

SIKH DYNAMIC VISION

By Nirbhai Singh

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All those who work in the areas of religion, ethics and aesthetics have realized it that mystic experience cannot be expressed in ordinary language. Meanings of the sacred scriptures are mysterious because they are hidden in the ciphers. In these areas, there is a primacy of the direct experience over the explanation. This is due to the nature of the subject matter and limitations of language, rather than the author's shortcomings. But many scholars in the field of religion do not realize this fact and go on claiming the finality of their explanations by ignoring contextual framework of the book.

The author of the present book with his philosophical background and understanding of Sikh Scripture from its primary source is well trained for decoding the Sikh Canon and the ciphers treasured there in. The book is written for those who are well conversant with philosophies of religion of the world. The author has made it clear in the opening lines of the 'Preface'.

The aim of the author is to make the reader aware of the need for reinterpretation of the ciphers in the canonical literature of the Sikhs in the context of the post-modern era. He makes an attempt to retrieve the eternal message of the Gurus, Bhaktas, Sufis and the philosophers of the world over in the coeval context in the modern philosophical idiom by using interpretive tools and analytic method as developed in the West. But he does not accept these methods in total; rather he develops their "modified model" that fits into the cultural aura of the Sikh sacred texts and medieval context from the philosophical standpoint. The author has concisely presented under historical, cultural and philosophical levels with comparative methodology and modern tool of interpretation. He tries to prove that Sikhism is reinterpretation of Indian and the Semitic religious traditions in the medieval context.

After giving a brief introduction in simple and lucid language, he applies this method to the text, context and syntax of Guru Granth Sahib. He raises questions related to epistemology, nature of *Akalapurakh*, the Sikh onto-theology, moral issues, *piri* and *miri*, and reconciliation between theory and praxis, This is what he has designated as *Sikh Dynamic Vision*.

The author has given objective and comprehensive analysis of the Sikh Scriptures and tradition of the Guru period. It is a rare feat of maintaining faith and rational dedication. Another merit of the book is that it justifies retention of personal identity of man to discharge historical action in the world. Logical development of Sikh faith from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh has been traced. *Akalapurakh* in Sikhism encompasses temporality and eternity. In the last chapter-VII Khalsa mirrors *Akalapurakh* on earth. The charismatic personality of personal gurus has been replaced with *shabda-guru*.

The book is sufficiently scholarly, detailed, exploratory, insightful, bold and interesting so as to profit not only those readers who are interested in knowing about Sikh religion as philosophy of life. The book - rather overpriced - will be widely debated and discussed in scholarly circles. It is repetitive at different places. These can be avoided in the revised edition.

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