

Need For Vigilance: The Present and the Future

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WE, AS SIKHS, HAVE SURELY, at some point or other, faced daunting challenges in our daily lives. This is because men conspicuously sport a turban and facial hair, while women too wear long hair and Punjabi dress. This, advocated with love throughout our religion, is met with skepticism from the outside world. They may frown upon our appearance, because we look different from the run-of-the mill folks. That was a master stroke of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji when he “baptised” Sikhs with Amrit to transform them into Khalsa in year 1699. Little do those people know that indeed it was only kings, and nobility or the scholar who used to sport turbans in the days gone by.

Post-1984, the Punjab-Delhi images may have turned sour. The Sikhs, as powerful as they are, pose no significant threat to the Hindus in the centralized Indian government. The Sikhs are - by and large - an educated and hardworking lot, with a hint of brilliance, often lacking in other Indian communities. Although - currently - a Sikh is the head of India at the moment, he has restricted powers - as politics goes. But Punjab, once the richest state in India, has deteriorated steadily, more so since the 1984 ‘Operation Bluestar’. Neglected, it has fallen backward, with other parts of India given more significance, partly because of Akali tie-up with communal Bharatiya Janta Party.

Came a time when the same Sikhs thought they wanted to carve out an autonomous state: Khalistan. There was a whole lot of noise made of it, and a lot of brouhaha, too. In the end, they found it was a pipe dream. In my opinion, that was a blessing in disguise as had Khalistan been created, Sikhs would have been left to fight on a day-to-day basis. There would be turmoil, just like in Kosovo, where Serbia’s forces have frustrated any more visisection.

Now, coming back to the title, The Essence of Spirituality, one wonders how it works? The Essence of Spirituality concept works at the optimum level when a man keeps his hair unshorn. In the old days, Chinese fighters, Muslim Priests and Jewish people too kept their hair unshorn. It is hair unshorn hair is out of fashion. How wrong are they to say that for in the next decades, the human race will realize the importance of keeping unshorn hair that the percentage of humans, regardless race and religion, will keep on increasing.

Talking about The Essence of Spirituality, *Raj Karega Khalsa* also comes to mind. Sadly, in India, or specifically Punjab, the number of people that live as True Khalsa, is dwindling. To know that it was the holy land that our Gurus graced hundreds of years ago, yet it is rapidly becoming an embarrassing notion.

That said, I have nothing else to say. Everything has been discussed in ***The Sikh Review*** numerous times before. I know it to be the truth that the Khalsa shall rise in the West, even if it may wither in India and Punjab, and that a New Order of the Khalsa shall emerge. They will be the people that take pride in their religion, and they shall live without politicking and infighting that has plagued the Sikh political fortress, the Akal Takht in recent times. They shall live on the basis of the Essence of Spirituality.

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