

Capt. Bhag Singh: A Family Remembers

We, the *parivar* of late Captain Bhag Singh, M.B.E. (founder editor of ***The Sikh Review***) greatly admire your team as a dynamic unit, dedicated and devoted in "selfless sewa". Your dedication inspires team of ***The Sikh Review*** to work hard and strive to make it as an undisputed magazine of highest standard of the global Sikh fraternity by providing thought-provoking editorials on our burning problems, and *par excellence* articles by national and international personalities of repute on Meditation, Naamology, Theology, Philosophy, Moral Tradition, Heritage, Perspectives, in addition to Poet's Corner, Members' Forum, Diary and Book Section makes it not only as an authoritative reference magazine for people involved in comparative study of religions but also of great interest to people striving to learn more about Sikhism in its proper perspective.

"Bravo" to you, and your team for the "selfless sewa" to keep "***The Sikh Review***" flag flying high.

We pray to Sat Guru Nanak to bless you with good health, vitality and zest so that you may continue to lead and groom your team with your vast knowledge and wisdom for many more years to come and take ***The Sikh Review*** to even greater heights and glory.

In fond and loving memories of our father late Captain Bhag Singh, M.B.E. (Death anniversary 05th Nov.) and our mother late Sardarni Inderjit Kaur (death anniversary 23 Oct.) I enclose herewith a cheque for Rs. 4,000/- drawn in favour of ***The Sikh Review*** for utilisation as you may deem fit.

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Happy Tidings from Nigeria

Our periodic Satsang continues with great enthusiasm by the expatriate community here. Sometimes visiting kirtan jathas provide the occasion for larger gatherings.

We keep getting regular issues of ***The Sikh Review***. Each issue is getting better. We circulate copies amongs the interested Sangat. Your selection of well researched articles, editorial comment and book section are most enlightening.

My father has sent me a copy of the Bir Memorial Lecture, last October, of Sr. Tarlochan Singh - on "The Sikh youth at the cross roads". He has rightly diagnosed the problems we presently face and has suggested some key solutions for all to follow. My father who has immense respect for your devotion, dedication and deep knowledge of Sikh cause mentions about the extremely well organised Memorial lecture.

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Ritual of Akhand Paath

Col. Avtar Singh from Toronto (Canada) has highlighted (SR Oct. 2003) his experience to obtain the Guru Granth Sahib Bir from Gurdwara Rakab Ganj, Delhi. The behaviour of the official was deplorable. Such individuals do not understand the philosophy of religion, and fail to follow the core message of *Gurbani*. The Scripture tells us about One & the ONLY GOD, the ultimate and the eternal Guru, who provides enlightenment and understanding for the disciple to set his heart on finding and serving him. God is beyond description. The Palki Sahib concept signifies reverence, and it has no connection with obtaining a copy of the Granth Sahib for use, both domestically and publicly. Everyone is entitled to have it - and more important - to understand the scripture.

“Futility of ritual paath” through *Pathis* has been well brought out by Sardar Gurvinder Singh. Anybody can be a *pathi* and a *raagi*. The *sangat* must be encouraged to read and sing, else it amounts to commercial payments for services rendered by the paathis and the raagis. This issue should be debated openly. We want an enlightened community.

The methodology of cremation of aged birs at Gurdwara Chhotti Javadi, Ludhiana, shows full honour and regard for our living Guru Ganth Sahib. The underlying conception is to inculcate respect and love for the Holy Book. Bravo, Bhai Sahib Narinder Singh of Ludhiana!

SWARANJIT SINGH
Amritsar

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Gurbani Translation Pitfalls

This is in reference to Dr I.J.Singh (SR March 2003) regarding translation of Gurbani by Khushwant Singh in this article. Around 1987 this humble servant of *gurupanth* came across a commentary on Japuji Sahib in English by S.Khushwant Singh in the house of a friend in Sydney. In pauri 37, “*tithe jodh mahaabal sur, tin mih RAM riha bharpur*” & “*naa oh mareh naa thhaage jae, jin ke RAM vasae man mahae*”, the word Ram has been used twice as a name of Akaalpurkh in a poetical form and rhythm which most of the Sikhs, I believe know today. But our renowned writer and brother, Khushwant Singh says in the commentary, RAM implying son of DASRATH. Many names of Akaalpurkh which have the origin in Hindu mythology and frequently used by Bhagats in Aad Guru Granth Sahib for expressing their devotion to Akaalpurkh have been accepted by Sikh Gurus also.

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The Dasam Granth Debate

Sir: I have read the article titled “Compilation of Dasam Granth - A Scientific analysis” (*The Sikh Review*, August 2003). In my humble opinion, the noble Gurus did not want any episodes or their own life stories to be recorded, This was

deliberate, not by default. From Guru Nanak Dev Ji's own time, the Guru concept was clearly enunciated for the Sikhs to imbibe.

It is another matter that our premier institution, the SGPC is too involved in petty politics (and manned by self-serving political persons) to sponsor genuine research, or even to ensure uniformity of *Maryada*. The major issues facing the Sikhs have been pushed under the carpet all along. A stage has come where the so called "Dasam Granth" is being installed along with the prakash of Shri Guru Granth Sahib. I am writing this to request for your permission to have this article reprinted for Canadian Sangat. I firmly believe that when the light of knowledge shines, the darkness of ignorance will be automatically dispelled. I look forward to receiving your permission. My temporary local e-mail address is care: "gmalik@mindspring.com".

COL. AVTAR SINGH
Toronto
Canada

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Sikh Women in Seva

Sr. Jagmohan Singh's article in the September, 2003 issue of *The Sikh Review*, "Sikh Women in Seva: An Unbiased Perspective", is brilliant in its analysis but rather "political" in conclusion. His statement that "The right to do Seva does not exist in isolation." is remarkable.

On reading his well researched article, I am reminded of the good old days when, as a policy civil servant, I knew in advance the conclusion my political masters expected to arrive at after elaborate research! Yet, knowing his robust views, I am certain that his caution is strategic and has to do with Panthic unity and a smooth transition to the ideal state.

The right to do Seva is not based on gender and is Guru-given. He does not isolate it for women in the context of Panjabi social milieu, and makes a sea change in that chaos a pre-condition for granting equal Seva rights to women. Historical background about the evolution of women's rights in the West is most interesting but, with respect, irrelevant in this context. Please do reflect again on the not so "unbiased" conclusion he has reached: the impression given is that of indefinite delay in correcting a situation, which is harming the Sikh cause.

The question of equal rights for women in doing seva at Gurdwaras (including Darbar Sahib) was exceptionally raised at a recent British Sikh Consultative Forum meeting, and I must say that it was most embarrassing to listen to some of the arguments against, put forward by some, otherwise responsible, jathedars.

As mentioned in the article, Gurmat based resolutions accepting the principle of gender equality, have been passed by the Religious Advisory Committee of the SGPC as long ago as 1940, albeit, in the context of performing Kirtan at Darbar Sahib. Surely, what has been resolved decades ago should be put into effect without delay. The patience of the Sikh diaspora with unresponsive central Sikh institutions is wearing thin and it is important that overdue reforms are made without any delay. It is important that the credibility of our institutions is not allowed to erode further. When is the right time to do the right thing? The response of the Sikh tradition to this

question (by Gur-ithaas and Sikh-ithaas) is clear: the time to do the right thing is now! Innumerable Sikh sacrifices bear witness to the action-based Sikh ideology in the boneless Indian religio-social milieu.

I do hope that his other suggestions e.g. about a Brains Trust to review the whole range of issues affecting the status of women are also acted upon with some urgency.

Trust these comments, copied to those with an immediate interest (including ***The Sikh Review***), are received in the same constructive vein as made. There is much appreciation for the dedicated work that you are doing for the *chardhi kala* of Khalsa Panth.

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