.P. Pattanayak, the founder Director of CIIL, who writes: “Dr O.N. Koul is one rare breed of Scholars who has worked with commitment and sincerity and consistently moved from junior most position to the senior most”. Dr Koul has received similar accolades from nearly 2 dozen scholars of renown.

As a reviewer, it is my duty to point out if there is any discrepancy in the MS. I feel the book has not been checked thoroughly for some minor grammatical mistakes. The author calls Suba Singh of Punjabi University Patiala as Shoba Singh while recalling an anecdote on page 122, Chapter 3. In my view, ‘The Whispering Words’ is not only a Memoir of the author but it will also serve as a Travelogue, Autobiography and a Teachers’ Guide in Linguistics.

# REVITALIZING TECHNICAL EDUCATION (Diagnosis and Remedies)

By **Dr. Major Singh**, Govt. Polytechnic for Girls, Ludhiana

Published by Virsa Sambhal Publications,

Dugri Road, Ludhiana, 2007

Pages: 180; Price: Rs. 180.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Dr. Major Singh is a physicist by training and he is well versed with problems of Science education in India. I always appreciated his contributed articles to IAPT Bulletin. The book under review is based on his personal experience of working in a Government Polytechnic for more than a decade. The author has consulted all the documents pertaining to Higher Education, Science Education and Technical Education prepared by various commissions set up by Govt. of India after 1947. He is fully conversant with the successes and failures of the Govt. policies in promoting technical education in India. I consider this book as a masterpiece document on Technical Education, perhaps the best in the market till date. The focus of this book is Technical Education scenario in Punjab state but I am fully convinced that its diagnosis and remedies are equally applicable to Technical Education in other states of Indian union.

The book consists of two chapters only. The author introduces concept of autonomy and impact of globalization on technical education in the first chapter. He is against autonomy for Polytechnics as this concept was introduced for institutes of higher education, namely Universities, as one of the recommendations of University Education Commission in 1948. However, the author is highly critical of corrupt practices prevalent in institutes of higher education at all levels. At page 15, the author laments : "It is the moral duty of all the scientists and teachers to devote full time to their work. Some of the teachers have the liberty not to take classes and engage in politics. Thus corruption of money, time, absenteeism, ignorance of latest developments in the field, engaging in private business during office hours and all other corrupts practices are in vogue."

The author refers (p.23) to the U.R. Rao committee report 'Revitalizing Technical Education', on which the title of this book is based, as the panacea for all the maladies. I agree with the remarks of the author : "Reckless commercialization by the so called self-financing institutions, has turned the higher learning into an education bazaar in India". The author vehemently criticizes the loot by private institutes/agencies in name of Information Technology (IT) related courses of short duration for making a fast buck. The society, especially the weaker sections, are looted by these sharks under the very nose of state and central agencies, e.g. technical boards and AICTE. The author quotes at page 36, Article 46 of the Indian constitution, which deals with education of weaker sections of society: "The state shall promote the education and economic interests of weaker sections and shall protect them from the social injustice and all kinds of exploitation."

Chapter 2 "Falling Standards of Technical Education : Causes, Concerns and Realities" is the core chapter of this book, spread over 104 pages. Almost all the problems of technical education are enumerated in this Chapter; critical review of the role of Government, teachers, students and society is discussed and some remedies are suggested to invigorate the

decaying system. On page 61, the author laments: “The first blunder of the Government is that it does not know how many polytechnics should be opened. There is hardly any consideration for demand projection and supply, and the future forecasting. Private colleges are interested only in their personal gain. They are not concerned about the trained manpower requirements of the state or the country”.

The author stresses the importance of teaching basic science courses to all engineering students from polytechnics to IITs. He has quoted from various sources in support of his suggestion. The best section of this chapter (Art. 2.10, pages 114-117) is devoted to revival of laboratory work in polytechnics. I must say, India is going to be a bankrupt nation morally, politically economically and technically because we have ignored the practical training at school, college and professional institutes’ level, laying too much stress on theory and rote learning at school level. As past President of IAPT, I was involved in promotion of Physics Education in India and our Vice President, Prof. Ved Ratna at the age of 80 is still engaged in innovations of school laboratory practicals at his residence. I agree with conclusions of the author: “Neglect of practical work in technical institution results in producing technical manpower of less than required competence. By awarding 80 percent or more marks to students in practical examination on the basis of false records in polytechnics, we are training students in unethical values through practical work. And we are contributing to the environment of corruption in our society”.

Some of the quotes of the author deserve special mention, e.g. on page 118 while highlighting the role of library, the author remarks: “The attendance in the library is related to the crime graph of that place”. How true it is for Panjab! Punjab Police may find it convenient to prepare a statistical graph of crime rate in the state by recording roll call in the libraries.

The author has recommended the establishment of a ‘Placement Cell’ in each polytechnic as already in vogue in NITs and some other professional colleges. He advocates the spirit of entrepreneurship for all type of students coming out

polytechnics and professional institutes. This should be a part and parcel of their training. The problem of unemployment in India is the main concern of all state governments but precious little has been done to inculcate the spirit of entrepreneurship among our educated youth.

The author is well versed with maladies of technical education in Punjab and suggested some remedies to overhaul the system. He is right, Punjab government has promoted agriculture in the state but ignored technical and higher education. In the age of globalization, Punjab needs to come abreast with innovations in health, education and agriculture through re-structuring of curriculum at all levels. Appendix II and III are about Examination reforms and Curriculum development in polytechnics. However, the most amusing part of the book is Appendix IV "Punjab : No. 1 state". It is written in a highly satirical style by the author. Punjab is number one in many fields, to name a few, female foeticide, alcohol consumption, imperialistic attitude of the government, rampant corruption, suicide rate of farmers, violation of human rights and last but not the least, collapse of education system. The author personally feels that bureaucrats and politicians of Punjab must read the summary of the book given in the Chapter 3.

The author quotes extensively from reports and newspapers to support his view point. It is desirable but only upto a certain limit. The book is free from howlers and grammatical mistakes but some mistakes do occur. For example, at page 133 (i) 'Enticement' should be replaced by 'enhancement', at page 138, 'California' by 'Berkeley' and at page 145, 'expended' by 'expanded'. The book is a unique contribution by the learned author in the field of technical education and I hope the academic world will appreciate the labour of love of Dr. Major Singh.

# INSIDE STORY OF NOBEL PEACE PRIZE AWARD: INDIAN CONTESTANTS

By **Rajinder Singh**, University of Oldenburg, Germany  
Published by Shaker Verlag GmbH, Aachen, Germany, 2016  
Pages: 234; Price: 21.90 Euro

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Rajinder Singh is a well-established Historian of Science who started his journey in this field by working on his Ph.D. thesis: "Nobel Laureate CV Raman's work on Light Scattering". He is author of ten books and a score of research papers dealing with Indian Nobel Prize Winners and their Nominators. The book under review is focused on Indian Nobel Peace Prize nominees, including Aga Khan III, Jawahar Lal Nehru, Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, Raja Mahendra Partap Singh, S.K. Chaudhuri, N.K. Mukherjee, B.N. Rau, Vinoba Bhave et al. Mahatma Gandhi was also nominated for Nobel Peace Prize but the author has dealt with Mahatma in a separate volume: "Mahatma Gandhi – Sex Scandal and the missed Peace Prize". The author has researched the archives of Nobel Foundation and prepared this volume based on 14 Indian nominees for Nobel Peace Prize.

The Foreword by Professor S.C. Roy recounts the herculean effort made by Rajinder in collecting materials, rare documents and confidential reports from archives to prepare this book. The author had to use online translators to get information about nominees written in Norwegian, Swedish, French, Italian or Dutch languages. In the Introduction, the author summarizes the history of Nobel Prizes and Indian contribution.

The first Indian nominee to Nobel Peace Prize was Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III. He was a great linguist who was well versed in Arabic, Persian, Urdu, Hindi, English, French and German. He played an important role in politics after WWI. He was nominated twice in 1923 and 1924 by the Persian Prince Samad Khan on the plea that the war between Turkey and Europe was prevented due to Aga Khan's efforts. However, his Indian nomination became highly controversial due to communal politics of India and intrigues of political secretary of British – Indian government who opposed the move.

Raja Mahendra Partap Singh was adopted son of Raja of Hathras, near Aligarh, who visited Europe as a young man and on return founded the first polytechnic institute in 1909. He was fascinated by Mahatma Gandhi and became a revolutionary. He was an avid traveller who visited many countries of Europe during 1920s to meet world leaders who were opposed to British. His main interest was to publish his journal "World Federation". He acted as a Diplomat for the Amir of Afghanistan and finally settled in Japan before his return to India in the 1950s. It is interesting to recall that Raja M.P. Singh was nominated by a Swedish doctor, Nils August Nilsson, who was a member of International Peace Bureau, Sweden but it failed to find favour with Nobel Prize Committee.

Hari Mohan Banerjee and Nalini Kumar Mukherjee were two Bengalis who were nominated by Calcutta University professors for their books and pamphlets written to promote Peace. However, both nominees were not short-listed by the Nobel Peace Prize Committee. The author concludes that Nobel

Prizes are not awarded for 'Ideas' in the form of 'Books' unless these ideas are put into practice and show some concrete results.

Mohan Das Karamchand Gandhi was a strong contender for Nobel Peace Prize who was nominated 4 times in 1937 - 1939, and 1947, even posthumously once in 1948. It is a mystery why Mahatma Gandhi failed to get this coveted award when he was amply qualified for Peace Prize. Jens A. Seip, who was tasked to for preparing a report on Gandhi, wrote: "There is no doubt that Gandhi is considered as spokesman for violence-free resistance; a pacifist in the most radical sense, who influenced his country's politics and his people's minds". Gandhi was short listed every time but failed to win. After his death in 1948, there were lots of nominations for Gandhi from USA and Europe but Nobel Prizes are not awarded posthumously, as a rule.

Sanjib Kumar Chaudhary had a brilliant academic record and served as a Professor of English Literature in 3 universities. He turned out to be a Jurist and wrote many books and pamphlets related to politics and law. But his proposals for 'Reunion of India and Pakistan' and "A Constitution for the World Government" were considered as significant contributions to World Politics. Chaudhary was nominated to Peace Prize four times and made lot of propaganda to win the award but failed to influence the decision of Nobel Committee as concluded by the author.

Benegal Narsing Rau was another brilliant scholar from India who served as India's permanent representative to the UN (1949-51) during the Korean crisis. He played the role of a mediator in the Korean War and put forward a proposal "World Disarmament and Aid to Underdeveloped Countries" but was ignored for the Peace Prize. It is interesting to note that Rau was not nominated by any Indian but by his foreign supporters.

Jawahar Lal Nehru was another strong contender for the Peace Prize from India who was nominated seven times during

the period 1949 to 1961. The author has made critical analysis and investigated Nehru's case in great detail before concluding that he was not seen as a 'peace-maker' by Indians or foreigners. Rajah B. Manikam, a Christian missionary, was nominated only by Swedish nominators belonging to his own church but was not considered worth the Prize. Maharishi Mahesh Yogi was nominated by his Indian and Italian followers for his "Spiritual Regeneration Movement" through Yoga but was ignored by Nobel Committee.

Acharya Vinoba Bhave, a Gandhian and a leader of Bhoodan Movement in India, was nominated by his foreign supporters but not a single Indian. He was rejected for the Peace Prize, in the same way as his Bhoodan Movement has been rejected in India. Servapalli Radhakrishnan, the Philosopher President of India, was nominated for a record nine times, during 1950 to 1963, by his supporters worldwide. He was short-listed thrice but failed to win the Prize. Meher Chand Davar from Punjab was a nationalist and supporter of Hindu-Muslim unity but not a strong contender for the Prize.

Aurobindo Ghose, the revolutionary turned spiritualist, is considered by the author as the last nominee in the book under review for Peace Prize from India. Aurobindo was a prolific writer and Editor of a magazine "Mother India" and his nominators tried to impress the Nobel Committee by his published work. However, the author concludes that like other Indian 'Rishis' and 'Gurus' the nomination of Aurobindo did not convince the Nobel Committee and he was not even short-listed for the Peace Prize.

Rajinder has made a critical analysis in the last chapter "Concluding Remarks" and discussed the reasons why Indian nominees failed to make the grade for winning Nobel Peace Prize. It shows the modus operandi of nominators as well as the evaluators of reports. If nominators indulge in propaganda, it does not pay, as the committee seeks confidential reports about the nominee from evaluators. Author concludes that

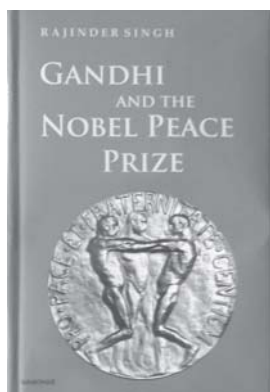
norms for Nobel Peace Prize are not the same as for Nobel Prizes in Physics and Chemistry and some element of politics, religion, and ideology plays a role in decision making.

The author has admitted in the Preface that using on-line translators is a weak point in the text. I find lot of howlers and some serious grammatical mistakes in the text. Just to cite one example, the author writes on page 175: "It would not be exaggerate to assume that it had to do less to do with Pakistan, but more the USA's politics in that area". On the whole, I congratulate Rajinder Singh for his unique contribution to History of Science by this publication which highlights the Indian nominees for Nobel Peace Prize. Let us not forget that India's track record is better in the field of Peace Prizes as compared with other areas as India has been awarded three Peace Prizes, namely Mother Teresa (1979), Dalai Lama (1989) and Kailash Satyarthi (2014).

# THE MYSTERY OF MAHATMA GANDHI MISSING THE NOBEL PEACE PRIZE

By **Rajinder Singh**, University of Oldenburg, Germany  
Published by Manohar Publishers, New Delhi, India, 2018  
Pages: 171; Price: Rs. 495.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*



Rajinder Singh, a well-established Historian of Science, has become a household name in the area concerning Indian Nobel Prize contestants, nominators and winners. He started his journey in this field by working on his Ph.D. thesis: "Nobel Laureate CV Raman's work on Light Scattering". The book under review: "Gandhi and the Nobel Peace Prize" is seventh among the series on Mahatma Gandhi (four in English and three in German).

The earlier one "Mahatma Gandhi – Sex Scandal and the missed Peace Prize" discussed this topic partially. The necessity of a separate volume arose to give full coverage to the theme why Gandhi, the most deserving candidate for Nobel Peace Prize

(NPP) from India, missed it despite his nomination running for several years from 1924 to 1948.

The author clarifies in his introduction to this volume a sense of guilt among the members of Nobel Committee (NC) for their failure to award Nobel Prize to Mahatma Gandhi. Rajinder refers to two important documents from the Nobel Peace Prize archives in support of his contention. According to him: "Editor of the Nobel Peace Prize section of the Nobel Museum of the Norwegian Nobel Institute, Øyvind Tønnesson, wrote an article on the official webpage of the Nobel Peace Prize Foundation. He stated that Gandhi was nominated in 1937, 1938, 1939, 1947 and 1948 and that the Nobel Committee (N.C.) regretted Gandhi's omission". In 2006, Muhammad Yunus and the Grameen Bank of Bangladesh received the Nobel Peace Prize where, once again, Gandhi became a point of discussion. Geir Lundestad, the permanent secretary of the Norwegian Nobel Committee admitted "Our record is far from perfect and not giving Mahatma Gandhi the Nobel Prize was the biggest omission".

What were the reasons behind this whole episode of Mahatma Gandhi missing the Nobel Peace Prize is the objective of this book by Rajinder Singh. The question has been discussed threadbare in the five Chapters of this book. In Chapter 1: "Gandhi *vs.* Aga Khan: The First Indian Nominees for the Nobel Peace Prize" the author discussed the rules and regulations for the NPP and narrates that Sultan Muhammad Shah Aga Khan III was the first Indian to be nominated for NPP in 1923. In 1924, Aga Khan and Mahatma Gandhi were both nominated for NPP from India. The author has found from the NPP archives: "Aga Khan was nominated for the Prize in 1924 by the Persian Prince Samad Khan and again in 1925. The documents of the Nobel Institute show a fascinating story about the role played by Indian politicians, the British Empire, and the media against Aga Khan and in favour of Gandhi". In my view, Aga Khan was a deserving candidate who played a crucial role to avoid the war between Turkey and Europe by his sincere efforts. However, his Indian nomination became highly

controversial due to communal politics of India and intrigues of political secretary of British – Indian government who opposed the move. As a matter of fact, neither Aga Khan nor Gandhi were short listed for the second round. Out of 21 persons and 8 institutions nominated for the NPP in 1924, none were seen as worthy of it.

According to author (Chapter 2): “In 1937, all in all 40 candidates (32 persons and 8 institutions) were proposed for the Nobel Peace Prize. Out of these, Nalini Kumar Mukherjee and Gandhi were from India. Gandhi was nominated by Ole Colbjørnsen, a Norwegian journalist, economist and politician on behalf of ‘Friends of India’ society. It was argued that Gandhi had advocated for racial, social and political peace in addition to being a leading figure of India’s nationalist movement with the emphasis on non-violent struggle against British rule”. Gandhi was shortlisted for NPP as one of the nine candidates. Jacob S. Worm-Müller, a historian and politician was asked by NC to prepare a report on Gandhi’s achievements. The expert scrutinised the history of Indian National Congress *vis-a-vis* role of Gandhi. The expert report was highly critical of Gandhi and states: “Many of his (Gandhi) actions in the politics, though religious and moral, are tactical with sly calculations. There are abrupt changes in his policies. There are also surprisingly contradictions between his statements and actions. He is a man of freedom, a dictator, an idealist and a nationalist. At the same time he is a politician and not a politician. S.C. (Subash Chandra) Bose believes that he lacks political instinct”. The reporter was not convinced of Gandhi’s internationalism. He argued that in South Africa the man (Gandhi) struggled only for oppressed Indians rather than the natives who lived under worse conditions. Another point of criticism was that within India, Gandhi did not attack the indigenous princes for their brutal practices used to rule the people. On the basis of this report, Gandhi’s nomination for NPP was rejected by the NC in 1937.

During years 1938-39 (Chapter 3), Gandhi received more than 40 nominations for NPP, a record number by any

standards. He was nominated by both 'Friends of India' Denmark and UK societies, Nobel Laureates Romain Rolland and Henrik Pontopidan, priests CF Andrews and Albert D. Belden, who were sympathisers of Indian freedom movement, and Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, Zurich. Despite these nominations, Gandhi failed in the first round and was not short listed for NPP. Eventually, the prize would be awarded to 'The Nansen International Office for Refugees', which was founded by Fridtjof Nansen in 1921. The idea of the NC was to attract the attention of the people to the refugees problems.

Gandhi was nominated in 1947 (Chapter 4), the year India got her freedom, by at least six persons from India, including three members of the Congress party (BG Kher, GV Mavalankar and GB Pant). The author writes: "15 persons and 5 institutions were nominated for the NPP during the year 1947. Out of them six were short-listed. Gandhi was among them at last. The historian and consultant of the Nobel Institute, Jens A. Seip, was tasked with preparation of a new report. He complimented the old reports by writing on Gandhi's contribution in Indian politics after 1937". The report of Jens Seip reveals the power yielded by Gandhi in Congress and Indian politics: "There is no doubt that Gandhi is considered as spokesman for violence-free resistance; a pacifist in the most radical sense, who influenced his country's politics and his people's minds". Further, the report refers to the dominant character of Gandhi and states that when Subhas Chandra Bose became the president of the Congress party in 1939, Gandhi hinted that he would retire [as Gandhi's candidate had lost against Bose]. This subtle threat alone was enough to remove Bose from the president's position.

I wonder how wisely Rajinder has used the archival material at his disposal to establish the failure of Gandhi to get the NPP in 1947. He writes under the sub-heading "Opinion of the Nobel Committee" as follows: There were 5 members of NC, two supporting Gandhi and three opposing him on the ground that (i) No one nominated Gandhi on international

level, (ii) Chairman of NC, G. Jahn, was highly critical of Gandhi's personality who failed to resolve the Pakistan issue, (iii) Two other members of Socialist background, M. Tranmæl and B. Braadland, opined that Gandhi's ideology was not suitable for downtrodden peoples. They thought Gandhi was pretending to be for poor, while his true motivation was to protect the interests of the capitalists. Hence, Gandhi nomination for NPP was rejected by split decision based on majority vote.

In the last Chapter: "*Gandhi on the Verge of Receiving the Nobel Peace Prize: The Failure of Mahatma's Followers*", the author has tried to bail out the NC and holds Indian authorities responsible for not offering sponsorship to receive the prize money of NPP for Gandhi. In 1948, Gandhi received a record number of nominations from USA (>20 nominations), France, UK, Norway, and just 2 from India. A large number of nominations came from women who mattered a lot in Europe and America and held Gandhi in high esteem as a messenger of Peace.

The author has established by citing documents which reveal the positive mindset of members of NC and politics of Indian authorities, which failed to come up to the expectations of NC. He writes: "The NC was ready to award a posthumous prize. It would not be an exaggeration to assume that it was partially due to international pressure after the assassination of Gandhi. Special positive report was written by its expert; showing Gandhi the man who deserves posthumous Nobel Peace Prize. The first time in the history of the Nobel Peace Prize, the NC asked its jurist to interpret the law to find out the possibilities for the posthumous Nobel Prize. The NC could not have done more than this. Evidently—it is wrong to blame the NC for not awarding the Nobel Peace Prize to Mahatma Gandhi". It is a mystery why Mahatma Gandhi failed to get this coveted award when he was amply qualified for Peace Prize.

# SCIENTIST OF THE EAST:

## Life and Legacy of Dr. Abdus Salam (1926-96), Nobel Laureate (1979)

By **Zakaria Virk**, Toronto, Canada

## My Reminiscences of Professor Abdus Salam

By **Hardev Singh Virk**

In the summer of 1972, after submission of my doctoral thesis in Marie & Pierre Curie University of Paris, I took a train to Sarajevo in Bosnia (Yugoslavia) to spend my holidays in a Slav family, who were my hosts for one week. On return journey, I changed my train at Trieste but never knew that International Centre of Theoretical Physics (ICTP) was just a stone's throw from Trieste railway station. Thus I missed my first opportunity to meet Prof. Abdus Salam, the director of newly established ICTP at Trieste. I returned to India in Nov. 1972 to join Punjabi University Patiala. ICTP Trieste organised its first course on Physics of Earth in Sept. 1977 and I was selected for it. ICTP started operating from its beautiful new Campus of Miramare on the Adriatic coast.

I was anxious to meet Prof. Salam. One morning, I moved in to his office hesitantly after my appointment and started my dialogue in English but Prof. Salam asked me to speak in

Punjabi with disarming frankness. I told him about my experimental work in High Energy Physics and the problems faced due to lack of high energy accelerators in India. When I left, he asked me to visit again some time. Our common bond was Punjabi language and culture. He narrated how as a young boy in Jhang, he used to visit Gurdwara (Sikh Temple) to enjoy the sweet pudding (*karah prasad*) distributed at the end of the prayer meeting.

In June 1979, I was an applicant for Professor's post in Guru Nanak Dev University (GNDU), Amritsar and I asked Prof. Salam for a Reference Letter. He very kindly recommended my candidature for this post but unfortunately the selection committee ignored his letter. When I informed him, he was quite upset and told me that his recommendations are accepted all over Europe but this University named after Guru Nanak fails to recognize his letter. Fortunately, I was selected for a lower post in July 1979 and I joined the University as Chairman of Physics Department to set up a new department. This started a new era in my life and my visits to ICTP became quite frequent. In Oct. 1979, the news of Prof. Salam being recommended for Nobel Prize in Physics was announced in the Press. I asked my Vice Chancellor (VC) that I will like to deliver a popular talk to the faculty on Salam's work for Nobel Prize but he postponed it for a later time.

In Dec. 1980, GNDU Vice Chancellor, KS Gill, got an SOS from Prof. Nurul Hassan, the then Education Minister of India, that Prof. Salam is visiting Qadian, a small town near Amritsar, to pay his homage to Mirza Ghulam Ahmed, the founder of Ahmedya movement. The VC called me and asked to prepare a Citation for awarding the degree of D.Sc. (Honoris Causa) to Prof. Salam. In my Citation, I wrote that in *Belas of Jhang*, Nobel Laureates are roaming in place of Ranjhas to meet their Heer. A special Convocation was organised in GNDU to award this degree on 25th January 1981. Prof. Salam made presentation of Nobel Prize winning research work in Punjabi and the

audience was spell bound to listen to his journey leading to Cambridge and then to Nobel Prize. A grand reception was held in the evening and I took time to introduce GNDU Research Scholars to Prof. Salam.

On Jan. 26, 1981, I joined Prof. Salam in a public *jalsa* (congregation) held at Qadian in his honour and Mirza Wasim Ahmed, the head of Ahmediyas, presided over it. The rural folks of *Majha* belt were pleased to listen to a Nobel Laureate for the first time in their life. I accompanied Prof. Salam to Golden Temple Amritsar where he was presented a robe of honour by the management. He was short of time and we had pushed him in a flight to New Delhi the same evening.

After Salam's visit to GNDU, our department became a federated member of ICTP. Almost all our faculty members got a chance to visit ICTP. After my training at the ICTP, I ventured into new fields of research in Earth Sciences, namely, Geochronology, Exploration Geophysics, Earthquake Prediction studies. Professor Abdus Salam visited my laboratory in 1981 and was surprised to see a Particle physicist transformed into a Geophysicist. I also attended courses in Medical Physics at ICTP and on return to India set up the Radiation Physics laboratory in Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar.

During my visits to ICTP, I took time to meet my friend and mentor, Prof. Salam. When I presented him my book "*Sade Vigyani*" (Our Scientists) written in Punjabi, he saw the Photos of all Scientists and asked me why his biographical account is missing? I was looking for some excuse when he asserted his claim to be included as a Punjabi Scientist from the Indian sub-continent in the next edition. He encouraged me to popularize Science in Punjabi medium at School level for the benefit of rural students. During this meeting in 1987, I was entrusted with the job of translating his book "Ideals and Realities" in to Punjabi language which I did on return to GNDU under the title "*Adarsh Ate Haqiqat*". I also published 2 more books of Scientific essays in Punjabi with grants received

from ICTP for free distribution in schools of Punjab.

Prof. Salam was a frequent traveller to Asia. I was informed that he is going to visit Bangla Desh and on return journey will have a stop-over in India to visit Qadian. I made preparations to receive him in GNDU but soon after got a message that Prof. Salam had a fall and his trip is cancelled. I met him in 1993 in ICTP and found him in a wheel chair attending to his office work. His health was deteriorating fast and he died on 21st Nov. 1996. It was a great personal loss to me. I wrote his obituary, "A Genius called Abdus Salam", which was published in *Current Science* in June 1997. I called him a Prophet of Third World Scientists.

Our Physics Department in GNDU was affiliated to ICTP for almost a decade. A Centre for the Promotion of Science was set up under my supervision for popularisation of science in Punjab; research grants were received from ICTP in a project mode; the book *Ideals and Realities* by Abdus Salam was translated by me into Punjabi and I had the honour to work as a Senior Associate of ICTP (1988-93). ICTP proved to be a launching pad for my research activity in India, culminating in the publication of 400 research papers, 135 popular science articles and 40 books during my scientific career.

# DISCOVERY OF REALITY: The Light of System Philosophy

By **George Luke**

Published by Partridge Publishing, India  
Volumes 3; Pages: 645; Price: Rs. 1348.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

Discovery of Reality is a comprehensive treatise on REALITY by George Luke who took voluntary retirement at the age of forty eight to prepare his *magnum opus*. He is writing this book under sub-title "The Light of System Philosophy". The author has distinguished the phrase *system philosophy* from the alternative concept of *systems philosophy*, which has been popularized in the writings of Ervin Laszlo. In contrast, George Luke defines *system philosophy* as an integrative thought about the universe as a system of matter and consciousness, where these constituents are in dialectical and productive relation. This philosophical perspective about real existence involves the synthesis of rational and empirical aspects of knowledge.

The present book has been divided into three sections. The first two Chapters: "A Guide to Theory of Knowledge", and "Philosophy and Its Main Divisions" are just introductory and included in Section one. Chapters 3-8 are listed in Section 2, and Chapters 9-14 in section 3. Chapter 3 "Fundamental Ideas

of Physical Science" is an important chapter devoted to conceptual understanding of Physical Science and its evolution in Europe. The march of Physical Science from renaissance to Standard Model has been described in a systematic way. The basic principles of Physical Science are enumerated in a simple manner. The coverage is quite exhaustive but intelligible to an intelligent layman.

Chapters 4 & 5 cover Big Bang Cosmology and Quantum Cosmology, respectively. Einstein's General Theory of Relativity is in fact a theory of Cosmology. The solution of Einstein's equation leads to various models of universe. It had predicted the expansion of universe. Different epochs of Big Bang Cosmology, experimental observations in its support, and its drawbacks are highlighted in Chapter 4. The author writes about Quantum Cosmology: **"Quantum cosmology is specifically concerned with the epochs constituting the physical reality. Interestingly, cosmology tries to explain the evolution of the universe up to the first second after big bang"**.

Chapter 6 deals with Philosophy of Science and author defines it as that branch of philosophy dealing with the epistemology of science. The author further introduces a scheme for the scientific method in the following way: **"The true methodology of science consists of five stages namely theory, hypothesis, deduction, testing and inductive inference**. We may introduce the phrase *TyHDTI scheme*, in order to denote scientific method conveniently".

The opening paragraph of Chapter 7 "System Philosophy of Science" reads as follows: "In this ground-breaking chapter on philosophy of science, we will try to reconcile the conflicting doctrines of methodology, source and justification with regard to scientific knowledge. It is imperative here to consider the levels of science such as classical science, quantum mechanics, quantum field theory and quantum cosmology for the purpose of epistemological unification. Recognizing this incomplete state

of philosophy of science, we would apply the principles of System Philosophy in order to derive the innovative aspects of scientific justification. The key achievement is the system model of phenomenal existence of matter and physical world”.

The implications of **System Model of Justification** are described by the author: *“Our philosophical enquiry here aims to develop a theory of justification for physical science by overcoming the ambiguities and dichotomies in scientific cosmology. For achieving a breakthrough in this pursuit we must make use of the two principles, namely, principle of symmetry and principle of system”*.

Chapter 8 “Cosmological Puzzles Finally Solved” discusses three fundamental concepts of Space, Time and Gravitational Waves. Dilemma about matter and energy has been highlighted focusing on the question of existence and failures of scientific realism. The author resorts to his system model, which gives a practical and phenomenal theory about the existence of physical world. In my view, these cosmological puzzles will remain a mystery and no final solution is possible. In the words of author: **“It is reasonable to point out that the origin of universe is an event which scientists cannot explain”**.

Chapters 9-14 constitute Section III of this book. Chapter 9 is focused on Life and Evolution, firstly giving account of various theories about life, mainly genetics, and its critique. The author then refers to pitfalls of theories of evolution and writes as follows: *“But many theologians and religious fundamentalists opposed Darwin’s theory and evolutionary science accusing it as challenging the belief in God. Accordingly, they have published great volume of literature supporting the biblical story of creation. This aggravated the conflict between science and religion”*.

In the opening paragraphs of Chapter 10 “System Philosophy of Mind”, the author writes: *“The totality of mental activities is conventionally termed as **mind**. Accordingly, we hold that **mind is a higher phenomenon which exists over and***

*above the biological processes of nervous system.* The foremost issue in *philosophy of mind* is the definition of mind since we have to take into account the related notions like body, soul, spirit and consciousness. There are great differences between science and religion while considering the question: what is mind?" Then the author proceeds to develop the system model of human mind.

Chapter 11 "World and Reality" is the CORE Chapter of this Volume. The author makes a distinction between phenomenon and reality as follows: "We can define phenomenon as any object that depends on another object through cause-effect relationship. On the other hand, **reality is the original cause of all phenomena taken as a whole.** Accordingly, reality is self-caused, infinite and permanent. The terms like *ultimate reality* and *ultimate truth* are commonly used as synonyms of reality". The bridge between reality and the set of theories of phenomenal world using the notion of worldviews is established by the author. He introduces the **System Model of Ultimate Reality** and writes: "This ontological principle necessarily exists as the synthesis of the three levels of phenomena in nature – inanimate world, biological world and mental world... The X-Y model is presented in content view; it illustrates the existence of reality simply in the form of a factory. The truth of the model is ascertained by empirical evidences about the hierarchy of things in the cosmos."

Chapter 12 deals with Social World and Seven Life Systems. I find this quote of author interesting: "The spectrum of social knowledge must be first divided into *scientific social knowledge* and *mystic social knowledge*, in accordance with our faculties of scientific mind and mystic mind, respectively. Obviously, in the first kind, social phenomena are observed in physical terms; such knowledge is popularly called the *social science*". The names of the *seven life systems*, which are global-level social systems, are proposed as below:

1. Natural Life System (NLS)
2. Economic Life System (ELS)
3. Political Life System (PLS)
4. Family Life System (FLS)
5. Ethical Life System (ETLS)
6. Artistic Life System (ALS)
7. Religious Life System (RLS)

In Chapter 13, “System Philosophy of God and Evil” author refers to anatomy of a crisis in the Christian world. I appreciate the idea of author to define religion as a social system: “It is a popular notion that *religion is a social system* in view of the empirical and concrete aspects like various activities of worship, the organizational structure of churches and temples as well as the social relations between the believers”.

The author winds up his Volume in Chapter 14 “Comprehensive View of Truth”. He discusses the dilemmas about scientific truth as well as the issues about religious truth to arrive at his definition of truth: **“Truth is the property of a justified belief that it corresponds to an actual state of affairs of the universe”**.

George Luke has done a commendable job in preparing this Volume : “Discovery of Reality” using concepts of System Philosophy. I congratulate him for this singular achievement.

# THE REAL RANJIT SINGH

By **Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-Din**

Published by Lion Art Press, Lahore, 1965

Pages: 217; Price: Rs. 30.00

*Review by Hardev Singh Virk*

History is not science and it can be twisted to suit the whims of the ruling class. Much has been written about Maharaja Ranjit Singh during his bicentenary to eulogize his achievements. No doubt he was a great ruler who liberated Punjab from the clutches of Afghan invaders and created a secular state in India but he had all the vices of a medieval monarch. The most authentic source about the personal life of Maharaja Ranjit Singh is the book written by Fakir Syed Waheed-ud-Din of Lahore, a doyen and descendant of the famous Fakir family which served with dedication and devotion to the Maharaja. The book is based on the archival material in the possession of the Fakir family. It resolves some of the mysteries about Maharaja's personal life and state policy.

The author writes that Maharaja Ranjit Singh entered Lahore Fort as a conqueror on July 7, 1799. He was admonished by a holy 'voice' to obey four commandments as a ruler, if he wants to prosper:

1. To say his prayers every morning without fail.
2. Never to hold court sitting on the throne of the Mughal emperors.

3. To treat his subjects equally, without distinction of caste or creed.
4. To respect and befriend Fakir family, which would serve him truly and well as a spiritual guardian of the new state.

These four commandments became the corner stone of his state policy. Maharaja Ranjit Singh was a devout Sikh and his daily routine began with early morning prayers and listening to recitation of Guru Granth. He started his military campaigns after seeking guidance or '*hukamnama*' from Guru Granth Sahib. He had a profound reverence for all that was holy and spiritual, irrespective of what religion it pertained to. He paid regular visits to Harimandir Sahib (Golden Temple) on special occasions. His visits to the shrines of Muslim saints and Hindu temples were as much acts of faith as those to the Golden Temple. He donated liberally to the religious places of all sects in Punjab. He participated in religious festivals of both Hindus and Muslims. Thus he was the first true Sikh, secular King of Punjab.

Following the second commandment, Ranjit Singh never sat upon a throne but held his durbar sitting cross-legged on a chair. He never added any royal emblem to his turban or attire. He used to tell his courtiers, "I am a peasant and a soldier, and do not care for external pomp. My sword is enough to win for me all the distinction I need".

He had a keen sense of delight in beauty, colour and gaiety in his surroundings. His courtiers, councilors and military officers were among the best-looking and most magnificently dressed men of their time. It is doubtful if any court in Europe possessed such grandeur as the court of *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* in Lahore.

Fakir Azizuddin attributed Ranjit Singh's lack of interest in his looks and dress to an utter lack of personal vanity and humble acceptance of a disadvantage which it had pleased God to inflict on him. He had a deeply pitted face, a blind eye and a diminutive figure and he wasted no time or money on

trying to improve it. Fakir Azizuddin also endorses the well-known exchange of remarks between Ranjit Singh and Akali Phula Singh, the Nihang Chief and Jathedar of Akal Takhat. One day, while the Maharaja was passing under Phula Singh's balcony riding on an elephant, the Jathedar shouted down at him, "O you one-eyed man, who gave you that he-buffalo to ride on?" Ranjit Singh looked up and said with mock humility, "Your Honour, it is a gift from you." Akali Phula Singh represented *Khalsa Sarkar* and Maharaja Ranjit Singh considered himself a humble servant (*sevadar*) only.

Historians have not done justice to the stellar role played by Rani Sada Kaur and Sarbat Khalsa in building up the foundations of Sikh Empire ruled by Ranjit Singh. Shah Zaman, the Afgan ruler marched into India at the head to 30,000 men and plundered Punjab. All the Sikh chiefs were afraid to fight with the Afghans. Sada Kaur called the Sarbat Khalsa on behalf of Ranjit Singh at Amritsar and threw a challenge to Sikh *misaldars*, "Khalsa Jee, if you fail to summon courage to fight, I shall die fighting to save the honour of Punjab". Thus, Ranjit Singh was chosen to commend the defending army at the young age of 19 at the bidding of Sada Kaur. He laid the siege of Lahore fort, rode up to *Samman Burj* and challenged Shah Zaman to single combat. Demoralised and defeated, Shah Zaman returned to Kabul and Ranjit Singh became the acknowledged leader of the Sikhs. Sada Kaur was not only a mother-in-law of Ranjit Singh but she also guided his destiny and helped him to acquire the Sikh Empire in Punjab. In later years, she felt ignored and nursed a grudge against Ranjit Singh. She was even imprisoned and put under house arrest in Lahore and was allowed to return to her estate in Batala only when she signed the ownership deed in favour of Prince Sher Singh, her grand-son and the second son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.

Maharaja's fascination towards horses was matched only by his love for liquor, aphrodisiacs and pretty women. His harem comprised forty-six women of four categories: nine whom he married in the orthodox Sikh manner, another nine, all of them rich widows, whom he adopted as his wives by casting

his mantle (*Chaddar*) over them, seven courtesans, mostly Muslim dancing girls and the rest consisted of concubines. Fakir Nuruddin, the Home Minister, was also incharge of Maharaja's palaces and the harem. Due allowance being made for his reticence, it is remarkable that there exists hardly any account or mention of anything scandalous that happened in the harem. The size of his harem was much smaller than the average monarch of Oriental history.

Ranjit Singh conducted an expedition against Raja Sansar Chand of Kangra, especially to marry his two daughters, Guddan and Raj Banso, known for their beauty and good looks. Ranjit Singh's favourite queen, however, was Moran, a dancing girl of Amritsar, with whom he fell violently in love at first sight when he was just twenty-two. Ranjit Singh accepted all the conditions of Moran's father to marry her as per custom of the courtesan's family. After this marriage, Akali Phula Singh reprimanded Maharaja Ranjit Singh and he presented himself at the Akal Takhat to receive the '*tankhah*' imposed by the Jathedar, by baring his back to receive the lashes.

Maharaja was fond of spending his hours of relaxation in singing and dancing soirees in the presence of his courtiers and guests. He would drink his special wine, an extract of raisins with ground pearls mixed in it, at these soirees. The service was provided by a royal troupe consisting of a hundred and twenty five girls chosen for their good looks from all over the Maharaja's domains. The upper age limit was twenty five after which these girls were given to the Maharaja's officers as a favour or a reward for good work. The *prima donna* of this royal troupe was Bashiran, whom the Maharaja used to call 'Billo' because of her brown eyes.

Glowing tributes have been paid by Fakir Wahid-ud-Din in his book, "The Real Ranjit Singh" to the Lion of Punjab. It is a personal account of Maharaja's rule of justice, his secular politics, his conquests and empire building and his relations with the British. However, it fails to determine the causes of the fall of Sikh Empire within a decade of Maharaja's death.