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Philosophy of Sikh Religion

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PHILOSOPHY OF SIKH RELIGION

GURU PANTH

The following definition of *Guru Panth* has been recorded in the *Rehat Maryada* published by Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee and which is *Panth* approved as well—“**The baptised ever ready assembly of Singhs is called *Guru Panth*. It was prepared by all the ten Gurus and the tenth Guru fixed its ultimate form and honoured it with Guruship.**”

Where a Gursikh seeks spiritual guidance for his life from Sri Guru Granth Sahib; for social, communal and political development and ideals, he has to seek direction from *Guru Panth*. He alone is called a Gursikh who holds complete faith and trust on Guru Granth Sahib and *Guru Panth*. He who does not abide by the discipline or rules of *Guru Panth* may be anything but a Sikh according to *Gurmat*.

But the big fight is—who is *Guru Panth* ? Every ignorant person who has been able to acquire knowledge of two herbs has been promoting himself as a *Vaid*. A few ignorant Sikhs become his followers. And on the strength of a few lines of *Gurbânî* committed to memory, they are indulging in propaganda, misleading naive people and pushing their own peculiar *Panth*. Such a chaos exists that can be well described by “*koî n kisai varjaî soî karai joî man bhâvai.*” New Satgurus, *Sâdhs* and *Sants* are appearing everyday. Every one of them is promoting his *Panth* by calling it the adherent of the ideals and philosophy of Guru Nanak-Guru Gobind Singh, and is creating tremendous confusion in the

minds of gullible Sikhs. The so called holymen are living lives miles away from the tenets of *Gurmat* and are claiming their genuineness. These self made *Sants*, *Sâdhs* and Gurus are betraying the *Panth* and dividing it into small factions. As a result, the new generation has remained ignorant of *Gurmat*. They are trimming and cutting their moustaches and beards. The Sikh character that the nation was proud of is disappearing. Yet these fake leaders are busy promoting their own *Panth*. Putting the simple person in all sorts of doubts and through all sorts of absurdities, they are operating their shops successfully. At the same time, they are claiming to be leaders of the *Panth*. In order to earn followings, they are using the names of the martyrs. Pawning the blood of the martyrs and not feeling ashamed of demanding *Jathedaris*, where will such tendencies take the Sikhs?

Sychophancy has reached its nether end. The leaders of the *Panth* are sparing no efforts to bring the *Panth* on the feet of the others. At this state of uncertainty, the religion based conduct have taken a back seat but none of these self made so called Gurus have ever paid attention to raise the morality of its community. It is a state where a green living plant is hard to find in the fire of the jungle.

So we pray before the well wishers and fully baptised Sikhs to discard all their menial interests, disputes for gaining place of authority and get down to serious requirement of re-establishing the credibility of *Guru Panth*. Guru Sahibs had raised only one *Panth*, and it should be one still. As it is, we are small in number. The caste divide, division by profession, brotherhood, rural and urban living have further added to our woes and tribulations. Remember ! our negligence at this time will obliterate all the good work

done by our martyrs. The life style of our children and young men broken away from the tenets of Sikhism is sounding alarm of our dark future. Let us free ourselves from futile discussions and debates on matters that would in no way raise the spirit and knowledge of Sikhs. Let us put an end to the propagation of our specious knowledge and reasoning. If we remain careless about it, the apostasy will over power the community resulting in much greater damage. Let us resolve our differences discriminately, and if we are still unable to come to a mutually agreeable solution, close the subject. Then raise an organisation that can take up removal of apostasy at a fast pace. There is a dire need to remove the feelings of inferiority complex from the minds of our new generation.

ORGANISATION

What is an organisation ? Whatever be our own individual thoughts and fixations, to approach a problem unitedly with the active participation of other members with disregard to their own views on the subject is organisation.

Man possess qualities in two forms, individual and collective. The form of the body, intelligence, experiences, the level of conception, sentiments and needs are the constituents of individual traits. By the acquisitions of these, a form of personality of an individual results. But these traits do not distinguish much between a human and animal. Human also possess universal qualities, experiences and intelligence/knowledge of wide ranging subjects and feelings. By his efforts, he tries to reach benefits to others and learn more from others' endeavour. Man cannot progress without social life, organisation and associations. Whatever progress he has

made, much is due to his temperament of unity and cooperation.

Organisation is like a body which has many appendages. All these appendages function under the order of brain or mind. Their gain or loss is common. Although each part or appendage has an independent existence, yet each one of them join the other giving up their own individuality and functions in consonance with other parts, It is then called a body system. Similarly when a man associates his gain and loss with a community or a group, then he becomes part of an organisation. Unity cannot be achieved till every separate part forgets its existence for achieving a common objective and ideal.

Organisational system exists in all the creation of the Lord. Sun, Moon, Earth, Planets, Stars are all fixed in space at their allotted place by some power. Very small atoms and very small cells have united to form the body of a human being. When we speak, our voice reaches the listener by waves that travel through ether. The bees, the cranes and ants work together. Small atoms of iron become iron sheet when they come extremely close to each other. Sand particles unite to form rock that can turn the course of sea waves. Water in a small pond harbours no power in itself. But a small quantity of water when turned into steam in a boiler acquires the capability of pulling and lifting loads of many mounds. If we see the creation of the universe carefully, there are organisational elements at work. An organisation is a power. Men create families. Families when brought together give birth to tribes and when tribes unite, nations are born. There are three essentials of a nation—

- (a) Love for a race or dynasty.
- (b) Love of religion.
- (c) Coming together of a few men harbouring similar principles.

Why is formation of an organisation essential ?

Because a Sikh has to serve the whole world and this can only be done through an organisation. We also learn from history that lakhs of scattered individuals cannot confront a well organised class of people. Those who are without commonality of thoughts, bereft of common principles or ideals, are without association with each other, are not there in reality. As the body parts of a living being are under the control of brain, similarly the members of a living community are threaded together in the form of an organisation.

Sikhism is an organisational religion. Every Sikh is a part of the *Panth*. Were it an individualistic religion, it would have served no useful purpose to the country, nor it could have done any good for the world at large. In personal religion, the progress of life becomes individualistic, where as in an organisational structure, it is that of the community. As it is essential for a student to join a school for better assimilation of knowledge, similarly, it is important for a Sikh to be the member of an organisation.

How has the organisational concept progressed among the Sikhs ? Let us study it from historical and conceptual view point. The foundation of Sikh organisation was laid by Guru Nanak Dev Ji. He established *Sangats* through his preachings. He called *Sangat* as miraculous. For the *Sangat* to assemble, he raised *Dharamshalas* in various cities which developed into effective preaching centres. These

centres were raised even outside India. All successive Guru Sahibs also raised such centres. Junagarh, Kamrup (Assam), Chittagang (Bengal), Surat, Patna (Bihar), Cuttack, Nanak Mata (U.P.), Kathmandu, Baghdad (Iraq), Kabul (Afghanistan), Jalalabad, Colombo, Rameshwaram, Kajli ban, Dhubri (Assam), Hyderabad (Deccan), Singladeep are some places where Sikh *Sangats* were established. The eleventh *Vaar* (Ode) of Bhai Gurdas Ji reflect the names of *Sangat* and some key Sikhs of that time. Places like Kashmir, Tibet, Rampur, Delhi, Agra, Ujjain, Burhanpur, Lucknow, Raj Mahal, Dacca are found mentioned in the history of missionary activities of the Sikh religion.

In praise of *Sangat* , Bhai Gurdas Ji writes—

***Nahin dadsâr pita pitâmâ per pitâmâ,
sajjan kutumb sut bândhav n bhâtâ hai.
Nâhi nansâr mâtâ parmâtâ bridh mâtâ,
mâmû mâmi mâsî mausâ bibidh bikhiât hai.
Nahî sasurar sâs sasrâ au sâro sârî,
nahî virtisar au jâchak n dâtâ hai.
Asn basn dhan dhâm kâhûn main n dekhio,
jaisey gursikh sâdh sangat ko nâtâ hai. (Kabit—100)***

Every *Sangat* was headed by a chief. We find from the writings of Bhai Seva Das (1558) that the chief of a *Sangat* was called *Manji*. It means centre of preaching that was assigned by Guru Ji to a blessed Sikh.

Guru Amar Das Ji, the third Guru, established 22 *Manjis*. The concept of organisation among the Sikhs kept taking place latently till the times of the fifth Guru Sahib. The third Guru Ji dug up a *Baoli* in Goindwal Sahib and started holding Baisakhi fair. Guru Ram Das Ji founded Amritsar, appointed *Masands* who used to collect offerings of the

Sikhs and reach them to the court of Guru Sahibs. Thus with the raising of preaching centres, the economic state of the Sikhs also improved as a result of mutual association. Guru Arjan Dev Ji raised Sri Harimandir Sahib, prepared a voluminous *Granth* by compiling all the *Bani* in it. It was then known as *Bîrh Sahib* or *Ad(i) Bîrh* and is now known as Sri Guru Granth Sahib. By constructing Sri Akal Takht Sahib, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib brought both politics and religion, *Mîrî* (temporal) and *Pîrî* (spiritual) aspects of Sikhs together. Whatever was needed for a religion to get a shape of an organisation, they were now ready and complete.

Guru Gobind Singh Ji created the institution of five beloveds (*Panj Piaras*). He baptised these *Panj Piaras*, passed on the title of Guru to *Khalsa Panth* and completed the ideals of an organisation. He gave the responsibility to the *Sangat* to select *Panj Piaras* and baptise other Sikhs with *Khande-di-Pahul*, Thus *Khalsa Panth* became an embodiment of Guru.

The tenth master saluted the tomb of Dadu in Rajasthan with his arrow, in order to test the Sikhs accompanying him. The Sikhs immediately reminded Guru Ji about his teachings of not saluting any grave, sepulchre, tomb etc, and asked him why he had done so. The Guru replied that it was his mistake and that the *Sangat* may kindly forgive him. Guru Ji also commended that the Sikhs had been successful in the test. It was not a mistake on the part of Guru Ji but he had done it on purpose to test the Sikhs. He made an offering of Rs 125.00 to the *Sangat*.

After the tenth master, '*Sarbat Khalsa*' used to assemble at Amritsar twice a year – once on Diwali and then on

Baisakhi. They used to resolve all their matters during these two visits. Whatever resolution was passed, it was accepted as the order of *Guru-Panth*. The mughal rulers let loose a reign of terror on Sikhs from 1716 to 1763. They confronted Nadir Shah Durrani and Ahmed Shah Abdali. Prices were fixed for the head of the Sikhs, and yet they remained united. Twelve *misls* (confederacies) were formed. Although these were independent in nature, yet they were enthused with the spirit of Sikhism in times of distress. When ever they passed a resolution unanimously, every Sikh respected it. These *Gurmatas* were passed whenever *Panth* was faced with religious calamity and a combined effort was needed. Before any resolution (*Gurmata*) was placed before *Sangat*, it was debated amongst the leaders of the *misls*. Then it was read out by the *Jathedar* of Akal Takht and the *Sarbat Khalsa* used to accord their approval.

For arriving at all religious decisions, there are four other Takhts beside Akal Takht. These are Sri Keshgarh (Anandpur), Takht Sri Patna Sahib (Patna), Sachkhand Sri Hazoor Sahib (Nanded) and Takht Sri Damdama Sahib (Talwandi Sabo). The opinion of the *Jathedars* of all these Takhts was also taken in all religious matters. The hub of activities on all matters religious and political used to be Sri Akal Takht Sahib. For the protection of Sri Amritsar and to stay during Baisakhi and Diwali, all the twelve *misls* raised their accomodation in the form of *Bungas* around Sri Harimandir Sahib. The bravery shown and the sacrifices made by the members of the twelve *misls* for the protection of religion and country's freedom is unique and worthy of feeling proud to the utmost. But after acquiring the political power, these *misls* fell apart with each other. The training of

sacrifice, organisational skill, unity and democratic character that Guru Gobind Singh Ji had imparted to the Sikhs had been forgotten. The internal feuds ended the existence of the well disciplined like *misls*. Democratic training must be augmented by democratic character for it to be effective and succeed. In the beginning, the *misls* were endowed with the desired character but as the time went by, their character under went a sea change resulting in their end.

After these *misls*, Maharaja Ranjit Singh provided the necessary leadership. His administration and governance was good and effective. But he had one difference in the political position of the *misls*. *Misls* were Sikh organisation. They used to take all their decisions at Akal Takht Sahib in a religious or righteous ways. Those used to be the decisions of the Sikhs. But the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh was not exclusively of Sikhs but of all the Panjabis. The Maharaja was addressed as *Sarkar*. Satguru Ji had taught to serve the society at large in addition to the service of *Sangat* or *Panth*, Thus Hindus and Muslims were equal partners in the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. For conducting the affairs of the kingdom, he had made a council of ministers. So, with effect from 1809, passing of *Gurmata*s from Sri Akal Takht ceased. Only religious matters were now dealt with by Sri Akal Takht Sahib. All political affairs were dealt with by the council of ministers. The Maharaja had extended great respect to the Akal Takht and *Sikh-Panth*. In the event of any omission on his part, he had presented himself at the Akal Takht Sahib for necessary action against him.

The question of *Mâjhâ* and *Mâlhwâ* had surfaced amongst the Sikhs during the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. This difference had been initiated by Ahmad Shah

Abdali when he tried to separate away Baba Ala Singh from the main *misls* by giving him the territory of Sirhind. But Baba Ala Singh understood his aim behind and maintained his contact. Much later, Amar Singh, grandson of Baba Ala Singh sided with Ahmad Shah. It resulted into a skirmish between the armies of Amar Singh and S. Baghel Singh but the Sikhs managed to resolve the issue. During the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Britishers tried to gain over the rulers of Patiala, Nabha, Jind and Kaithal. Maharaja Ranjit Singh could not have them united with him. Thus the British government succeeded in their mission. As a result, the division of *Mâjhâ* and *Mâlhwâ* got confirmed. British forces established a contonment at Ludhiana. The reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh ended and the Sikh states became slave of the British regime.

By the end of the *Sikh Raj*, Sikh leadership came under the influence of British officers. The priests of Takhts and Gurudwaras forgot *Gurmat* resulting in weakness of the *Panthic* structure. Since Sikhs were endowed with zeal, feelings, and of righteous character, many reformatory movements started. The Akali movement commenced in 1924-25, that consolidated the *Panth*, reformed the Gurudwaras, changed the mind set of the Sikhs. Since the inner structure had weakened, the Akali movement also ended in a split.

Why did every struggle of the Sikhs after *Dasam Patishah Ji* ended in a split ? It is because of not understanding the teachings of Gurus and not spending life in accordance with them. It must be remembered that only knowledge of democratic norms of any class or organisations are not enough. It is essential to develop democratic

character and bring the teachings in ones life. Any organisation raised according to *Panchayati* rules is bound to have differences of opinion. But these differences should be for the good and prosperity of the organisation and not for individual considerations. Two wrestlers wrestling in an arena are only sharpening their skills and improving their strength and not killing or harming each other.

To unite in the face of common calamity, willingly, sacrificing self for the larger good are the important traits of *Khalsa*. But to be at cross with each other, harbouring envy, hate, ego, selfishness and not knowing who the true leader is, falling a prey to the split are our shortcomings. To keep the organisation powerful and strong, good ideals, good leaders, good organisational skill and sacrifices are essential. Guru Sahib had blessed *Khalsa* with all these traits, but these could not develop into heirarchical assests. Every chapter of Sikh history ended in a split. Others exploited this weakness to their advantage. *Sangat, Pangat, Ardas, Amrit, Panj Piarey* all inspire Sikhs towards collective life—organisational life.

SACRIFICE AND MARTYRDOM

To sactrfice oneself for upholding a lofty ideal or anything that is for the good of a large number of people is sacrifice. It has seed of life in it. Pure sacrifice ruscitates the communities. Although the life span of Sikh religion is short, its sacrifices are mighty. Where traits of Gods worship, service of Guru, *Sangat*, feeling of brotherhood and organisation are mandatory, self renunciation, sacrifice, martyrdom and self sacrifice are also essential. Sikhism starts from sacrifice. Sikh means to obliterate one's

existence (of mind) and merge into the mind of Guru. Guru Nanak Dev Ji has said—

***Jao tao prem khelan kâ châo.
Sir(u) dhar(i) talî galî morî âo.
It mârg(i) pair(u) dharîjai.
Sir deejai kân(i) n keejai. 20.***

Sri Guru Amar Das Ji says—

***Tan(u) man(u) dhan(u) sabh saop(i) gur(i) kao,
hukam(i) manîai pâîai.***

(He alone is a Sikh who has surrendered his body, mind and wealth before his Guru and has obeyed his order.)

Bhai Gurdas Ji describes the state of self sacrifice of a Sikh in the following words—

***Murdâ hoey murîd n galîn hovnâ.
Sabar sidak shaheed bharm bhao khovanâ.
Golâ mul kharîd kârey jovanâ.
Nâ tis bhukh n neênd khânâ sovanâ.
Peehan hoey jadeed pag mal dhovanâ.
Sewak hoey sanjîd n hasan rovanâ.
Dar darvesh raseed pîrm ras bhovanâ.
Chand mumarakh îd pug khalovanâ. (Vaar 38/1)***

Bhai Nand Lal Ji says—

***Manziley ishaq darâz ast bapâ n tavân raft.
Sar karm sâz ke dar rah ân yaar shavee.***

It can be translated as—

***Manzil prem durâdî dadhî, pairîn jâvan aukhâ.
Sir de kadam banâvein, taino miley piârâ saukhâ.***

As, a seed when in earth produces countless seeds like itself through the plant and fruit, as the pen is sharpened first before it can write, as the pearl is formed before it can

adore someone's neck, as henna leaves are crushed into paste before it can yield colour, similarly in order to achieve some higher ideals, sacrifice is essential. Mother sacrifices her beauty and brings forth a pretty baby.

As voluntary service has been taught in Sikhism, similarly voluntary sacrifice for the larger good of the people is a high ideal of Sikhism. Self renunciation or sacrifice is a very difficult and bitter venture but its effect is very pleasing. Let us see some examples of sacrifice from Sikh history.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji spent nearly 40 years of his life travelling and preaching the name of the Lord. It is very difficult for a house holder to spend so much time away from home. When he returned after his first '*Udassi*', his sister Bebe Nanaki, father Mehta Kalu Ji, mother Tripta Ji and wife Bibi Sulakhni Ji said, "You will not go away now."

Guru Sahib stayed at home, for sometimes. By His order he proceeded on his second '*Udassi*'. Bebe Nanaki said, "O brother ! you are going away. Whom will these small children call father ? In whose lap will they sit ?"

Guru Ji replied, "Dear Sister ! they are my children. We belong to the Formless Lord. They are in His lap. You know that millions of children of the world are in distress. God has ordered me to go and relieve them of their distress. Therefore, separated from these two children for a while, we have to go and look after millions of children. Please do not feel attached. Let your conscious mind be attached with the Formless God, and take care of these children. When you remember me, I shall come back."

The grand palace of martyrs of Sikh religion has its

foundation laid by Guru Nanak with his self renunciation and spirit of service without expectations of reward. Spending time in the prison of Sikandar Lodhi, arranging release of poor helpless people, selling oneself as a slave in Ruhelkhand and freeing the poor local slaves in captivity, grinding grains in the jail of Babur in Emnabad and then saving *faquirs*, destitutes and shelterless from the tyranny and oppression of the mughals is an excellent form of sacrifice and selfless service.

As an intelligent analysis of a principle is essential, similarly facing of hardships and self sacrifice is essential for the success of higher ideals. No great ideal had ever been preached in the world for which great men had not borne hardships; religious, social, political or related to any other aspect of life. As the standing water stagnates, stopping of flow of blood in the veins renders a body dead, similarly an ideal becomes dead without sacrifice. Sandalwood paste made by rubbing a piece of wood on stone when applied on forehead gives cooling and soothing effect. Gold gives much greater shine after going through an ordeal in fire. Similarly much sacrifice made for an ideal stays alive for long.

Sikh religion has many high ideals that Guru Nanak preached. It kept flowing like a peaceful river till Guru Arjan Dev Ji imparted the teachings of acquiring moral values, worship, equality, service, true companionship, brotherhood etc. Obstructions encountered if any were mostly from the supporters of age old social and religious order. Mughals had no political confrontation with Sikhs for which they had to make any sacrifice.

Sri Guru Arjan Dev Ji is the first honourable martyr of Sikh history, who bore tortures peacefully and sacrificed his life. It was a unique martyrdom for the protection of Sikh ideals. What were these ideals ? Without going into elaborate historic details, suffice to say that it was for the protection of Sikh religion. Emperor Jahangir records in his book Tuzik-e-Jahangiri—

“Their shop was active for about three four generations now. I have been contemplating to close this shop of falsehood or he (Guru) should be brought into Islam.”

The above words prove amply that the king was determined to finish Sikhism. Only two courses were open to Sikhs. Either it should have accepted the subservience of the mughals or remained alive through sacrifice. Guru Arjan Dev Ji selected the later course. And he had to lay his life bearing indescribable tortures. This was the first sacrifice of Sikh history that was made to save Sikh religion, and such noble causes as saving the poors and serving the downtrodden. *Shahid* (martyr) is a word of Arabic language that means to stand witness or he who lays his life treading the path dictated by God. The fifth master achieved the martyrdom for such high ideals.

The second sacrifice and martyrdom is that of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji. This was done for the good of the people. Aurangzeb had perpetrated tyranny and oppression on the Hindus of Panjab and Kashmir. The Pandits of Kashmir came to the court of Guru Teg Bahadur at Anandpur and made a plea for help and safety of their religion, which was in danger and they could seek no one's help at this juncture

to save them or even guide them. Their life was in a turmoil and that no one would be able to help them except him (Guru Teg Bahadur Ji).

Guru Teg Bahadur was much moved by their plight and told them to go and tell the king that their leader was Guru Teg Bahadur. If the king could bring him around to his view, they all would accept whatever was deemed of them without any objection.

Aurangzeb maintained *Gurgadi* to be a seat of power. Therefore he wanted to end its existence. He issued orders for the arrest of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji. Gurudev set out from Panjab and reached Agra where he was arrested and brought to Delhi. Aurangzeb was staying at Hasan Abdal (Panja Sahib) in view of his campaign against Kabul. However, before going, he had issued orders for the arrest of Guru Sahib. By the order of the king, Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was beheaded in Chandani Chowk Delhi. This was the second sacrifice of the Sikh history offered/undertaken for a philanthropic cause.

The sacred sacrifice of Guru Teg Bahadur Sahib filled the Sikhs with a new vigour and zeal. The great plant of Sikhism blossomed with the blood of the martyrs. Thereafter, the sacrifices made by Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji for the survival of the nation and freedom of the people are hard to find not only in the Indian history but in the history of the world. To see and accept the sacrifice of his father at a young age of nine years, spend period of perpetual hardship all his life could only fall on the lot of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji. His entire life was a picture of sacrifices. Guru Nanak had made a temporary renunciation from his

two sons when he proceeded on 'Udassies' but he in the form of tenth *Patishah Ji* sacrificed his four sons to complete the strength of Sikhism.

In 1704, the mughal army assisted by hill chieftains laid siege at the fort of Anandpur Sahib. After a long drawn encirclement and various skirmishes in between, when no success could be achieved, the mughal army generals swore and assured that no harm would befall upon Sikhs and Guru Sahib, if they would vacate the fort voluntarily in order to help them save their respect and honour. Guru Patishah Ji agreed and vacated the fort on night 20-21 December 1704. In total violation of all the vows and assurances, the hill chiefs and the mughal *Sainapati* attacked the caravan of Guru Sahib. They tried to catch him. A bloody battle was fought on the bank of rivulet Sirsa. In the din and melee, two younger Sahibzadas Baba Zorawar Singh and Baba Fateh Singh separated from the Guru family along with their grandmother Mata Gujri Ji. Confronting the enemy and many other forms of difficulties, Satguru Ji reached Chamkaur. He and some Sikhs accompanying him stayed in a mud fortress of a landlord. The royal army came and encircled the fortress. A fierce battle was fought where Baba Ajit Singh and Baba Jujhar Singh, the two elder sons of Guru Gobind Singh Ji achieved martyrdom. The sacrifice of brave sons of great warrior father is equally significant in the Sikh history. The younger Sahibzadas were bricked alive at Sirhind by the order of Nawab Wazir Khan, the Governor of Sirhind.

As a plant when pruned blooms and blossoms more, the nations prosper through sacrifices. Sacrifices for worthy cause never go waste.

Life is precious and should be saved but many a times the

situation arises that death alone can save lives. Such deaths make one immortal. On the contrary there are some who are alive but no better than dead. Martyrs always live because they bestow life on the nations. As Shakespeare has said, "A coward dies many a deaths; the brave dies once."

The sacrifices of the Gurus paved a path of sacrifices for many others to follow. Baba Banda Singh, Bhai Mani Singh, Bhai Taru Singh, Bhai Subeg Singh, Bhai Shahbaz Singh, Bhai Hathu Singh, Baba Deep Singh and Baba Gurbakhash Singh are a few names that are worth mentioning here. Then there were brave women who bore the garlands of the body limbs of their infant children around their necks during the times of Mir Mannu. In the twentieth century, many Sikhs laid down their lives campaigning peacefully for the freedom of Gurudwaras like Nankana Sahib, Taran Taaran, Guru Ka Bagh, Panja Sahib and Gangsar (Jaito).

DASWANDH

Human life enjoys a higher status than animals. *Gurbânî* says,

— *Avar jon(i) terî panihârî.
Is(u) dhartî meh terî sikhârî.* (Page 374)

(O man, you are the supreme being of all the worldly life. Other living being are in your service.)

He who spends life of selfish interests is not a human being but an animal. One major difference between human beings and animals is that animal fills his stomach or of its young ones (others may remain hungry, it does not disturb him), but a human being beside taking care of his own

family members also try to be useful to other needy persons. Thus it is said that he who is not aware of his duties is no better than animal. Not only righteous or religious people of the world but even atheists are well aware of such duties of a man. Even those who harbour communistic thoughts propagate the need to have sympathy towards fellow being. The Sikh Gurus have defined the objectives of a human in the following words that is one of the pillar of the religious structure that they have given to the world—

Bha-ee prâpat mânuh dehurîâ.

Gobind milan kî ih terî barîâ. (Page 378)

(O man ! you have acquired the human form so that you can endeavour to meet the Lord).

This is the high ideal of Sikh religion that the atheists are totally ignorant. And to reach the pinnacle of this ideal, *Gurmat* has defined three principles—

1. Earning livelihood through honest labour. (Kirt Karnî)
2. Remembering Lord all the time. (Naam Japnâ)
3. Sharing the earnings with other needy persons.
(Vand Chhakhna)

A Sikh should lead life according to these three ideals. Guru Sahibs have emphasized on the righteous earnings not on just doing something to earn. For fulfilling their needs. thieves, dacoits, smugglers, pickpockets, cheats also put in much labour but such earnings are impediments in the path of God realisation. The righteous earnings mean earnings acquired through hard work in which physical self is involved and the hands and feet are doing some useful work without harm to anyone and the society. Guru Sahib has also instructed his Sikhs to use a part of their earning for the

welfare of others—

Ghâl(i) khâey kichh(u) hathauh deh.

Nânak rah(u) pachhaneh sey. (Page 1245)

Emphasizing on the need to earn wages through hard work and condemning parasitic aptitude in order to fill their stomachs and meet all other needs, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, the founder of Sikh religion has said—

Hak(u) parâîâ Nânakâ us(u) sûar(u) us gâey.

Gur(u) pîr hâmâ tâ bharey jâ murdâr(u) n khâey.

(Page 141)

An essential aspect of Hindu religion is renunciation of the world for search of God. It encouraged them to leave their homes and escape the vagaries of running and supporting their families. Many left their families and started living in jungles, mountains and caves, in the garb of *Sadhus* and *Sants*. They condemned the institution of family life and yet visited the householders for alms and charity to meet their basic requirements. Sikh Guru Sahibs were not prepared to see their Sikhs treading this path. They wanted to see them struggling for God realisation even while living life as a householder in the society. The following quotes of *Gurbânî* are ample proof of the attitude of Sikh founders towards familial life.

— ***Nâmâ kahai Tilochanâ
mukh te Râm(u) sammâl(i).
Hath pao kar(i) kâm(u) sabh,
chît Niranjan nâl(i).***

(Page 1375)

— ***Uddam kare(n)diâ(n) jîo tûn
kamâva(n)diâ(n) sukh bhunch(u).
Dhiâi(n)diâ(n) tûn Prabhû mil
Nânak utarî chint.***

(Page 522)

- **Nânak Sat(i)gur(i) bhetiai
pûrî hovai jugat(i).
Hasandiâ(n) khelandiâ(n) painandiâ(n), khâvandiâ(n)
vichey hovai mukat(i). (Page 522)**

During his conversation/debate with *Sidhs*, Guru Nanak Dev Ji explained the Sikh principle as under—

- **Hâtî bâtî nînd n âvai
par ghar(i) chit(u) n dolâ-ee.
Bin(u) nâvai man(u) teyk n tika-ee
Nânak bhûkh n jâ-ee. (Page 939)**

(Guru Sahib says that the true knowledge is that living life as a worldly man, a man should never be complacent, not let his mind get disturbed. But without Lords name, the mind can never be stable and the desire of mammon never reduces).

One must remember God (Naam Simran) while actively pursuing the worldly duties and living a house holder's life. There is no need to go to the jungles forsaking all responsibilities.

If the Sikh principle of righteous earnings is adopted by the world over, social evils like theft, dacoity, pickpocketing and smuggling etc would all disappear from the character of human being. The life then will become peaceful spiritually. The concept of righteous earnings have been well ratified by Bhai Santokh Singh and Bhai Gurdas Ji—

- **Sun gur kahio kirt kar soî.
Dharm sameyt nibahauh so-ee.
Kapat bihîn jîvakâ karai.
Per ki vast(u) chhupâey n dharai.
Tis meh bânt Prabhû hit khavai.
Tis ke ur nirmal hoey jâvai.**

- **Hathîn kâr kamâvanî
pairîn chal sat(i) sang malehî.
Kirt virt kar dharm dî
khatt khavâlan kâr karehî.
— Ghâl khâey sukrit karai
vadâ hoey n âp ganâey. (Bhai Gurdas Ji)**

It is written in *Rehatnama* Bhai Desa Singh—

- **Dus nakh kar jo kâr kamâvai,
tâ kar dhan jo ghar mai âvai.
Tis te gur(u) dasaundh jo dey-ee,
Singh suâs bauh jag meh ley-ee.**

The matter does not end on righteous earnings and *Naam-Simran*. There is a third principle that is inseparable from these two and that is—*Vand Chhknâ*.

The concept of *Vand Chhknâ* places humans above the animals. Those who are bereft of this virtue can equate themselves with birds and animals. In support of this virtue, the Sikh Gurus commenced the system of taking out *Daswandh*. To take out one-tenth of one's earning and offering it to the Guru for undertaking welfare projects for the community was commenced by Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

Sikhs used to make offerings of money according to their own choice even during the period of first four Gurus. These offerings were spent by Guru Sahibs on the propagation of Sikh ideology, help of the needy and other philanthropic projects. The initial efforts of preaching Sikhism made by Guru Nanak Dev Ji and maintenance of its tempo by other successor particularly Guru Amar Das Ji who established 22 *Manjîs* and 52 *Peerhâs*, who attached the devotees with the key centres of preaching where the Guru used to reside. Those who were appointed as *Manjîdârs* and *Peerhâdârs* were responsible for spreading the gospel of Sikhism and

help persons of other religion attach with *Gurmat*.

When Guru Ram Das Ji laid the foundation of Sri Amritsar as a central place of Sikh religion, he appointed *Masand* wherever a sizeable population of Sikhs existed whose job was to keep Sikhs attached with their Guru, collect their offerings and reach them to the Guru periodically. This system lent strength to the organisational structure of Sikhism. The *Masand* used to be persons of noble character. They used to maintain all accounts in writings. They were required to render and explain all accruals before Guru Sahib at least once a year.

Guru Arjan Dev Ji asked his Sikhs to set aside one-tenth of their earnings for undertaking works of common welfare. This amount would be sent to Guru's treasury to exercise central control and ensure that more important tasks were undertaken on a higher precedence. The *masand* system was further strengthened by Guru Arjan Dev Ji. He would spend this amount on such projects as raising of buildings, digging of *Sarovars*, meeting expenditures on *Langar*, and suitable accommodation for *Sangat* who could be visiting the place for a short period. He also made it a point to spend the amount on such projects which were for the larger benefits of the people. A proof of it is available in Sikh history when Guru Sahib stayed at Lahore and the areas adjacent to it from 1594 to 1597 and tended the sick and hungry who were hard hit by grave famine. The collection of '*Daswandh*' was spent on food, medicine and clothing of the people. He arranged digging of wells for the farmers. He stayed at Lahore for over eight months in looking after the sick and destitutes.

Mohsin Fani—the author of *Dabistan-e-Mazahib* (Persian)

writes as under :

“No offerings were taken amongst the Sikhs before the fifth Guru (Guru Arjan Dev Ji) i.e. there was no set system of collection of offerings. What ever they offered was all acceptable. Guru Arjan Dev Ji appointed a *Masand* in every city so that he could collect offerings of all Sikhs. Every follower of Guru Nanak used to deposit one-tenth of his earnings with this officer. The officers (Masand) used to reach all the money and other offerings of the Sikhs to the Guru *Darbar* on Baisakhi every year. The Guru would then honour them with a turban.”

According to Gokal Chand Narang, **“It had become easy for Guru Sahib to plan his budget. His income had far exceeded that of the mughal rulers.”**

The system of '*Daswandh*' was continued by successive Gurus. Guru Hargobind Sahib used the money to raise a nucleus army to fight the cruel and tyrant mughal rulers beside meeting expenditures on various welfare tasks.

The ninth Guru Sahib arranged digging of sweet water wells in Bangar region and used the '*Daswandh*' amount for this noble task. Over a period of time the '*Daswandh*' system became corrupt. Guru Gobind Singh Ji discontinued it and asked his Sikhs to deposit their offerings themselves with the Guru's house so that the funds are not misused.

The tenth Master used the offerings for military hardware, enrolment of Sikhs and equipping them with essential items possessed by a soldier, construction of forts in order to fight the increasing tyranny and oppression.

While Guru Gobind Singh Ji punished the corrupt

Masands severely, he also honoured others who were honest and loyal. Bhai Pheru, a *masand* was one such person who was awarded the title of ‘*Sachî Dâharî*’ and ‘*Sangat(i) Sâhib*’. When the accountant who was sitting close by pointed out that Bhai Pheru had never reached ‘*Daswandh*’, Guru Ji said that he had been reaching it to him directly. Explaining his statement, Guru Ji said that Bhai Pheru has been spending the *Daswandh* amount in feeding the poor and meeting their financial needs. Thus these offerings had been reaching him directly—‘*The mouth of a poor is the coffer of Guru.*’

These episodes are enough to provide us guidance as to how the offerings of the Sikhs should be spent today. The *Rehatnamas* written by some key Sikhs also give us evidence and necessary guidance in respect of *Daswandh*.

- ***Dus nakh kar jo kâr kamâvai.
Tâ kar jo dhan ghar main âvai.
Tit te gur daswandh ju dey-ee.
Singh soî jas bauh jag ley-ee.*** (Bhai Desa Singh)
- ***Dharm kirt ke nafe vichon Guru daswandh devey.***
(Bhai Chaupa Singh)
- ***Jo apnî kachh(u) karauh kamâi.
Gurû hit dehauh daswandh banâ-ee.***
(Kavi Santokh Singh)
- ***Daswandh Gurû kê neh dev, jhûth bole ju khâey.
Kahai Gobind Singh lâi jî, tis kê kuchh n basâey.***
(Bhai Nand Lal Singh Ji)

Guru Gobind Singh Ji ended the system of personal/living Guru by granting Guruship to Sri Granth and *Guru Panth*, but kept the institution of *Daswandh* in tact so that the needs of missionary work of Sikh *Panth* could be met for ever.

NISHAN SAHIB

‘Nishân’ is a word of Persian language which means a flag, a symbol. Kingdoms, states, countries and religions always have their own exclusive flags to establish their identity. *Khâlsâ Panth* has a symbol of *Kharag* or *Khandâ* on the top of its ‘Nishân’ (Flag). The flag itself is triangular and in yellow/saffron colour. It is reverently called ‘Nishân Sâhib’, ‘Akali Dhuaj’ or even ‘Flag of Satgurû Ji’. Kavi Nihal Singh Ji has the following to say in this respect :

***Vâhan shingârey rahein, bâjatey nigârey rahein,
Dujan dararey rahein, bhâgey bhîm rah ke.
Sangatein abâd rahein, âvatey prashâd rahein,
lâkhon ahlâd rahein, dekhîey umâh ke.
Gaddiân attal rahein, chaukiân achal rahein,
bungey jhalâ jhal rahein, pûrey utshâh ke.
Lâgtey divân rahein, gâvtey sujân rahein,
jhûltey nishân rahein, sâchey pâtshah ke.***

The Sikh history records that, Sri Guru Hargobind Sahib commenced the tradition of *Nishân Sahib*. No tradition of a flag existed during the times of first five Guru Sahib. Guru Ji enrolled 52 young strong men as his personal guard and then built an army of 5-6 hundred able bodied young Sikhs from *Mâlwa* and *Mâjhâ*. He then had a *Nagârâ* (Victory Drum) and a *Nishân* prepared with a view to amalgamate *Shaktî* and *Bhaktî*. He raised Akal Takht in front of Sri Harmandir Sahib and raised two *Nishâns* in the compound between Sri Harmandir Sahib and Sri Akal Takht Sahib. These two *Nishâns* exist even today.

The yellow flag with an emblem of *Khandâ* (two swords crossing each other at the hilt, a *chakrâ* and a double edged

sword standing erect in the middle) is indicative of the prosperity of the *Khâlsâ*. Each of these items have a significance according to the Indian philosophy. 'Chakrâ' indicates time. The swords and double edged *Khargâ* are the destroyers of evil and the yellow is the symbol of *Bhaktî*.

There is a basic difference between the *Khalsa's Nishan* and flags of other nations. The *Shaktî* represented by the *Nishân Sâhib* is supposed to be used for the protection of hapless, poor, weak and downtrodden. This beautiful concept is not associated with flag of any other nation or the community. Sikh history of last four centuries is full of fragrance of philanthropic deeds carried out by the Sikhs under the benevolent protection of *Nishân Sâhib*. It adores the place of residence of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, *Langar* and where Sikh *Sangat* assembles. It can be unfurled in every country of the world.

The '*Nishân Sâhib*' had always been held in the vanguard of all battles and peaceful campaigns involving welfare activities. While sending Baba Banda Singh Bahadur on a mission to Panjab from Nanded, Guru Gobind Singh Ji blessed him with five arrows from his quiver, a battle drum (Nagârâ), a *Nishân Sâhib* beside armed Singhs who constituted his entourage. Giani Gian Singh has following to say on page 2788 of his book—Panth Prakash :

***Pun pushâk nij gur bakhshâ-ee.
Kamar kas(u) yut sabh(i) saiwâ-ee. 141.
Pun Bandey kar jor(i) bakhânâ.
Kichhak singh muhey dehauh saganâ.
Sun sat(i)gur yeh bhal manmânî.
Panch singh vad bhaey mahânî. 142.***

***Nij nishân ik daio nagârâ.
Aur bees aswâr udârâ. 144.***

In eighteenth century, *Khâlsâ Panth* organised itself in five main bodies and took a *Nishân Sâhib* each from Sri Akal Takht Sahib. In the guidance of these five *Nishans*, *Singhs* organised their twelve *misls*. One of the *misls* was named *Misl Nishânchîân*. The brave Sikhs of this *misl* used to carry *Nishân Sâhib* in the lead during the battles. This is well corroborated by Giani Gian Singh on page 768 of his book 'Panth Prakash'.

***Chaldehy pakar(i) nishân agârî.
Jang part jân jeh thân bhârî.***

It was under the shadow of this *Nishân Sâhib* that brave and courageous Sikhs used to retrieve and recover all the wealth and captured young girls from Abdalis and Durranis and reach them home with total regard and respect, thus earning love and affection of the people. During the times of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, *Nishân Sâhib* evoked Sikh pride that enabled them overcome such impregnable forts like Jamraud, Multan, Peshawar, Kasur that blocked the infiltration and ingress of Pathans as raiders into India for ever.

In order to maintain the importance and greatness of this *Nishân Sâhib*, during the reign of the Britishers, the Sikhs of the Guru successfully conducted Singh Sabha Movement, *Akâlî Lehar*, Gurudwaras Reform Movement for the liberation of Gurudwaras. Their deeds were so magnificent that the whole world could not help biting their fingers. Those Sikhs sacrificed themselves on the railway lines, in the brick kiln, burnt alive tied upside down on a tree. The

Sikh ladies were not far behind their Sikh brethren when they were made to wear garlands made by the body parts of their infant children. Yet they kept marching towards glory in Guru's pleasure uttering *Waheguru, Waheguru*.

From the foregoing discussion, we can conclude that Guru Gobind Singh Ji blessed the *Khâlsâ* with *Nishân Sâhib* to keep them ever ready for self sacrifice and forsaking self interests when it came to the protection of saints and noble souls, prosperity of the *Dharam* and destruction of the tyrants. The combination of *Bhaktî* and *Shaktî* for all that is good for country, nation and mankind is what a *Nishân Sâhib* stands for. Therefore, it is the duty of every Sikh of the Guru to bestow respect to it keeping in mind its greatness beside the fact that this symbol of pride and honour of the nation has been blessed to us by Guru Sahib. Let it unfurl in every corner of the world and reach a message of sacrifice, abandonment and protection of the poor and destitutes. Let it show a path of prosperity to all.

WAHEGURU JI KA KHALSA WAHEGURU JI KI FATEH.

Wahegurû nitt bachan uchârai.

Wahegurû ko hirdai dhârai.

Agai âvat singh jo pâvai.

Wahegurû kî fateh bulâvai. (Bhai Desa Singh Ji)

Eat, drink and be merry may be the temporary slogan of a few that could grant them solace for a while, but even the soul of a lowly person at some stage or the other must have felt that life surely have a higher purpose than what is stated above. Satguru Ji has given inspiration to a man

in the following simple words :

Prâni tûn âiâ lâhâ lain(i).

Lagâ kit(i) kufakrhai sabh mukdî châlî rain.

(Page 43)

Bhaee prâpat(i) mânukh dehurîâ.

Gobind milan kî ih terî barîâ.

(Page 12)

Bhagat Kabir Ji too has advised a man very emphatically that this body is perishable and he should use it for achieving some higher purpose. These are not the views of *Gurmat* or Eastern philosophers on the subject of aim and objective of life. The Charvak philosophy of ancient India or atheist section of society too express their views on the need of or possibility of higher aim in life. Writing against materialistic view points, the following words of Henry. W. Longfellow, an American poet are indeed full of truth and sincerity, through which he has expressed his innate feelings that achievement of peace and comfort cannot be the sole aim of life :

*Not enjoyment and nor sorrow
is our destined end or way.*

Not elaborating in much details, suffice to say that the real aim of a religion is to show light to a man and explain to him what the real aim of life is. And in what way can we achieve that aim.

Satguru Ji has placed before the world the aim of human life in a very simple and unambiguous manner. They have also explained in very simple words the methods of the realisation of these aims. In his long span of 239 years, Guru Nanak in his ten forms, explained the aim of a man's life and the method of fulfilling this aim in a very scientific

manner. It was his love for humanity that prompted him to do so. He just did not explain them theoretically but demonstrated their validity by living his ideology practically. The Sikh Gurus had established beyond doubt that religion, truth or righteousness cannot make a mark all by themselves. The traits of kindness, others welfare, *Sewa*, *Simran*, forgiveness, peace, sacrifice, love, devotion etc. all depend upon the social, political and communal structure of the society. In order to propagate virtuous principles, for the prosperity of religion, for the truth to progress, a strong organisation or power, based on truth and honesty is most essential. To spread the virtues and noble thoughts, evil and vices have to be uprooted by force, without pity or remorse.

It need no explanation why discipline is essential for an organisation to prosper. Organisation without discipline cannot be called an organised body. No discipline can exist without obedience of rules and regulations.

Many aspects of discipline have their own importance and significance. There can also be many ways or aspects which yield no gain or loss. Every country fixes a uniform for its armed forces. The regiment of most versatile soldiers cannot even claim freedom from wearing of uniform or not living under the code of conduct. Such body of warriors cannot be part of an organised body called army. All soldier-like traits are essential but as part of an organised body, there cannot be any compromise on pre-determined, accepted code of conduct. Uniformity in all matters ranging from dress to eating of meals and constituents of meal lends a sense of belonging to each other and generates esprit-de-corp.

Similarly for the preaching and propagation of a true religion, its organisational structure or its social aspects cannot be ignored. Guru Ji had well realised that individual idealism and prosperity will not be able to raise a righteous society. Man is a social animal. Without the support of the society such virtues, like good religion, righteous path, truth, nobility, welfare, forgiveness, non-violence, tolerance, large heartedness etc. become lame that cannot bear even a strong gust of vice laden wind. They perish under its effect. Perhaps that is why *Kalgidhar Patishah Ji* was kind to bless his Sikhs with the following advice :

Binâ râj neh dharam chalai hai.

Binâ dharm sabh dalai malai hai.

For the progress and prosperity of ‘*Dharm*’, a strong, fresh and healthy organisation is essential. Many wise men call Sikh religion as social religion—and it is true also. A seeker can reach pinnacle of individual perfection in spiritual field through the teachings of Sikhism but this is just one half of the ideals of Sikhism. The order is the prosperity of the whole social structure in which he lives. His contentment in his own individual prosperity is inchoate without the society which is bereft of social idealism of Sikh religion. Such a religion is bound to have faith in a particular form of code of conduct in life.

Bhai Desa Singh Ji has defined the following code for a Sikh—

Âgey âvat Singh jo pâvai.

Wahegurû kî fateh bulâvai.

Shiromani Gurudwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC) has published a booklet of *Rehat Maryada* that has been

accepted by the *Panth*. It defines religious and social rules of conduct for a Sikh. It has been mentioned there also that when two Sikhs meet, they greet each other by *Fateh*. It is indeed distressing to know that where as many Sikhs are violating and breaking the code of conduct given in *Rehat Maryada*, they are equally callous about the actual greeting words that they should be using. Since it is an accepted form, there is no need for any discussion. A little deliberation will show that the proclamation of '*Fateh*' is very scientific and depicting of rising spirit and prosperity. First of all it generates faith in the existence of Lord and His power. This is no small matter. Infact, this faith is the foundation of real knowledge.

Jâ kai ridai biswâs Prabh âiâ.

Tat giân(u) tis(u) man(i) pragtâiyâ. (Page 265)

Thereafter, a mention of *Khâlsâ*—the treader of this path of Sikhism successfully has been made. It was for the seeker to reach this stage that Guru Nanak Dev Ji took ten forms and in the tenth form had blessed the *Khâlsâ* with the words that—'*he is my special form*'. In the pleasure of his spiritual knowledge, he even called the *Khâlsâ* his Guru. The Gurudev was so much enamoured by his most appropriate creation that took almost two and a quarter centuries that he declared *Khâlsâ* as his special form. Seeing the prosperity, virtues and form of the *Khâlsâ*, Bhai Nand Lal Singh Ji had said :

Khâlsâ so nirdhan ko pâlai.

Khâlsâ soî dusht kao gâlai.

Khâlsâ soey nâm jap karai.

Khâlsâ soî malechh par charai.

Khâlsâ soî nâm sion jorhai.

Khâlsâ soî bandhan ko torhai.

Khâlsâ soî jo charai turang.

Khâlsâ soî karai nitt jang.

What is the relationship of *Khâlsâ* with *Waheguru*—the possessor of infinite power ? This has been cleared in the first part of the '*fateh*' sentence. *Khâlsâ* belongs to *Waheguru*. This is no small matter. Familiarity or feeling of closeness is always overwhelming, and such familial relationship with God is unique and beyond description. These ties are so intense that *Khâlsâ* becomes Him. This point would be very cogent and forceful. *Khâlsâ* means a pure, blemishless and a complete *Gursikh*. It also means such a seeker who has maintained and established relationship with God directly. Satguru Ji shows the path. The seeker must follow it. His actions must be clean, pure, practices *Naam Simran* and lives life in accordance with the laid down code of conduct (*Rehat Maryada*). He can then establish direct union with Lord. In the historic account of feudal system prevalent during the Mughal kingdom, a mention of *Khâlsâ Land* is found. It is that piece of land which was directly under the control of or related to the king. Infact—these near meanings are applicable to the *Khâlsâ* of *Kalgîdhar Pâtishâh*. *Khâlsâ* is a regular reciter of *Jâp(u) Sahib*. A simple explanation of this *Bâni* confirms that *Khâlsâ* has established direct contact with God.

And what is a human life ? A struggle where a successful seeker must come out victorious in all the fields. The second part of the *fateh* depicts that these words are not neutral. By saying *Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*, *Khâlsâ* has already presumed that victory is his. Such an optimistic view point is very significant from psychological point of view.

Once in a major confrontation, the British army lost battle and it caused much demoralisation of the army. The generals were much worried. They worked out a programme to fill their mind with optimism. The ideal of victory was propagated forcefully. The victory sign 'V' was preached and used freely. Guru Gobind Singh Ji well understood such psychological nuances on the minds of fighters. Thus he ensured that in the struggle faced by him in various fields, no thought of defeat ever enters his mind. *Khâlsâ* and defeat cannot exist together. Demoralisation or acceptance of defeat against all odds is not the character of a *Khâlsâ*. The earlier Satgurus had also sown the seeds of victory in the minds of the Sikhs during their times as is evident from the following :

—*Agâhân kû trâng pichhâ pher nâ muhadrhâ.*

—*Hâr nâhî sabh jetai.*

And by calling 'Fateh' (victory) as 'Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh', Guru Sahib has endowed it with another superb trait. By the foregoing concept, victory of the *Khâlsâ* is assured. But 'Fateh' alone can often prove damaging too. Very often, victory over lust, anger, greed, attachment can lead to the subtle birth of ego in a person who is seeker of the spiritual regions, and turns it into a waste of effort or scuttles it. From this greeting of the *Khâlsâ*, it is clear that by not regarding the victory as his own, he has dedicated it to the Lord. This 'Fateh' of *Dasmesh Pâtishâh* has turned many, a martyrs and practical persons who have adored the history of India. A mention of these noble souls is made everyday in all the Gurudwaras and at individual level when a *Sangat* or even a lone Sikh stands up for *Ardâs*—(a five minute sketch of Sikh sacrifices).

The importance of this greeting of *Khalsa* is much from another point of view. The central theme of the greeting is the timeless power—*Waheguru*. Clearly, its connotations are beyond country, period, race, gender, colour, caste or creed. Therefore this greeting is humanistic and universal. We call Sikhism a universal faith or Universal World Faith. We are not laying any infructuous claim of it. This truth emerges amply from our *Fateh*. It can be used in any country, in any society, in any environment and in any time with boyance. Societies other than Sikhs too have their own greetings or words of salutations but all of them are inchoate compared to 'Fateh', though they may not be inadequate by themselves. A large population of India uses 'Namaste' as their greetings when they meet each other. In simple words, it means—*I bow before you*. And how much can mere words 'I bow before you' motivate anybody. A sizeable population of Indians also use the words 'Radhey Sham' to greet their friends and dear ones. But it is not possible that the entire or a large segment of population would have faith in Sri Ram Chander or Sri Krishan as their deities and hold them as their ideals. One may labour hard but the words or name 'Sita' or 'Radha' does not seem to hold any purposeful meanings. It has developed into an irrational customary practice. In a large part of Madhya Pradesh—the words used for greetings are 'Jai Ram Ji Ki'. If 'Ram' of this greeting is son of king Dashrath, it hardly conveys much; after all it is confined to a person who had limited capabilities compared to God. However if 'Ram' here means the Lord who is the source of all creation since and even before the time began, then one can have no comments to make on this greeting phrase. Otherwise it can do no better than satisfy the feelings and emotions of a few

people. But the spiritual seekers who hold the entire world and all its inhabitants as members of one very very large family can never be satisfied with such greetings which are confined to a section of society or are restricted in their application. The true devotees and seekers of the Lord are keen to establish and maintain their association with all His creation in His name. Lord is their inspiration. Good Morning or Good Evening as used by western society are equally bereft of emotion and feelings desired between Lord's creatures. The words of greetings should be full of purposeful message that should be able to elate a persons mind. There is no fun in beating about morning, evening or afternoon and hoping them to be good. One, may try to prove much in 'Adab Arz' or 'Salam-a-lekum' but these too will not be able to adopt universal character.

Much aversion or indifference has been noticed in Sikh society with regard to 'Fateh'. Like many other great and noble views of Sikh society, this great greeting phrase has also not found much propagation. We cannot deny that its acceptance in Sikh society is also very marginal and it could be primarily due to lack of knowledge of its quintessance. 'Sat Sri Akal' is more commonly used amongst the Sikhs instead of 'Fateh'. This infact is the 'War Cry' of the Sikhs. In reply to 'Bole So Nihal', 'Sat Sri Akal' is the reply. God is remembered as eternal and beyond time. This proclamation is to infuse zeal, full of bravery and loaded with colours of enthusiasm. So, it goes well in the 'Diwans' where lecturer often excites the feelings of the audience and other Sikhs present in the form of *Sangat*. Being short and not knowing the complete connotations of the slogan, it has become the accepted form of salutations among the Sikhs.

This is not correct. The salutation of 'Fateh' has more or less disappeared from the culture of a common Sikh. This could be a matter of concern and the Sikh community must set up and give a serious thought to the matter. It also brings to fore the fact that the Sikh populace is grossly ignorant of the need to follow the accepted '*Rehat Maryada*'. Isn't it our duty to abide by the accepted form of Code of Conduct ? Hasn't this been prepared by renowned scholars of the *Guru Panth* after a thorough study of ancient '*Rehatnamas*' recorded by devout Sikhs of Guru Sahib ?

There exists a false notion in the minds of Sikhs that 'Fateh' salutations are only to be used compulsarily by those Sikhs who have partaken *Khande-ki-Pahul*. Others can do with 'Sat Sri Akal'. This is absurd argument. Firstly all Sikhs are supposed to partake *Amrit* and become members of the *Khâlsâ Panth*. Secondly—even if a Sikh is awaiting baptism, nothing should stop him from using 'Fateh' as salutation. At least it will motivate him to partake *Amrit* sooner than later.

Those youngmen who have been brought up in the light of Western culture often state that it is an era of brevity. Calling a person by his full name has given way to addressing him by the initials. Their infructuous argument is that such a long sentence of salutation takes much time and is not very comfortable to speak out. This is such a baseless and absurd argument. They feel no pain or discomfort making futile conversation endlessly or listening to noisy music for hours together. No time is wasted if they remain in bed till late morning. Such copycats of the western traditions find it highly cumbersome to say '*Waheguru Ji Ka Khâlsâ, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh*'—a phrase that is sure to bring their minds closer to the Lord having uttered His name

twice. These words are the creations of a great warrior Satguru Ji that he devised for his powerful Sikh nation and not for those cowards, weaklings whose tongue and lungs cannot bear the so called fatigue of less than five seconds of time that is required to say 'Waheguru Ji Ka Khâlsâ, Waheguru Ji Ki Fateh'. Lion like attitude and cowardice/weakness are two diametrically opposite traits. A good and motivating slogan cannot be brief. The charm of this form of salutation of the *Khâlsâ* lies in its style of saying—and it is pleasing to the ears.

For the social unity, prosperity of the Sikhs and uniformity of *Sikh Panth*, all Sikh organisation of the world whether these are in missionary work or any other socio-religio-political activities, efforts must be made at all levels to grant the *de-jure* place of honour to the 'Fateh' form of salutation, greetings that Satguru Ji has so kindly blessed us with. This will surely arrest the decline in our socio-religious life and show us the path of prosperity and optimism. It will generate a feeling of Sikhs being one nation and not just another religion.

FUSION OF BHAKTI AND SHAKTI

(Sant-Sepoy)

In the creations of the Almighty, one comes across two diverse characters in a thing. Look at a rose plant. Every branch has thorns and flower as well. Clouds shower rain that give life to plants and trees. The lightening from the same clouds fall on the trees and burn them into cinder.

Man too is blessed with two traits—rigidness, harshness

or cruelty and softness, tenderness or sensitiveness. Rigidness yields bravery and courage while softness generates virtues of kindness, compassion and love.

These diverse qualities are essential and goodness of the world lies in them. Inclination towards one weakens the other, thus reducing the intensity of idealism in life.

History is replete with examples that, those who attached their minds with bravery became tyrants and unjust. Those who spent their life in worship became cowards and weak. Hindus worshipped non-violence while Muslims loved *Jehad*. This is a famous axiom.

The caste divide of Mannu divided the traits of a human being. Brahmins became custodians of spirituality while *Khatris* took possession of sword. It drove *Vaish* and *Shudra* to the lower strata of society.

The Jains and Buddhist stressed upon their followers to become *Bhikshû*.

Thus the life got divided into two. Pride took one side and indolence became part of the other side of life. So, brave did not become saintly and those devoted to worship failed to become warriors. This was the unwise use of intelligence in the annals of history.

Sikh religion combined the virtues of bravery and softness at one place. The caste pride is very ancient in mankind but soldiership is believed to exist since the times immemorials and from the day of birth. People of Germany, Scotland, Mughals, Pathans, Gorkhas and Marathas are known to be martial and warrior nations since their birth.

This belief is also age old that soldier warriors are born of sword.

It is said that when Nadar Shah took over Delhi after defeating Muhammad Shah Rangila, he decided to solemnise the marriage of his son Nasir Shah with the daughter of Mohammad Shah. Nasir Shah went to the royal palace. The princess jokingly asked Nasir Shah his lineage. He felt much ashamed in his mind because his father Nadar Shah was a shephard earlier.

Nasir came back and narrated the event to Nadar Shah. Nadar Shah asked his son to go next day and ask the princesses their lineage. When they came to Taimur, then ask them where had Taimur got his kingdom. What ever they reply will be your answer to them as well. Next day, the princess said that Taimur achieved his success from the sword. Nasir too replied that his father Nadar Shah achieved his kingdom from the sword.

Therefore, individually, it is strongly believed that a *Khatri* is son of sword.

There is another mythological tale that we hear in the Indian mythology. Some sages performed a *Yag* on Mount Abu in order to destroy the demons. Four brave warriors appeared from the fire of the *havan*. They were Parmar, Chauhan, Solanki and Parhar. Each one of them laid the foundation of four Rajput dynasty. The *Agni-kund* only produced four brave warriors. The bravery now rested on the birth of their issues. Thus all their successors were accepted as great warriors. The fact that every person can become a warrior by taking to weapons had been forgotten.

In order to make a person's life supreme, Satguru Ji granted right of worship to everyone. At the same time, he did not let the bravery remain the right and virtue of any one clan, creed or race. By administring *Khande Dâ Amrit* to the people of all caste, he created *Khâlsâ* and ordered that :

***Khâlsâ mero rûp hai khâs.
Khâlseey meh hau(ñ) karao nivâs.***

Great warriors were created out of the members of low caste people who were branded as *Vaish* or *Shudra*. Such people are still joining the *Khâlsâ Panth*. The source has not exhausted. It is still there.

The bravery in Sikh religion has two aspects :

- (a) Inner enemies—*Kâm, Krodh, Lobh, Moh and Ahankar.*
- (b) Attaining victory over the external forces.

A man may be strong physically, adept in the use of weapons and very courageous, if he is without self control, discipline and a slave of his mind, he is no warrior at all. It is not for nothing that Guru Sahib has said—*'Man jeetai jag jeet(u)*. (He who has conquered his mind has won the whole world. Guru Amar Das Ji has said in *Sri Râg Kî Vaar*,

***Nânak so sūrâ waryam(u),
jin(i) vichauh dust(u) ahankarn(u) mâriâ.*** (Page 86)

Living in this world, the mind of a person focuses on the external scene that causes waves of vices to grow in the mind. A battle rages between wisdom and lust. If he wins, he is a warrior. A loser lowers the status of his existence

when he starts following the dictates of vices. He creates evil in the society. Guru Sahib has taught his Sikhs to lead a disciplined life and indulge in God's worship, *Naam-Simran*, *Satsang*, *Sewâ* and *Ardâs* (supplication) to win over the power of the mind. To control the mind and keeping it in discipline is a matter of great heroism. This is spiritual aspect and beside this overpowering of worldly enemies is also important. Self control and imbibing divine traits make a man a saint. When he wears weapons on himself, takes the battlefield, fights for freedom, righteousness and country, he is a warrior, brave and courageous soldier. The ideals of Sikhism are to raise the level of a man both spiritually and in worldly dealings equally.

When a sage is busy in his '*tap*'; he is without weapons, he is a saint. No one will fear him. If a person is only a soldier, possessor of weapons, a fierce fighter, he will be without the emotion of kindness, mercy, love and good of others. People will be scared of him. He would be without the soft and sensitive virtues of mankind. Satguru Ji has made his Sikh a saint because of his divine traits and a soldier because of his bravery and courage.

Guru Ji has infused the characteristics of both *Bhaktî* and *Shaktî* in Sikhism. A garden or a fruit orchard must be protected against the destruction that the animals may cause. Similarly the society needs to be protected against evil doers who spread distress and discomfort. Brave people save the society against them.

He who permits perpetration of oppression, tyranny and cruelty right before his eyes and does nothing to stop it despite having the where withal and capabilities, is no less

a sinner. The bravery and courage that Satguru Ji had taught to his Sikhs is not meant for enslaving others, occupation of a country, exercising high handedness, injustice or oppression on the hapless. It was meant to provide protection to the weak, helpless, do philanthropic tasks and maintain freedom of life. They fight against evil and not for acquisition of power and authority. Its spiritual aspect is winning or victory over the mind, self discipline and constraints. A weak and coward person cannot win over his sentiments. This is the reason that hunger, unemployment, poverty and slavery still exists in the world. There is a need to fight against these shortcomings and social problems. Peaceful solution of these problems is a most desirable approach but raising of arms is certainly not evil. The tenth master has said :

Halâl ast burdan bâ shamshîr dast.

(When all other peaceful means fail, it is just to raise arms).

How did Sikh *Panth* become brave ? The answer is that the foundation of bravery amongst the Sikhs was laid by Guru Nanak himself. He raised his voice against all types of social and political tyranny, and advised his Sikhs to be fearless.

Emperor Humayun came to Khadur to meet Guru Angad Dev Ji. Satguru Ji did not extend respect to him as he was expecting being a king. Humayun felt enraged and put his hand on the hilt of his sword with the intention of drawing it out of its scabbard. Guru Ji saw it and said, "You are raising sword on us *faquirs*, why did it go blunt while facing Sher Shah Suri ?"

Hearing this, Humayun felt much ashamed and sought

Guru Ji's forgiveness. Cause no fear to anyone and fear no one is what Satguru Ji has taught us.

Sikhs have lent entirety to peace and bravery. The martyrdom of the fifth master was the high point of peaceful acceptance of a calamity by the Sikhs. It was thereafter that Guru Hargobind Sahib took sword in his hand and converted the Sikhs into soldiers while still retaining the peaceful characteristic in them. They then fought with Mughals. Bhai Gurdas Ji has described the spirit of the master of *Miri-Piri* in one line as under :

*Dal bhanjan gur sûrmâ
vad jodhâ bauh parupkârî.*

No battle was fought by Guru Hargobind Sahib for acquiring land, wealth, power or any selfish interest. Guru Ji was a warrior capable of destroying garrisons of enemy force yet he was kind and worked for the good and welfare of the people.

After the martyrdom of Guru Teg Bahadur Ji, Guru Gobind Singh Ji raised the sword to fight injustice and oppression. He was convinced that Mughals cannot be brought around by peaceful means. The centuries of slavery had brought cowardice and weakness in the character of the people. After much deliberation, he formed *Khâlsâ Panth*. The selection of *Panj Piaras*, preparing *Amrit* in all iron container, granting suffix of 'Singh' with their names, making five *kakaars* as essential part of a Sikh's attire, a war cry of *Sat Sri Akal*, a new phrase of salutation and greetings in the form of *Fateh*, acceptance of *Karhah Parshad* by touching it with a sword end. Such like disciplines were primarily made to create a feeling of

bravery amongst the Sikhs. His advice to the Sikhs was :

1. *Bina teg teerang raho nâhey bhâî.*
2. *Binâ shastr kesang narang bhed jano.
Gaho kân tâko kitey lai sidhano.
Iho mer âgyâ suno hey pyarey.
Binâ teg kesang devo n didârey.*

Giani Gian Singh describes the character of Singh in *Panth Prakash* :

The tenth master turned members of all four caste system brave by administration of *Amrit*. According to ancient division, Khattris were only responsible for fighting and they seemed to be tired of this duty. It had caused much weakness in the society. Guru Ji created the traits of *Bhakti*, *Shakti*, farming, trading, handicraft in a Sikh instead of dividing the society for undertaking different tasks. Rajputs, Gorkhas, Pathans and some other races are considered brave. Sikhs became brave on receipt of *Amrit*. The way they have protected the country against repeated invasions of Durrans and Abdalis is amply recorded in the history.

RISING SPIRIT (CHARHDI KALA)

Charhdi Kala is a symbolic word of Sikhism. It has been used at the end of *Ardâs*. It implies acquiring that power of mind and soul where a person remains optimistic even in most adverse circumstances. By his association with the Lord, he becomes enthusiastic, hopeful and determined in his faith. He then keeps marching towards his ideals.

A man is a combination of mind, body and soul. Body is constituted of five elements (Fire, Earth, Water, Air and

Space). There are five senses that provide him with knowledge, Mind is subtle and abstract. Consciousness or inner mind has four parts. These are mind (Man), intellect (Budhi), Heart or mental faculties (Chit) and arrogance (Hankar). Mind is the exciter of the senses and works in the body in a subtle or abstract way.

What does the mind do ? *Sankalap* (determination to do a job) and *Vikalap* (Lackadaisical attitude). Sensuality, desires, devotion, kindness, love, encouragement, lust, anger, fear and envy are the traits of mind. Intellect (Budhi) discriminates between right and wrong. Then the mind orders the senses of knowledge (hands, nose, eyes, ears etc.) to act. 'Chit' keeps the experience stored in itself and to reproduce when called for. Arrogance (Hankar) distinguishes one class of person from the other. In *Gurbânî*, the word 'man' has also been used for *Âtmâ* (soul). Sometimes the consciousness has been used for 'man' (mind). When Guru Ji says :

Man tûn jot(i) sarûp hai(n), âpnâ mûl(u) pachhân(u).

(Page 441)

Here 'man' means *Âtmâ* (soul) that is a fraction of the Lord. And yet at another place, it is said :

Ih(u) man(u) karmâ ih(u) man(u) dharmâ.

Ih man(u) panch tat te janmâ. (Page 415)

Here it does not mean soul but consciousness and that faculty of mind that acts on *Sankalap* and *Vikalap*. Kabir Ji says :

Ih(u) man saktî ih(u) man sîo.

Ih(u) man(u) panch tat ko jîo.

Ih(u) man ley jao, un man(i) rahai.

Tao tîn(i) lok kî bâtai kahai. (Page 415)

The western school of thought says that man is made up of his own thoughts and views. Man is supreme amongst all the creation and is centre of all powers. A determined mind of a man can achieve everything.

The research of Western scholars on the subject of psychic power says that a man can become whatever he wants. The power of mind governs the body. The first essential in the use of psy power is that the mind be focused in a definite direction and be so perpetually. Those whose mind waivers from one side to the other can hardly achieve success. We must know what we want and what our priority is. What ideal are we determined to complete. Once the faculties of mind are scattered, one faces failures. Success depends upon determination, place and firm resolve. The right use of the mind is to keep it engaged in constructive tasks. Keep yourself busy in good thoughts and actions. If you accept any thing as ideal, try to mould yourself towards achieving that idealism. Let pessimistic or thoughts of failure not come to your mind. The psy-power of those who fail more often are not operating in the right direction.

When you make up your mind to do something, think of it many a times during the day. Motivate your mind to do it. Put all your faculties to ensure its success. Your intentions and desires are a powerful part of your life. Keep your thoughts high to achieve greatness. Think good and be firm and careful about your character, strength and health. Be alert of mind. Life must blossom and let it blossom towards the right goal with right thoughts.

Many men do not use their psy-power rightly. They make them weak. They do not strengthen their objectives and passions. They do something that they do not wish to become. Hoping for success, and yet keep asking—‘tell me what should I do’ is total lack of confidence and fickleness of mind that will never grant success. There is nothing that will get attracted towards you when you are despondent.

As the sun light causes all the vegetation to blossom, to be hopeful or optimistic, renders strength to your life. Optimism is a nectar for a human life. It makes our lives beautiful and successful. *Gurbânî* tells us :

Agâhan kû trângh pichhâ pher na mohadhrhâ.

(Page 1096)

As a magnet attracts iron fillings from sand, similarly a man can acquire worldly materials through his mental power. Qualities like bravery, courage, determination faith and confidence, happiness and good wishes are essential for making the mind powerful. What degrades the mind and lends pessimism to it are envy, fear, depression, despondency, worry, uneasiness, lack of confidence etc. Increase in vices lowers the capabilities of the mind. Auto suggestion and concentration effects the mind much.

Many people fall ill due to weakness of the mind and many escape serious maladies because of their mental strength. Many set other people right with the use of their psychological power. Determination lends power to the mental strength and grants success. Keeping mind away from depressive thoughts and focussing it on a point often produces praiseworthy results. He who thinks low can never rise above. It is in a man's nature to either rise or slip

towards decline. It is difficult for the mind to stay firm in one state. Great achievements result from determined efforts and never say die spirit. A person is influenced by two types of thoughts. One that generates in his own mind and the second that he acquires from others. Own thoughts are powerful and the others are not all that strong. Keep the foundation of your thoughts strong as the character is built upon it. Be engrossed in work when you are working and think hard if you are planning something. This is the key to success.

The western scholars of psychology consider the mind of a man as the centre of all his energy. Man is supreme in all the creation. Sikhism considers man to be superior over all other species but is not the centre point of all energy. Its mind cannot remain in high spirit all the time. The power house of all energy is Lord Himself. A man's mind can become powerful when he attaches himself with Lord. As the water in a fountain flows from a reservoir, the source of mental energy is also God. All energies are then utilized to the optimum and He supports all noble causes.

For strengthening the mental faculties, Indian culture has such disciplines as *Jap*, *Tap*, *Sanjam* and *Yog*. The western culture analysis the constructive and destructive tendencies of the mind and then promote constructive traits to strengthen the mind. By ‘Yoga’ a person achieves miraculous powers and acquires a state that is beyond desires and wants. The West has resorted to hypnotism and mesmerism to achieve concentration of the mind. The cause of a highly spirited profile of a Sikh is due to his attachment and intimate association with Guru and

Omnipotent God.

Guru Amar Das Ji commenced service of his Guru in old age but his mind was ever in high spirits. He says :

Gurmukh(i) budhey kadey nâhî,

jinnâh antar(i) surt(i) giân.

Sadâ sadâ Her(i) gun raveh

antar(i) sahaj dhiân.

Oey sadâ anand bibek raheh

dukh(i) sukh(i) ek samân(i).

Tinâ nadrî iko âiâ

sabh(u) âtam Râm(u) pachhân(u). (Page 1418)

Those who are self willed and self conscious are old even in their youth.

Manmukh(u) bâlak(u) birdh(i) samân(i) hai,

jinnah antar(i) Her(i) surt(i) nâhî.

A western scholar has said :

Youth is not a state of life. It is a state of mind.

It is written about Prahlad in history books that his father Harnakshyap threw him before the elephant, threw him from the cliff, into the fire and yet he did not flinch.

The hands and feet of Kabir Ji were tied with chains and was ordered by Sikander Lodhi to be thrown in river Ganges. He said at that time :

Man(u) n digai tan kâhey kao darâey.

Charn kamal chit(u) rahio samâey. (Page 1162)

The pious lives of Guru Sahiban and Sikh martyrs are a beautiful saga of high morale and rising spirit.

RESOLUTENESS

Resoluteness is to see a task through to its success despite myriad problems that may come up from time to time. This trait is essential for the nations to remain active and alive.

Sikhs are blessed with this trait of strong determination. It is firmly believed that when Sikhs take up a task, they see it through to its end. The Sikhs had said that they will roll up the bed of the Mughals and after bearing their cruelty and tyranny for almost half a century they achieved what they had said. Their resolve to destroy Sirhind came to an end after 58 years of struggle. It was not an easy mission in those days. It was as good as Lahore and enjoyed the patronage of Delhi. A little trouble on Sirhind would make Delhi despatch a sizeable force for help. Who could raise an evil eye towards Sirhind ?

The mughal rule was at its zenith when the Singhs decided to cause destruction of Sirhind. Those who heard it branded them being out of their mind. They can't find place to hide themselves. How can they come anywhere near Sirhind fort ? What harm would they be able to do to Sirhind ? They should be wishing good of themselves.

For five years, the Singhs remained dormant. Enters Banda Singh and the city of Sirhind came under the control of *Khâlsâ Panth*. Banda took much tribute from the city inhabitants and did not ransack the city. Five months later, Sirhind slipped out of the hands of Singhs. Singhs came under the dark clouds of tribulations and distresses. A sword of democle's kept hanging on their head for next thirty two

years. Singhs became stronger and more in number. At the first opportunity, they tried their might on Sirhind.

Around 1754, when Mir Mannu was hunting the heads of Sikhs around Lahore, a force of about ten-twelve thousands Singhs raided Sirhind and entered the city by scaling its walls. Before the mughal force could become alert, they sorted the city out and escaped to Thikriwal. This was their first attack on Sirhind.

In 1757 when Marhattas came towards Punjab and wanted to win Sirhind, Adina Beg advised to entrust this task to the Sikhs who captured the city in no time and sorted out every cruel person there in three days time.

The Marhattas ruled the city now. Ahmad Shah invaded again and pushed the Marhattas to their territory. By a resolution, the Sikhs beseiged the city and after sorting it out, escaped towards *Malwa*. This happened in 1759.

Khâlsâ was now roaming around Sirhind. Zain Khan the Governor of Sirhind was also a clever ruler. He summoned Ahmad Shah and caused immense damage to the Sikhs in 1862. Yet the *Khalsa* never lost sight of their mission of destroying Sirhind. In January 1853, Sikhs again assembled around Sirhind and killed Zain Khan. They captured Sirhind.

The cursed Sirhind was no more lived by any Sardar. *Khâlsâ* camped out side the city. The city was divided into twelve parts. Each part was placed under a *misl*. They started demolishing it in a systematic way. All mansions (Havelis) were demolished. Not a person was left in the city. The leaders called donkeys from the nearby villages and all Sikhs were instructed to dump five bricks of Sirhind in

the river. The city that enjoyed status equalent to Lahore was now in a delapidated state. Two years later when Ahmad Shah visited the city, he was surprised to see not a soul in the city. Sirhind is not in a healthy state even today. This is a sample of resoluteness of the *Khâlsâ Panth*.

Singhs had no love or greed for Sirhind. Even after winning it, no leader accepted it. Not only that, no one was ever prepared to spend a night in the city. At last this city was handed over to Bhai Budha Singh of Bhai Bhagtu's dynasty by a *Gurmata* passed by all the Sikhs.

People always passed off Sikhs talk as nothing more than foolish and impractical. But the Sikhs were determined to demolish every brick of the town and throw it in the river. They achieved their objective after a great struggle and wait.

The nation that is determined to achieve their objective will always succeed in their mission God Himself helps and bless such nations in their honourable designs.

