

## **'The Second Partition' : Some observations on Review**

Thank you for your upbeat and gratifying comments in your review of *The Second Partition*. [SR Feb, 2008]

I read your review with great interest and would like to comment only on the point you make in the second-last paragraph: I consider India a 'militarized state' because of the billions it is spending on the most sophisticated weapons, whilst we well over 400 million of its people are malnourished; whilst it has the highest infant and maternal mortality rates in the world; even as hundreds of millions lack elementary medical cover, educational opportunities, housing and jobs.

Considering what India spends on arms purchases, here are one or two stark facts - of interest to your readers:

Whilst it spends 0.9 percent of its gross domestic product on the health sector (this is startlingly low even among developing countries), the US health expenditures last year were 16%.

Since the occurrence of 'type 2' diabetes in India is the highest in the world, and steadily rising, and it contributes to the increasing toll of cardiovascular diseases, informed studies suggest that, by 2020, nearly 60 percent of cardiac patients worldwide will be Indian!

As for nuclear power it has been proved totally impractical the capital cost, problems of nuclear waste disposal, perils of malfunctioning, etc.). For military purposes, nuclear bombs have not been dropped since the last two - on August 6 and 9, 1945, on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, to end World War II.

It is difficult to get worked up over the "vulnerable geopolitical context", with nations on India's rim like the Maldives, Sri Lanka, Burma, Bangladesh and Nepal. Even Pakistan, for that matter. With China, political negotiations and statesman-like skills are required. And more trade and commerce. But not a full-scale war with sophisticated weapons!

If the money India spends on arms is spent on its own people - including those on its distant borders - then a contented population will be a far more effective deterrent to a would-be aggressor.

**PATWANT SINGH**  
Amrita Shergil Marg  
New Delhi. 110003

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## **Let us Reclaim our youth**

We recently had an opportunity of watching – Hola-mohala organized by Gurdwara St. Nehchal Singh ji. in Yamuna Nagar (Haryana) relayed live on MH - (Shradha) channel. We also listened to Bibi Harpreet Kaur Ji, (SGPC)'s Pracharak, eloquent exposition of Sikh moral code - maryada.

We are blessed that Sri Guru Granth Sahib has a universal appeal, consisting as it does of Gurus' and Bhaktas' Bani - all in lyrical/musical poetry that enshrines basic truth.

We have also seen on TV the most respected Sikh personalities, in traditional glory in every popular channel [**ETC Punjabi, Alpha Punjabi & MH ONE**, which are popular around the world]. They have set a good example for of us and made us proud of being a Sikh.

But, at the end of the day, we feel sad and sorry, whenever we watch Punjabi folk or

pop singers, in turban but with beard & mustaches shamelessly trimmed. It gives us immense pain to see that. They are un-knowingly propagating the fake culture of anti-Sikh maryada. Our younger Sikh brothers and sisters get influenced by them very easily.

After the **1984** massacre, many a Sikh youth cropped his hair so as to be unrecognizable. This 'safety zone' become a waterloo for the community; it made them cowardly and shy. Similarly, most government employees in Punjab wear nominal turbans during office hours, and in the evening they go-out bare-headed.

If we visit a Gurudwara during Guru-purva, we will find only senior Sikh citizens wearing turbans, while most youngsters are either shaven, wearing a turban but having french-cut beard. Even educated and working couples, observing Gur-sikh maryada, have their children go about shaven. If we ask questions, or raise an objection, they say, *"it's a democratic state and every-one has the right to choose what they want, we can't force Sikh-maryada on them. Religion is one's personal affair, etc.* This is regrettable. We feel, once we have been born in the family of Sikhs, we are supposed to be loyal Sikhs - no question asked.

Now, a time has come to think and affirm basic rules for the Sikh community in general and the Sikh youth, in particular. We have highly educated Sikhs working in India and abroad who can come forward and discuss, debate and come to a consensus framework of Sikh Maryada, with the due permission of SGPC and senior Sikh community heads.

We request all our Sikh Sisters & Bothers of the world to come forward, think why they were born in the Sikh family at the first place, we have a mission to complete, which our Guru Sahibans have defined for us. We have a very rich heritage of Sikh Dharma, which is just 300 years old, very young but at the same time very mature and fully capable of solving all the problems of humanity with ease and without any difficulty.

We can claim with full confidence - that Sikhs are lucky to have - as our guide - **"Hazir-Nazir" Shri Guru Granth Sahib**. We sincerely hope that respected **Bibi Harpreet Kaur** (along with her team-members) can visit every village, city and towns in India, so that she can guide the young in India and abroad.

**GURCHARAN SINGH MUKKER**

Email:gurcharanmukker@rediffmail.com

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## **'Mala' as Aid to Simran**

Sir,

This has reference to the article by legendary Sardar Khushwant Singh Ji [*The Sikh Review* March 2008 (page-65)] regarding the significance of Mala or Rosary. The author has raised a profound question in utter simplicity: of how the Holy number 108 came to be part of Jap-mala. To his surprise no final answer was available, but illustrations and conventions cropped up. I too have looked for an answer in our Holy scriptures. A longer essay will follow.

Meanwhile, the affirmation by Bhai Kahan Singh seems only partly true because he says that the figure 108 might have been arrived at by multiplying the 12 signs of the Zodiac with Sun's nine planets.

I consider the Vedic rationale to be the most consistent with fundamental laws of the universe. The other faiths like Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism and Sikhism

might have borrowed and built as per their own ease and convenience but it still smells of Vedic language.

It all started with Jyotish Shatras with 108 names of Sun God and the names of Lord Vishnu and Shiva and the number of breaths that we inhale during the day time (10800). The number 108 is a reference frame. It is symbolic of a bigger picture that of humility. We always try to monitor our devotion to God through numbers of Malas that we perform in the name of God.

There is no place for Mala in Sikhism. Each and every breath is important as far as chanting the name of Waheguru is concerned.

Gurbani states: [SGGS of 199] When one is not sure about the truth, then it is better to remain silent. That is why nobody has tried to answer his question.

**JAGDEV SINGH**

Dept of Atomic Energy, Kolkata  
Email:jagdev3215@yahoo.co.in

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### **Unseemly Debate**

I have seen an uncalled for correspondence (SR: March 2008) in your esteemed magazine regarding Mr. Shekhar Gupta, Editor, *Indian Express*. Neither he has desired nor he has asked for any honour or gift from the Sikh community. It was a suggestion of a prominent Sikh who knew his role during the days when Army was having control of Punjab. There was no need to start a debate about Mr. Gupta. He holds a position of esteem in the Indian media, and people appreciate his views and opinions. ***The Sikh Review*** should not allow its columns for such purposes. We should not unnecessarily create enemies in the media. We have done little to have good relations with all those who are in TV channels and print media. Good public relations is our urgent need.

For your information, I may add that recently wedding of Sekhar Gupta's daughter took place in Delhi with a boy of his choice from another Hindu family. The wedding was solemnized as Anand Karaj because because the girl insisted that she wants to be married according to the Sikh rites.

**TARLOCHAN SINGH, MP**

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My Dear Tarlochan Singh Ji,

Kindly refer to your letter dated March 17, 2008 reg. 'unseemly' debate involving Mr. Shekha Gupta, vide SR Readers' Forum (Oct. '07, Jan. '08 and March 08 issues).

We would not have taken note of the matter but for the fact that Dr. Kuldip Singh, FRCS of Chandigarh and Sr. Patwant Singh of New Delhi - both our long time members - narrated their respective viewpoints.

In view of your letter, taking umbrage, we shall terminate this correspondence, forthwith. Thank you for your role as a moderator and a statesman.

**SARAN SINGH**

Editor, ***The Sikh Review***

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### **Focus in Gurbani/Simran**

While reciting Gurbani (or doing Simran) the mind is alert and yet the devotee is relaxed without any tension. This is endorsed by science: A circular object with pointed (nail tip type) top and bottom; when put in motion, the tip appears to be stationary while the

object is in top spin.

During prayer (with the help of Gutka), one can go through Gurbani with mind fully concentrated - and yet feeling the bliss because the reader fully understands the meaning of Gurbani which he is reciting.

**Retd. Lt. Col. GURCHARAN SINGH**

# 1553, Sector 36-D

Chandigarh. 160036.

