

Goal of Religion

Sir, - Achievement of spirituality or discovery of our true self is the goal of all religions. So is the case with Sikhism. However, the common man has no idea about this. Many scholars think that eastern religions lay more emphasis on spirituality than western religions. People carry on living with their own myths and illusions. Priests and preachers are unable to guide. In study circles and religious discussions here, American participants raise many questions.

What is spirituality? How is it defined? Are there any pre-requisites for achieving spirituality? Can this be achieved in isolation? At what stage in life man should start seeking spirituality? Can spirituality be achieved without renouncing worldly life? Can man achieve spirituality himself without the help of religion and without the guidance of a teacher/guru?

Can spirituality be achieved if man's basic needs of food, clothing, shelter, education and health care remain unfulfilled? Are there different ways of achieving spirituality by rich and poor people living in urban and rural areas? How homeless, jobless and people living below poverty level achieve spirituality? In what way achievement of spirituality helps in improving quality of life? How man can achieve spirituality when life is threatened with dangers of pollution, wars, ethnic and communal fighting? Are religious practices such as yoga, fasting, prayers, meditation and such other practices help in achievement of spirituality? How education helps to achieve this?

The main problem is to help common man to achieve spirituality. How this can best be done in present day life when man has to struggle for his survival under stress, strain and tension? Sikhism has a treasure of wisdom in Gurbani. I request Sikh scholars to help and clarify this important issue explaining the part played by *Gurbani* in achieving spirituality.

HARDYAL SINGH PAUL

13500 Ridge Road, #206

North Royalton

Cleveland, Ohio 44133, USA

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Emergence of the Holy Name "Waheguru"

Sir, - In reply to the observations made by Sardar Amrik Singh Dahul (U.K.) in the Members' Forum (*The Sikh Review*, Sept. 2002) it is true that "Waheguru" as the name of God is hailed by the Bhatt poet Gayand and the bard Mathura, (both of the sixteenth century) in their verses which are enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, like many other "attributive" names of the Supreme Lord, to which a reference is made by me in the same article on page 6 (SR - April, 2002): "to

these Names of God more Names have been added by the Sikh Gurus, such as *Piara, Pritam, Mitter, Sajjan, Satguru, Waheguru, etc.*"

However, "Waheguru" as the Name of God assumed special significance when it was included in the salutation - "Waheguruji ka Khalsa, Waheguruji ki fateh" - by the Tenth Guru, Guru Gobind Singhji on the formation of the Khalsa, and thereafter it has become the most favoured and respected Name of God for the Sikhs.

R.M. CHOPRA

678, Marshall House

25, Strand Road, Kolkata 700 001

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Ridiculous Hindi Films

Sir, - I wonder if you have seen the recent Bollywood film "*Mujh-se-Dosti-Karoge*" - film conforms to the usual comedy formula except that it has presented the Sikhs as latter day Hindus wearing turban(s) and long hair. It is simply comic - if not stupid - to see the Sikh men, including the hero, wearing turbans and beards, singing "*Mata's Bhetas*"; and then the hero gets married at ceremony, complete with *havan* and all rituals that go with it.

This, I think, is silly but also alarming. Sikhs want to have friendly relations with Hindus - as they do with people from other religions, e.g. Muslims, Christians. But Sikhs are not a part of Hindu community. If we don't nip the evil in the bud, the Hindu chauvinism will continue to use the powerful media to convince Sikhs that they are 'Hindus'. I think all self-respecting Sikhs should raise their voice against such concealed weapons to strike at the roots of a beautiful sapling.

SURJIT KAUR

7320 Lee Highway #103

Falls Church, VA 22046, USA

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Delhi Modern School: A Protest

Dear Principal: This refers to the deplorable incident at Modern School premises on Sept. 20, when several of your students waylaid 15-year old Jaidev Singh of Air Force Bal Bharati School and forcibly sheared his hair, as reported by *Times of India*, dated Tuesday, Sept. 24, 2002.

I wonder what action has been taken against the offenders. The Modern School has a long tradition of character-building and tolerance even as it counts many distinguished Sikhs among its Alumni who have contributed to India's culture of many-splendoured faiths.

In order to assuage the sentiments of all citizens of Delhi and the rest of India, I trust you will go public with whatever action the school takes to reassure the younger generation of Sikhs that *Kesh*, the hair, is God's gift integral to human body (and spirit), and it does not cease to sprout again and again simply because most people choose to cut it every now and then. The Sikhs are enjoined to preserve and cherish this gift.

SARAN SINGH

