

## **Indian embassies cold-shoulder Sikhs?**

### **Assurance from Foreign Minister**

No. 7187/EAM/2002 2/1/2003

Dear Shri Tarlochan Singh\*,

I am writing with reference to your letter of 3rd October 2002 and my interim response of 4th October, concerning the difficulties faced by a large number of Sikhs who have sought asylum abroad, particularly in the United States and Canada. As you are no doubt aware, we attach the highest priority to the welfare of our nationals and our Embassies have standing instructions to provide them all possible assistance under the rules.

In the case of illegal migrants who enter Canada, with or without passports, our missions are authorized to issue travel documents once they are satisfied that the applicants are Indian nationals. In many instances, our missions are constrained in providing assistance because of the failure of the applicants to establish proper proof of their antecedents. Cases of such persons are forwarded to the state governments concerned for verification. In the meanwhile, the applicant is asked to get a notarized affidavit from his parents in India and a certificate from the concerned District Police where he was living, confirming his Indian nationality and absence of adverse record. The applicant is also to give a statement that he has not renounced his Indian nationality or obtained any other travel documents. In cases of emergency, a one-year validity passport is issued to such individuals after receiving clearances from the state government.

For those who have proceeded abroad and applied for political asylum, whether their stay abroad is legal or illegal, is left to the local government to decide. Our missions do not provide them consular services, except to enable them to visit their immediate relations in emergency on a short-validity passport restricted to travel to India and back for a single journey. In cases where individuals are not granted refugee status, the Mission provides emergency certificates for travel back to India, subject to verification of antecedents by the State Government. We have been seeking cooperation of all the state governments concerned to respond expeditiously to communications from our Missions and Posts overseas. Our endeavour has always been to assist our nationals by providing them necessary documents once their status as Indians is confirmed.

YASHWANT SINGH

Minister of External Affairs

India

[\* Chairman, National Commission for Minorities]

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## **The strange case of the Sikh homeland: Silence is surrender!**

Sir, Every nation on earth owes its first and foremost loyalty to its homeland territory. There are times when a nation is forced, or obliged, to vacate territory to its enemies, but it does not forego claim to that territory. It is that "claim" that keeps the spirit going and life worth living for. It is the claim towards which a nation's leaders must steer their followers.

But it is quite amazing that the Sikhs have forgotten their homeland and kingdom of Punjab of which they were **cheated by the British rulers**, as well as the **Congress Party** in 1947. A whole new generation of Sikhs do not even know why they had to vacate Nanakana Sahib and Lahore in 1947. Now, 56 years later, there is no sign of Sikhs returning to Gujranwala or Rawalpindi.

I would like to submit to the Sikh Panth to claim their homeland, including West Punjab, the land of our Gurus. Nobody's head will come under guillotine if we register a claim on the conscience of the world. But our heads may, indeed, come under guillotine if we don't. Isn't Lahore where the Fifth Guru, Guru Arjun Dev ji was martyred? What about Nanakana Sahib - our holiest of holy Guru Nanak's birthplace? Isn't Gujranwala where Maharaja Ranjit Singh was born?

The Sikh claim to a homeland is strong even though our present political position is weak. Claims do not depend on the strength or weakness of a nation but rest on merit. Being forced out by deception is no legitimacy for usurpers to hold on to such territory. A weak man losing his daughter to a strong abductor does not say: "Now I have no claim over my daughter because she is with a gangster who carries a gun." There needs to be a great debate on this if we are a community with honour.

When I was in the Baltic Republic of Lithuania, I was much impressed by the Lithuanians love of their mother tongue. It is close to fanaticism. Sticking to the Lithuanian language, they defied the Germans and the Russians and won independence in the end as United Lithuania. Today I regard that country great in many respects.

On the other hand, when I think of my Punjab I recall the Partition and "Operation Bluestar" and watch the Hindus forsaking the Punjabi language. The result? A region with the potential of becoming a world power lies broken in five fragments, with the capital of two of its fragments on "Union" territory. We can recall the story, how the clever monkey made a fool of the two cats fighting over a loaf of bread!

The Sikhs deserve the crown for sticking to the Punjabi language, but now it is time to reflect on our commitment to our homeland. **A community or nation that has no claim is as good as dead.** Having a claim is like having a vital current of life and energy flowing through its veins.

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## Holy Babas & SGPC

This is in reference to *The Sikh Review*, January 2003 in which the case holy Babas for Sikhs is emphasized by S.Sudarshan Singh. He says that there are quite a few *slokas* about saints by Guru Arjun Dev ji in Sukhmani Sahib. Since he reads *Sukhmani Sahib* carefully, a reference can be made to the *sloka Kartoot pasu kee manas jat/lok pachara kare din raat*. If most of the Babas are doing what Guru Arjun Dev ji calls as 'behaviour of an animal', then how can we distinguish between grain and chaff.

Another sloka is from the *baani* of Guru Tegh Bahadar ji:

*Saadho mun kaa maan tiyago*

*kaam karodhe sangat dur jan kee*

*taa te ehnis bhago"*

True Saints, in modern times, (as always), are a scarce commodity. The more their number, the dirtier the situation looks in general. Now how can you know what big saints are doing? Most of them are known from the company they keep. There are people who are concerned about this glut of saints and the harm they are doing to the Sikh Faith by their shady actions. They research about them and then expose them by challenging these saints and their followers by writing about them by giving facts from the records uncovered from the government files or by taking affidavits from people who have been affected by their greed and lust for carnal desires.

In case someone has time and interest to know more about it, please contact <mailto:sikhbulletin@lanset.com> for a free copy of this monthly journal by sending your mailing address and get information about Big Sikh Saints and their coterie.

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## **The Sikh Dharma of Western Hemisphere is Authentic Sikhism**

This is in response to Sr. Tejpal Singh Thind's letter "American Sikhs (3HO): Our Brothers Across Seven Seas," vide SR, January 2003.

**Let it be known very honestly and clearly that Sikh Dharma of the Western Hemisphere is a most sacred, authentic organization of the Khalsa, and all that we do comes after investigating all the terms and references from Guru Gobind Singh's time back to Guru Nanak's fundamental basics of the social, personal and religious approach.**

A section of the Indian Sikhs in the Western Hemisphere are *patits*, and they unfairly allege that Sikh Dharma is just a family affair. On the other hand, Sikhs in the Western Hemisphere have to survive against a powerful Judeo-Christian-Islamic prejudice, as well as the domestic negativity of the *patits* for whom they are a living challenge.

Sikh Dharma is not the private property of any individual. It is simply a miracle of Guru Ram Das who created it all. It is very strong, mature and a sophisticated organization. There is a Parliament of the Western Sikhs, called Khalsa Council, that meets twice a year to discuss those issues that concern us. Over the decades we have built up a very powerful social and political voice.

**In spite of our numbers many Sikhs from India, shy away from visiting us because we are vegetarian, and do not cater to their 'wining and dining' philosophy. However, we are not negative to anything or anyone. Simply we protect our own grace. The only reason we have survived until now is through our dignity to obey Guru's dictates. We rise in the ambrosial hours, perfect our *Sadhana*, and go to work, treating it as *sadhana* and *seva*. We have built beautiful Gurdwaras - truly beautiful - and there are no politics or political speeches. We believe in the Shabd Guru, and we bow only to him. Let there be no misunderstanding that this is a cult. Rather, let it be known, once and for all, that this is a body of the Tatt Khalsa under the guidance of the Shabd Guru of which its purity and piety is marvelous and unsurpassed.**

That is why even in the West our enemies have respect for our discipline and endurance. We have a great tolerance for injustice as the history of the Sikhs has shown us. From day one, we have gone through political, physical and economic torture. We are happy that the Sikh families have prospered in India. We believe in

purity and prosperity, and we are successful in our endeavours. The purpose of this letter is so that, through your magazine, educated Sikhs will know and understand that the only thing which commands and rules over us is the "Guru Granth Sahib."

We pray that this understanding will prevail and those who have held doubts or misunderstanding will find clarity.

In the name of the Cosmos which prevails through everybody and the holy Naam which holds the world,

MSS Nirinjan Kaur Khalsa

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