

Mysore's Magnificent Gurdwara

Sir, - I was recently in Mysore, one of the most attractive tourist destination of India. Thousands of foreigners and Indians visit this place to see the beautiful Brindaban Garden and the Maharaja's Palace. There are very few Sikh families settled there. Occasionally, some Sikh officers are posted there. It is heartening to see that a beautiful Gurdwara, built in marble, has come up there since 1993 in the Brindaban Extension. It is being visited by large number of tourists. S. Sheetal Singh, the founder-President told me that S. Chiranjiv Singh, IAS, who retired as Addl. Chief Secretary, Karnataka, last month, was the motivating force when he was posted there. Sardar A.S. Bawa, Head of National Food Laboratory, Sardar J.S. Sandhu, Scientist, Central Food Technological Research Institute, Sardar M.S. Jolly, retired Director National Silk Institute, S. Ranjit Singh Rangila, Institute of Indian Languages, and S. Mohinder Singh of Karnataka's Agriculture Marketing Board, have worked as a team in keeping the Sikh flag flying high, a model for Sikh organisations to replicate similar Gurdwaras in remote areas so that the message of our illustrious Gurus could be spread among non-Sikhs.

TARLOCHAN SINGH

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The Message of Guru Nanak

Sir, - Thank you for the excellent review of my book in the April 2005 issue of your esteemed monthly.

The book is an humble effort to spread the divine message of peace and harmony of the great spiritual visionary, Guru Nanak Dev Ji, who prophetically spoke of peace and religious tolerance during the strife-torn milieu in which he lived! This is as relevant today as it was in his time over five centuries ago, and it needs to be spread worldwide.

ONKAR SINGH

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Dear Sir, - Please accept a small contribution for *The Sikh Review*, undoubtedly, the Number One Sikh publication, spreading the Gospel of Guru Nanak throughout the World. The quality of journalism is outstanding and I congratulate you and your dedicated team for producing such an excellent magazine. I enclose a cheque for Rs. 5,000 as token of appreciation.

BRIG. K.B. SINGH SETHI, OBE (Retd.)

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From Editor:

My Dear Pritam Vir Ji,

Please accept our sincere felicitations on guiding THE PANTHIC CAUSE to a spectacular victory in the “JAGGI VS NYPD” case. You have shown a rare grit and steadfast faith in asserting the moral supremacy of faith. Turban has been a symbol of honour and an emblem of human dignity in all ages and many cultures. For Sikhs it embodies national pride and spiritual inspiration.

Many thanks for letting us have a copy of the BROCHURE and CD – which are proof of your monumental patience and commitment. We hope to use the material for the journal, and for our YOUTH CAMPS. Incidentally, the January 2005 issue of *THE SIKH REVIEW* features an article, by a jurist, centered on The French Govts’ ban on Turban in Schools! The struggle must go on. Your determination will inspire the Sikhs in Europe to persuade a ‘civilized’ if adamant administration.

With profound regards,
Sincerely yours
SARAN SINGH

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Gurinder Kaur’s
“Bride & Prejudice”
(SR: June 2005)

Sir, - Recently the above film was shown in Perugia City’s Herevin ‘Pavone’ and other Italian Theatres. The 20 Million Dollar budget film is supposed to be about Amritsar – It was given the title “Matrimonial & Prejudice – Ossa,” dubbed in Punjabi as ‘Balle Balle from Amritsar to Los Angles.’ The admission fee was Lira 4 per head. The original version dubbed in Italian left the songs in tact, with Italian subtitles.

But what intrigued and irritated me the most, was the poster of the film; Taj Mahal on the right side of the couple Ash Rai and an American actor Martin Henderson and on his right sky scrappers from LA.

The film starts with a grand view of Amritsar (Golden Temple) and ends in Amritsar. But the story doesn’t go anywhere near Taj Mahal (Agra) or Bombay (Mumbai). Even on the back page of DVD, there is no mention of Amritsar!

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Documentary on Darbar Sahib: Adoration of Guru
RamDas ji

Sir, - Prof. Sandhu has explained the meaning of relevant Sabd in Ramkali ki Vaar by Rai Balwand Tatha Satai Doom Aakhi [SGGS: 968]. Translation of Guruvani by different authors do not always agree, nor does rendering reflect true meaning. The following comparison illustrates the variety of meaning.

- Max Arthur Macauliffe: "Hail ! hail Guru Ram Das ! God who created thee hath decorated thee. (Vol. II - Page 253) Complete are the miracles which the Creator Himself performed.";
- Manmohan Singh, (SGPC Publication - Volume 6, Pages 3178-3179) "Blessed, blessed is Guru Ram Dass. The Lord, who created thee; He alone has embellished thee.
Complete is thy miracle. The Creator Himself has installed thee on the throne.";
- Gurbachan Singh Makin: The Essence of Sri GGS - Volume IV, Page 1943) "Blessed and praiseworthy is the (next) Guru Ram Das who has been created and anointed for the Guruship by the Lord. O Guru! You have been bestowed with all the occult powers (magical powers), being an embodiment of the Lord, who has appeared in the form of the Lord-Greater.";
- According to *Shabdarth*, Pothi 3 (SGPC), it can be said that the Almighty God, the Creator, has showered His Bliss and Glorified/ Honoured Guru Ram Das.

GURMIT SINGH

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Documentary

Sir, - This is in reference to article of Mr Ramesh Seth [SR May 2005, p 52] who, while quoting from Vaar of Satta-Balwand [SGGS, p 968; line first] has given the meanings as " Blessed is Guru Ram Das; whoever seeks refuge in Him attains salvation". The meaning of this line in English translations of Aad Guru Granth Sahib by Gopal Singh and Gurbachan Singh Talib is reproduced.

Gopal Singh: O Blessed art Thou Guru Ram Das; for, He, Who Created Thee, also Embellished Thee.(7) Volume 3, p 925

Gurbachan Singh Talib: Blessed be Guru Ram Das, exalted by Him who created him.(7) Volume 3, p 1987

Prof. Sahib Singh, too, gives the same meaning in his translation in Sri Guru Granth Sahib Darpan vol.7, page 241

In my humble opinion, we must be careful in translating *Gurbani**. Only translations which refer to its source with its title, name of author and page be accepted. No doubt it may require more work and patience. But it will go a long way in promoting use of authentic translation/s, available in the libraries.

SARJIT SINGH SANDHU

Boise IDAHO, USA

* The author has since regretted the inadequacy.

- Ed. SR

What is in a Name?

Sir: This refers to Dr Jaswant Singh Sachdev's article [SR, May 2005] regarding First Name of Sikh children, born and brought up in the Diaspora. No doubt many factors, including religion, culture and social environment play significant role in the choice of first name which parents choose for their child in India and else where. However, religion has been the most dominant factor in Punjab, which is evident from historical records. Before Muslim rule, the names of people in Punjab were Ram Chand, Ram Charan, Ram Lal, etc. During Muslim rule the same people would choose names like Roshan Lal, Amir Chand, Khan Chand, etc. As soon as Sikhs rose to dominance in Punjab, the names of same people changed to Kuldip Chand, Mehar Chand, Gobind Ram, Nanak Chand, etc. Sikhs, too, followed in accepting names such as Iftikhar Singh, Ajaib Singh, Bakhshish Singh, Guriqbal Singh, Iqbal Singh, etc.

Dr Sachdev has not given any specific indication as to what kind of change he is proposing for Sikhs in USA. Many Sikhs, out of fashion or copying local people, are naming their children as Jason or Harry, in USA and Canada. Most of these people are from less educated groups, or ambitious to join politics as a profession. A Mayor in California is known as David Dhillon { it is not known whether he is a Sikh or a Christian. This social or acculturation process is not controlled by any religious sentiment or any effort by any religious denomination with the intention of conversion of an individual from Sikhism to Christianity.

Dr Sachdev has indicated that he is in favor of using 'Singh' and 'Kaur' as the fixed middle names for Sikh boys and girls. However, he has not touched the important point related to ID of an individual in any society. In 17th century AD, most governments of the day declared that every citizen must have a name consisting of Three Words. From British History one can easily find out the reason behind this Royal Decree.

Amongst Sikhs there is a group which is against use of third word related to Surname or Family Name. They claim that Guru Gobind Singh Ji "prohibited" the use of Family name. Sikh History does not provide any evidence about this decree. In fact, **Rehatname**, the book edited by Piara Singh Padam, goes against this decree. Moreover, the *swayyas* of Bhattas too provide evidence about the use of family names in Aad Guru Granth Sahib. I wish Dr Jaswant Singh Sachdev, who himself, like me, write Family name as a part of his name, would throw some light as to the validity of its use by Sikhs in the diaspora.

Prof. SARJIT SINGH SANDHU

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I have seen Prof. Sandhu's thought provoking and a critically positive response to my article relating to Sikh names (May issue of *The Sikh Review*). I agree that the Religion has been the most dominant factor in the choice of first name besides cultural and social environmental influences. However, this is not only true in Punjab, but in fact everywhere in the world. We are aware of the fact that many children born in Judeo Christian environments in the West have names influenced by their respective faiths.

My argument in the article in question supports what Mr. Sandhu has stated, albeit in a modified mode. All I am suggesting here is that our religion, fortunately, provides us with several avenues by which we could maintain our roots by holding upon simple names derivable from our Scriptures, History and Culture without causing unnecessary difficulties in pronunciation for the members of society in which we happen to live. For example, several such names quickly come to my mind such as “Hargun, Chirrag, Roshni, Karam, Manuk, Guneet, Puneet, Ajit, Abheet, and so on. Names that have more than 4 or 5 letters, or are too long and have a sequence of letters, that happen to be unnatural for western cultures are often misspelled and misinterpreted and cause unnecessary harrasment to the children in school. Moreover, parents and children alike tend to avoid the usage od such long names wherever and whenever it is possible. I do not believe that having simple names will make one a less or Sikh than the one who has a long, rather very long name.I am saying all this from my personal experience. In no way my intent here is to hurt any one’s feeling in any way, shape or form.

As for the three components of a name, Prof. Sandhu himself has mentioned the concerns and debate that accompany such discussions I would rather not get into it, as this was not the purpose of my initial essay. No one (including esteemed Mr. Sandhu can refute the fact, however, that word “Singh or Kaur”, (as the case might be,) has to be included for a person to be recognized as one belonging to Sikh Faith.

Seeking guidance from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji in selection of the first letter of first name, in my way of thinking, connects one better - and forever with our roots in Akal Purakh and Guru Granth Sahib Ji.

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PM: The Man of Integrity

Pavan Kumar Varma writes: The day before the India-Pak cricket match last April, the correspondence of the Financial Times called me to seek my reaction to the fact that organisers had issued as many VIP passes as tickets for the ordinary man. I told him he should not be surprised because Delhi is indeed full of VIPs.

I was delighted later to read that Prime Minister Man Mohan Singh at least does not think he is one. He paid for his ticket to the game, and, apparently wanted his aides to do the same.

(A Stephanian, Pavan Kumar is a senior Indian diplomat and presently minister of Culture and Director of the Nehru Centre in London).

