

# The Holy Guru Granth: Tercentenary Year Heralds a New Spirit

*Manju Ahluwalia\**

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\* Associate Editor, formerly Head Mistress, La Martiniere School for Boys, Calcutta.

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In an act of finality Guru Gobind Singh Ji in 1708, conferred Guruship on the Guru Granth Sahib in perpetuity. Celebrating 300th year of that momentous declaration: *Gurumanio Granth*, we need to think of new beginnings. New Year resolutions rarely last beyond a few weeks. But let us launch deeper search within ourselves. Questioning oneself will be more advantageous in the long run, for an anniversary is but a milestone - to a higher goal.

Renewal of faith also means a time to be reminded of our connection to our deepest spiritual self. A time to listen to the small voice within. Sometimes the ceaseless chatter around one drowns out this voice. We need to have time for our true selves - to slow down and remember who we are:

mn qUM joiq srUpu hY Awpxw mUlu pCwxu ]

Let each of us discover truth within. [SGGS: Raag Asa 441]

It is a time for reflection - a time to ask ourselves what is our focus? What is our ultimate destination? Are we going in the right direction?

ey srlrw myirAw iesu jg mih Awie kY ikAw quDu krm kmwieAw ] - Anand Sahib (xii) (SGGS: 922)

As the spring season blooms this month, let us usher in the true spirit within us. We cannot afford to hold onto superficial rituals and beliefs. We must go deeper as well as forward, reach new goals, evolve, become purer in our actions, as Guru's true following, clearer in our ideas. The touchstone is always this - will our actions, bring us closer to God who resides within us? Will it enrich our spirit and draw us closer to Him?

**The Guru Granth Sahib is our guide. We are fortunate that we have this treasure where the most complex thoughts have been written in such fascinating poetry and profound simplicity. Each one of us can understand the great teachings of our Gurus.**

We need to make a sincere effort, first to understand the message they have given, and then, more importantly, to try to live our lives according to these principles. Sikhism is a way of life. Each one of us is on a different rung of the spiritual ladder which will reach the heights and help us merge with the Eternal Spirit. The Guru Granth Sahib has a message for every spiritual stage. We are blessed that we have this as our guide.

This year, let us look to our children. Younger children can go forward beyond the vistas we had ever dreamed of, to conquer new horizons. It is our youth that we have to address. We must think about our educational system. **We need to have more schools which are not only centres of academic excellence and professional skills, but also teach family values and ways to improve the community and benefit all mankind.**

A few such residential schools have been set up in the hills. Himachal

Pradesh alone boasts of two such: Atam Science Trust's Dagshai Public School, which has recently celebrated its Golden Jubilee, and the Akal Trust's comprehensive facility at Barhu Sahib, in Sirmour district. Both aim at a whole-life education rooted in basic moral values. More are needed. We have the funds, let us invest in our youth and help them to get the education to compete with the best in the world. I have great faith in the youth of today. **They need to be involved in the programme committees of every gurdwara so that they have a voice in the changes we need to bring about for a purposeful involvement in LIVE issues.**

Let us include students representatives in school and college committees so that they have a voice in the new thinking you want to bring about in these institutions. For too long, the power for change has been in the hands of a few 'oldies' entrenched in these committees. Sikhism will gain so much more; let the flowers bloom this spring.

Youth camps are being held by some organizations. More such camps will help in larger number of our youth to interact with persons of knowledge who can guide them, answer their queries and generally give them the right direction. Camps should be a 'fun experience' for young adults. **We must include physical activities and interactive sessions on topics. Debates and quiz programmes will enliven the proceedings. Camps need to be carefully planned and presented in an attractive way to young children.**

The youth in the rural areas - in Punjab and elsewhere - are in greater need of help and care by the community. They have very special problems which need to be addressed by trained personnel. We need to set up some centres in the rural areas to help them in every possible way. In particular, we have to involve our youth in community service. If we open more hospitals and care centre for the aged, we need to show them how they can help to bring about changes in our society. **Seva**, the selfless service for others, is one of the most important tenets of the Sikh religion. Let us make our youth sensitive to this aspect.

Great societies are built when every member of the society, especially the youth, works towards building a more harmonious society. Values cannot be taught by preaching or reading books. They have to be learnt by doing. We adults must serve our community and work towards this goal by 'doing', not just talking about it. Our youth will follow when they see how much they gain when they help others by selfless service. **I know our youth is ready to be led in this direction. The question is - are we ready to lead?**

The winds of change have started - from Australia, though Malaysia and Singapore, across India - upto Canada and USA. A number of organizations have been set up by right thinking individuals to help children from under-privileged families to get a better education. This is a step in the right direction. However, much more needs to be done to bring about a comprehensive change and more individuals must come forward

to help bring about this change.

The message of Guru Granth is universal, and in sync with the aspirations of the new generation - as a pragmatic and practical way of life:

Awgwhw kU qRwiG ipCw Pыр n muhfVw ]

nwnk isiJ ievyhw vwr bhuiV n hovl jnmVw ] [SGGS:1096]

