

# Bench-mark for Youth Today

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ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਕੇ ਸਰ ਲਾਗੇ ਤਨ ਭੀਤਰਿ ਤਾ ਭ੍ਰਮੁ ਕਾਟਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ [SGGS: 607]

With devotion deep, we bow in reverence,  
Pray, keep Thy love aglow in our hearts.

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Spirituality is an exercise in refining qualities of the mind and heart, in the context of the Sikh principle of ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥ (SGGS: 943) (i.e. the Word is the teacher, while attunement of mind is the learner's faculty. This is linked to the purity of the intellect.

On the auspicious occasion of 'Vaisakhi', the historical retrospect takes us to the times when our Tenth Master, Guru Gobind Singh 'baptized' five courageous men to create a new creed of valiant, saintly men, and coined the term 'Khalsa' (the pure), for them. We are their successors, though we may have inherited only an iota of their psyche! I am reminded of a recent musing of Dr. I.J. Singh, the eminent Sikh scholar based in New York:

"A Sikh truly remains a 'work in progress'...if all those who claim to be Sikhs walk the same path, surely they are not all at the same level. The Guru Granth is our perfect guide, as we walk in its light. So it is best not to judge others lest we be judged."

(excerpted from 'So large an umbrella' which appeared in a Souvenir titled 'Preceptor Eternal')

This beautiful thought brings to the fore the **necessity of harmonising morality and religion**, so that we do not segregate basic values, like truth, discipline, self evaluation, honesty and non-vindictiveness, from our day-to-day lives in the garb of practising a religion marked by exclusivity of the physical appearance.

The realities of today's world are challenging enough to shake one's soul. The youth are smitten by the hurly-burly of celeb bug. The material world, too, offers a major distraction. Our youth nurture an innate desire to prove their one-upmanship as far as loud display of their possessions is concerned. The power of sobriety is being lost in the din of music at night clubs and pubs. It is very trendy to fag, drink and share accounts on how wicked and mean one can be to fellow humans. This is the new age version of having a 'good time'!

If the changing lifestyle - in time and space - portray a gross degradation of values, one cannot negate the deeperootedness of human nature in goodness and spirituality -

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ [SGGS: 441]

Sayings of the past, like "..... the sole purpose of human existence is to kindle a light in the darkness of mere being", (Carl G. Jung) also reinforce the significance of values, like truth, discipline, self-evaluation, guidance by a teacher, continuous vigil, self-appraisal, and, above all, an abiding faith in an omnipotent God for 'kindling' that special 'light' in our mundane existence.

Quite recently, a teenager, echoing the sentiment of the majority of his age group, wrote to us seeking to befriend a Sikh role model. He boldly downgraded the prevalent likes of Vikram Chatwal, Navjot Sidhu, Harbhajan Singh, Daler Mahendi, etc. for their non-adherence to the Sikh edicts in toto. Taking a cue from Gurbani:

ਖੋਜੀ ਉਪਜੈ ਬਾਦੀ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਹਉ ਬਲਿ ਬਲਿ ਗੁਰ ਕਰਤਾਰਾ ॥ [SGGS: 1255]

Our chief editor wrote back to him to rise above this and carve a niche for himself as a Sikh, based on his own convictions, beliefs, confidence and achievements. I would also add that being exclusive (as in appearance) is not synonymous with closing ourselves on the world, for SGGS reveals:

ਸਭੁ ਕਿਛੁ ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ [SGGS: 665]

Rather, the reason for maintaining 'exclusivity' needs to be re-defined for our progeny. Instead of hardline, fanatic sermonising, honest efforts, coupled with prayers for inculcating 'love' in our hearts for the Guru are the need of the hour.

While mentoring our children on day-to-day basis, let us create a special love for 'Dasmesh Pita' in their hearts by sharing the unique, awe-inspiring story of Vaisakhi 1699, when 'Khalsa' - conceptualising the alliance of 'Bhakti' with 'Shakti', was born; a new dress code (viz sporting the five "kakars") was outlined, and our 'Sarbens Daani' Father, the blessed Guru Gobind Singh laid the edifice of this great Faith.

The recollection of this shining historical event makes us proud to be a part of this heritage. We invite the likes of Arshdeep (the teenager in dilemma), to call on us during their weak moments, so that we can address their 'lows', and make them see beauty in being a well-rounded Sikh, ever effervescent with positivity and endless striving for self amelioration through meditation!

