

## **“Celebrating Valour”**

Sir, - My wife and I greatly appreciate your writing the Editorial on me. It is beautiful, written in a very generous manner and we would treasure your opinions. And many thanks for sending us so many copies. Writing that booklet on me was Roopinder's idea and he did a good job. Rupa & Co. wanted it short without any frills like coloured pictures to keep the cost low for it to be generally affordable. I believe it had a good public response.

I had bought some land near Delhi long ago, and sold it a few months ago. We got a fair amount for it and we in the whole family felt that we should do something for my Air Force colleagues who are in adversity of some kind or another. The Trust I set up is just a small gesture for all the happiness the IAF has given us and the love and respect we have from Air Force colleagues and their families. The Trust will be fully managed by the Air Force Association, a well established organisation all over our country (there is a Branch in Kolkata also). The President of the A.F.A. will always be the Chairman of the Trust as ex-officio. My family feels happy that it would be managed well and meet the needs of our colleagues who have some financial difficulties. The amount has been already invested and would earn Rs. 16 lakhs yearly at the present RBI Bond interest rate for distribution.

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Sir, - The Feb. Special issue on Marshal of the Air Force Arjan Singh was quite informative and touching. All praise to SR for highlighting this great man's achievement which made all of us very proud of him. This Sikh has won the highest laurels in the history of Air Force in India, but success sits so lightly on his shoulders. By donating Rs. 2 crore towards the setting of a trust for the welfare of the Airforce personell, that too by selling his ancestral lands, must always be remembered in the history of India. No other individual has ever done this kind of charity. Most of the people are busy amassing wealth for themselves.

*The Sikh Review* has paid a fitting tribute to this great Sikh and an equally great son of India. Please continue to highlight such worthy Sikhs. Your earlier special issue on an equally worthy Sikh-Sardar Khushwant Singh was also praiseworthy. Is it possible to have a special issue on Bhagat Puran Singh-the “father Teresa” of India and the spirit of Pingalwara?. I am sure the readers would love to know in detail about that great soul whom even S. Khushwant Singh has called -”The Greatest Person I have ever known.”

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## **Hazardous Times**

Sir, - We Sikhs are passing through hazardous times. Our greedy selfish leaders have been playing second fiddle to what our enemy who had planned to destroy us.

Consequently we are not only disunited, but also falling in the dark pit. The sacrificial acts of 20<sup>th</sup> century statesmen Sr. Kapur Singh, Sr. Hukam Singh have gone waste and now Indian Constitution insists that "*Sikhs are of the sub-casts of Hindus*. Consequently, as our *unique identity is being finished*, many of our people are naming their children with Hindu names, and most are writing their names omitting or shorting the word, "*Singh*" and just as "Jaspal S." "Karam S." etc. Indeed Hindus are now proudly adding to their name "Singh", as Gajindra Singh, Sandeep Singh..... instead "Kumars", etc.

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## Remembering Capt. Bhag Singh

We, the *parivar* of late Captain Bhag Singh, M.B.E., bow in salutation to you and your dedicated team who have taken onerous task of spreading Essence of Sikhism through ***The Sikh Review***. One can say without any hesitation that inspite of your frail health, you and your dedicated team have done admirably well. You all have carried forward ***The Sikh Review*** with worldwide appeal to greater greater glory inspite of all odds.

We pray to Sat Guru Ji to bless you with good health and keep the zest of service to Sikhism alive in you that you and your selfless team have miles to go.

In fond and loving memory of our parents, Capt. Bhag Singh, M.B.E. and Sardarni Inderjeet Kaur, I enclose a cheque in favour of ***The Sikh Review*** for Rs. 3000/- which may be utilised as you may deem fit.

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## Appeal for Help

Sir, - I am a Sculpture Graduate from Delhi College of Art, seeking to do a programme on animation in a reputed college in Canada. I have been recommended College of Interactive art, Vancouver. Tuition fees being US\$ 20,000 (living expense is additional), may I request guidance and help possibly as repayable study loans?

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**Special Stamp on Pehla Prakash (SGGS)**

Sir: Thank you for publishing the article on Commemorative Stamps (SR March 2005). I am happy to report that the Government has agreed to release the Special Commemorative Stamps on the 400th Anniversary of the Prakash of SGGS as the first step, while the issue of similar stamps on the other two momentous events has been referred to the Philately Advisory Committee (PAC).

The stamps on SGGS will be issued anytime now. Though belated, better late than never. I would like to thank Sardar Charanjeet Singh Atwal, Deputy Speaker, Lok-Sabha, who took a personal interest in the matter. Thanks are also due to Shri Dayanidhi Maran for responding positively and diligently. His department has also released the Special Stamps on Bhagat Puran Singh which we had canvassed for in 2004, i.e. on the centenary of the great social worker. That Stamp (along with the first day cover and an exploratory brochure) is available at all post offices in India, especially those that also have the philately section. It is a collectors item and I urge people to buy and cherish it. One set is being sent to Sikh Review for its Record.

**PARAMJEET SINGH**

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## **Nishan Sahib: Some Questions**

Sir, - Thank you for publishing Kulwant Singh's informative piece on the "Origin of Nishan Sahib: The Sikh Banner," (January 2005, pp. 39-44). However, the piece makes some contestable claims. For example, Kulwant Singh writes that "the Sikh color (saffron)" was "accepted" into the Indian flag in the presence of Tara Singh (p. 40; editorial, "Akali," December 24, 1921; Harjinder Singh Dilgeer, "World Sikh News," June 30, 1995). However, Darshan Singh Tatla, claims precisely the opposite: "Kharak Singh sought the Sikh colour as India's third community. The flag committee chaired by Jawaharlal Nehru clarified that the flag was 'national' and did not represent any community. The issue was resurrected by Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale in 1983..." (*The Sikh Diaspora: The Search for Statehood*, p. 229).

**PUNEET SINGH LAMBA**

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## **Mundavani Mohalla V**

Sir, - The editorial [SR of November 2004] logically and impressively brings out how Sri Guru Granth Sahib pronounces only the Truth that is the Name of Almighty, God and His Attributes. My family and I are convinced that this meaning as brought out by the guest editor, Dimpy G Singh is the appropriate one. The Guru Granth Sahibji starts with IK ONKAR and gets "sealed" with the confirmation that it contains throughout all about the same Truth, the Naam. And after this seal the Editor, Sri Guru Arjun Devji writes "The Sloka, - "I have not acknowledged Your kindness and gifts, you have made me worthy (of yourself), I am merit-less and possess no virtue

and you yourself have taken mercy on me.” This sloka is also in conformity with the interpretation under reference.

I humbly suggest that Dharam Parchar Committee, should disseminate this interpretation of *Mundavani Mohalla 5* by giving reference to the editorial in the SR. Let all scholars be made aware of this interpretation. It appeals very much. Let us see what the scholars say. Let us, mortals, try to understand the meanings to the best of our ability; ultimately Satguru knows best.

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## **Shatabdis and Their Real Achievements**

Since 1999 the Sikh Panth has celebrated four *Shatabdis* where lacs of Sangat gathered, crores of *Bheta* collected and spent. What is the long-term benefit of all this in real terms to community? We need to take some inspiration from the Christians. All over the world, including the most backward of countries like Africa have set up schools, hospitals and orphanages, where free treatment/education/bringing up is provided although they do not have *golaks* in their churches. On the contrary we have an unlimited source of *Bheta* in every *gurdwara* yet this is being spent on marble, gold and *nagar kirtans* and *prabhat pheries*. Do they really matter to the common *Gursikh* who is unemployed, sick or to an orphan?

We do need to ponder seriously over this issue and take appropriate corrective steps, otherwise we would be following the Brahminical tradition of laying all the emphasis on rituals instead of the simplicity and *sewa* to humanity as enshrined in the holy *Guru Granth Sahib*.

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## **The Indomitable Sada Kaur**

Sir - This is with reference to the article “What Sikh Women Want” by Manpreet Kaur published in the December 2004 issue of *The Sikh Review* [pp.65-68].

On Pg 66, the author rightly states that Sardarni Sada Kaur played a pivotal role in the establishment of the *Khalsa* kingdom. However, it is erroneously stated that she was the mother of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. In fact she was the mother of Mehtab Kaur (the Maharaja’s first wife) thus making her Ranjit Singh’s mother-in-law. The recently released book “Connecting the Dots in Sikh History” by Sardar Harbans Singh Noor contains an interesting essay on Sardarni Sada Kaur.

I hope you will bring the above points to the notice of the readers.

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## **Guru Nanak Prakash Divas**

Sir, - Kindly refer to my letter to Sri L.K. Advani regarding cancellation of the public holiday of Guru Nanak Devji's birthday from the year 2004 (published on page 73 in the December 2004 issue of The Sikh Review).

I convey with great happiness that the govt. of Gujarat has restored this public holiday by an order issued on 2nd February 2005.

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