

Be-dawa - & Forgiveness by Guru Gobind Singh Ji

This refers to S. Gurmit Singh's letter (SR March 2005) regarding *Be-dawa*.

It is true most of the historical accounts state that the *Bedawa* was written and tendered to Guru Sahib at Anandpur. Considering the conditions under which Guru Sahib left that place, which was later plundered, it is questionable how this piece of paper survived. Maybe the all knowing Guru Ji had premonition about the coming events. But the discovery of *Bhat Vahis* has the story to this effect. In this respect *Saakhis* No. 91 and 92 are worth noting.

“ To begin with, Bhag Singh and other Sikhs who had just arrived, presented their condolences, and then said, “We, all the people of Majha, can get together and arrange an accord so that you can lead the rest of the life peacefully and we remain at your service.” Guru Ji, then, responded, “Who are you to get the reconciliation? Where had your ancestors gone during the time of the Fifth Guru Ji? Where were the Majhail Singhs during the time of 6th Guru Ji when the Emperor had interned him for many years in the Fort Gwalior? When 9th Guru Ji was taken to Delhi and martyred, none of you did utter even one word. Anandpur was under siege for many months, but you never approached. Why have you come now? Aren't you feeling ashamed?”

After listening to this reprimand of Guru Ji, Bhag Singh Jhabaliya pleaded, “*Ghareeb Niwaz*, if you are feeling like that then we cannot adhere to your Sikhi. We will rather go back.” Guru Ji again said, “Bhag Singh, we had not invited you. If you have come, you can give me in writing that the country of Majha is not retaining Sikhi.” Guru Ji asked Mann Singh to take out paper, pen and ink from the saddlebag. Man Singh acted accordingly.[90]”

This establishes that the *Be-dawa* was written and presented at Dina and it was quite in tact with Guru Ji when he met them after a few days; they indeed returned to seek martyrdom on the taunts of Mata Bhag Kaur and other ladies.

For full details, please refer to *Guru kian saakhian* compiled by Dr. Piara Singh Padam available with Singh Brothers, Amritsar.

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Miracle of Guruvani Prayer

Thanks for the confirmation of the miraculous cure of cancer of Mr. Vasu Bhardwaj. I wish I could meet that beloved of God. I also have experienced miracles in my life. God kept the base ready and wanted me only to pray for it. I prayed and got the job done. I am sure that without my prayers I would not have got the thing I wanted. But later on I learnt that every thing was pre-arranged.

Similarly, in Vasu's case He had got enough medicine poured in his body and God Himself made Vasu to listen to the Gurbani at the Harmandir Sahib. By listening the Gurbani the body yielded to the curative effects of the medicines which were already in the body. Everything was pre-arranged and pre-set by God. It is not to say that things will go on automatically and one need not pray. Prayer is definitely useful and full faith can bring wonderful results, though people may later learn that God had already set the things to happen that way. Prayer and faith are an imperative preconditions.

I would wish another patient of course may follow Mr. Vasu's foot steps and ask for God's grace. He will also be cured. Main thing is the faith and fervour with which one listens to the Gurbani.

If I knew Sardar Ramesh Singhji's email address I could contact him now itself. I am at Davis, California. Otherwise I shall get in touch with him after June when I shall be at

Bangalore. I do want to meet Mr. Vasu. I can know more from Sardar Ramesh Singhji.

Shivcharan Singh Dhesi (USA)

**We have learned that the text (SR February 2005) and the experience relates to Shri Vasu Bhardwaj who lives in Surat, Gujarat. One of the our readers, Sr. Ramesh Singh (C-131 Sonari West, Jamshedpur) verified the facts thru his son who works in Apollo Hospital in Surat. He confirms the miracle cure and all the documentation.

Editor - **SR**

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Wanted: More Institutes for Understanding Sikhism

This is in response to the suggestion (SR March 05) of Mr Paramjeet Singh, IRS, (Mumbai) to set up Institutes for Understanding Sikhism (Study of SGGS). You have intensioned about Calcutta Sikh Forum.

I had an opportunity to visit Calcutta and deliver a talk at this Forum. This Forum is doing wonderful job and I recommend that every town should have such Forums. I am of this opinion that one learns more in such forums, rather from any Giani in the Gurdwara. In Gurdwara one is not at liberty to ask questions or discuss details to enrich one's understanding.

Mr Paramjeet Singh is right that there are very few well-qualified Gianis in Gurdwaras. In these days Gianis are mostly employed to take care of regular rituals of the Gurdwara rather than imparting education to the Sangat. Most of the time in Gurdwara is given to Babas, Sants and professional Ragis whose intentions are how to extract more and more money from the pockets of the Sangat by telling unauthentic and irrelevant stories, often misinterpreting Gurbani to play upon the emotions of the Sangat.

Mr Paramjeet Singh has rightly emphasized the need for establishing "Institutes for Understanding Sikhism, like that set up by Prof D. S. Chahal in Canada." The Institute is running very successfully since its time of inauguration in 1999, the Tercentenary of the Khalsa - the most important even in the Sikh history. Four successful seminars were held from 2001 to 2004 to celebrate the Quadricentennial of Compilation of the Guru Granth Sahib and to discuss issues based on SGGS. The proceedings of all the seminars are available in print. Now the proceedings are also available on its Web Site:

Understanding Sikhism - The Research Journal

www.iuscanada.com <<http://www.iuscanada.com>>

Besides these proceedings all the articles published in all the issues of this Journal from 1999 to January 2005 are also available Online on the above Web site. Miscellaneous articles on special topics are also available on the Web site. Recent articles posted in this section are: Omkar, Misunderstood Word, Annotation by Guru Nanak; Same-sex Marriage; Nanakian Methodology; Sikhism - A Philosophy without Myths, etc.

Until such institutes are set up in every town, the IUS, although far away from India, is just ONE CLICK away on your computer. There are many articles based on well-documented research on various topics from Gurbani on this site. Anybody can reach the IUS at anytime for scientific and logical information on most of the topics from Gurbani. Particular questions are also answered by the IUS after consulting various experts in that particular field. The IUS is at your service for 24 hours a day and 7 days a week.

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Sikhism - A Sovereign Religion

Sir, - Under article 25 sub-clause (b) & explanation II of the Constitution of India, reference to Hindus is construed as including the Sikhs as well as Buddhist and Jains. For many years Sikhs have been demanding an amendment of this section so as to restore their independent and distinct identity as a sovereign religion.

A National Commission, headed by the former Chief Justice of India, Justice M.N. Venkatachaliah, was set up by the governments of India to review the working of the constitution. In its report submitted to the Vajpayee government, because of persistent demand and representations by the Sikhs, while dealing on the question of the 'Right of Freedom of Religion' and the issue of Article 25 diluting the identity of the Sikhs, the commission observed that the reference to Hindus construed as including a reference to Sikhs, etc. was inappropriate. The recommendation of the commission in this regard is as under:

The Commission, without going into the larger issue on which the contention is made, is of the opinion that the purpose of the representation would be served if explanation II to Article 25 is omitted and sub-clause (b) of clause (2) of this Article is reworded as follows:

'(b) providing for social welfare and reform or the throwing open of Hindu, Sikh, Jain or Buddhist religious institutions of a public character to all classes and sections of these religions.'

So far the recommendation of the commission to delete explanation II to Article 25 and sub-clause (b) of clause (2) of this Article reworded as suggested above in the report has not been done. The Sikh members of Parliament should now take up this matter with the government and get the necessary amendment in the constitution carried out in the Parliament at the earliest.

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An open letter to Vir Sanghvi

This is in reply to your article in *Hindustan Times* Sunday, 27th February, 2005, titled 'Free Speech' and the Sardarji Joke'. Your article raises the key issue of freedom of speech and expression conferred by the liberal state of each of its citizens. This freedom gets infringed as and when an enraged group/community expresses its displeasure and asks for censor of the warped sense of expression of the others.

Mr. Sanghvi, what you are implying is only a half-truth. This fact is that liberal democracies or bourgeoisie state confers a whole lot of rights to its citizens, one of them being the right of free speech and expression. These rights do not exist independent of the other rights. In other words, each right contributes in circumscribing the others. And therefore there is nothing called unlimited, or unfettered rights of man. Karl Popper's statement about one's freedom in a liberal democracy, that is, the movement of one's fist is limited by the position of one's neighbours' nose, imports not the physical position but sensitivity and sensibility of others as well.

That is why the right of free speech and expression is subject to many fetters. One of

them is that this right does not provide you license to besmirch others, launch a hate campaign against any community, and thereby disrupt public order, etc.

Secondly, as you might be knowing that the liberal democracy has to live with a contradiction. The contradiction that *banrheoisie* state does not confer rights only upon individuals but also on communities. Conferring rights on the communities is nothing but the extension of the same principle of democracy, which confers rights to the individuals. In the absence of community rights to keep its culture alive, democracy would turn into a Leviathan which would absorb all other communities into the majority mainstream. In such a situation democracy defeats and negates its own principles of equality and fraternity.

Thirdly, as you should be know constitutionalism does not only grant right to individuals and communities, but also to the state. The rights of state are the 'Cause of all causes' for the protection of individual and community rights. In the absence of the rights of the state, the very enjoyment of individual and community rights becomes an impossibility. It is in order to maintain order that the state intervenes and bans or censors certain books and films or any other medium of expression.

Therefore, what you are arguing might look correct apparently, but nonetheless your arguments remain as specious as ever, once one fathoms the unconscious. The Sikhs reaction to the movie '*Shabd*' should not be seen as an incidence of intolerance. Jokes on Sikh in different mass media are a concerted effort to malign the Sikh community and '*Shabd*' is another effort in a long series of malignment. The right answer to ridiculing the Sikhs cannot be known unless we dwell into the sociology of mass media of India. It has been observed that, since Independence, Indian mass media:- both print and electronic – dominated by the Brahmanical forces - have been concertedly trying to malign, besmirch, defame, belittle and ridicule all those communities, which do not share the 'Great Traditional' lores of the Brahmanical forces. After all, why is it that no other community finds space for ridicule as frequently as the Sikhs? There is no gainsaying the fact that the 'Sardarji' jokes are like any other ethnic jokes, as you say. But can you name those ethnic groups who are equally the targets of Indian mass media? It is this singling out of Sikhs for jokes which makes the filmmakers and writers' intentions suspect in the eyes of the Sikhs.

To conclude, one can only say that, for thriving of liberal democracy, i.e. for the right of speech and expression to be enjoyed, what is indispensable is order, which in turn hinges upon the 'balance of the rights'. It is in order to balance the rights of all and sundry that the institution of the censor becomes a 'categorical imperative' it is the discretion of the censor which prunes/trims or balances the discretion of individual writers and filmmakers. Hence what is required is discretion from both the sides. After all, you cannot clap with one hand.

Neelu Singh

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