

Thank God for *The Sikh Review*

Sir, - To my great delight I have received and read the July issue of *The Sikh Review*. The Guest editorial about Sikh youth is timely and inspiring. In Greater Vancouver several Gurmat Camps for youth had already been held and few more are being organized in August at various places.

Gurmit Singh's article 'Global Sikhism' is highly informative. Dr. Sukhbir Singh Kapoor's article throws light on "Marriage, Infidelity and Divorce" which seems very much a trend in these countries. I have attended many such cases where mostly Indo-Canadians are involved.

The article "With God's Love, from Brazil" by Claudia Gaspar Soares is thought provoking for everybody, particularly, the S.G.P.C. Why not create a centre of Guru Nanak's universal religion there? I have always wished to go to Brazil, if not upto the southern-most tip of land in Chile. But I am not getting a friend to accompany me. When I visited Kanyakumari, the southern most tip of Indian soil and a district of Tamil Nadu state, I visited the most beautiful Vivekananda Rock Memorial built on solitary rock amid the roaring ocean, about half a mile away from the coast. It has a library having rare books on all subjects, including the Sikh religion. There is another rock in the ocean about 500 yards to the west of this Memorial. I have been suggesting why not to open Guru Nanak Memorial on this rock, as Guru Nanak crossed the ocean to Sri Lanka from this area. Actually all articles are sparkling gems on the pages of *The Sikh Review*. I thank you for the efforts you are making for *The Sikh Review*.

GIAN SINGH KOTLI

Tel/Fax 604 321-6351

Email: giankotli@hotmail.com

* * * * *

Never too late!

Sir, - This pertains to Dr. Kharak Singh's article: Unite or Perish - A call for the Panthic Unity (SR, July 2002).

We must assess as to what the intelligentsia has contributed for the betterment of the Panth during last 55 years, including pre and post "Operation Blue Star" era.

Let us take the example of the tallest diplomat we ever had, S. Kapur Singh, I.C.S. Did he dilute or clear the apprehensions of the Central Government as for labelling the Sikhs as Criminal Tribe? Instead, he took such a route which brought a lot of suffering to himself and the Panth. Was that labelling the result of the bloodshed which took place in Punjab during partition of the country? Yet there have been Sikh Union ministers, bureaucrats and high ranking defence officials from those times.

Bhagat Puran Singh collected money from the *Sangat* and achieved what was considered impossible. Guru expects some concrete results from the intelligentsia.

A large section of Hindu society used to be closely glued to Sikhism in Punjab, whom we have lost forever, only because our leadership never bothered to take them into confidence for various Sikh missions. Guru Nanak was the master professional in public relations, as he took God's mission beyond Punjab. Unlike our Gurus, now Sikh religion is for the rich, by the rich and of the rich. "*Kichh lahe upper ghaliaye*". Even now a lot can be done to enrich our heritage.

GURDAYAL SINGH 'Apradhi'

538 Sector 16A

Faridabad 121 002

Haryana

* * * * *

Crime against Women

Sir, - A recent *Dispatch* article, "Rapes left unpunished after rioting in India," highlighted the failure of the police to act against the culprits who raped hundreds of Muslim women in the state of Gujarat in recent months. The abhorrent crime of rape has been employed against Muslim, Sikh and Christian communities in India "to teach minorities a lesson."

A citizens commission report stated: "The women were herded together into one room. Some of them ran away but were pursued to the nearby nallah (creek) where they were raped. Their shrieks and cries for help fell on deaf ears."

Surprisingly, the above horrific report is not from the recent incidents in Gujarat but from more than 17 years ago, when hundreds of Sikh women were publicly raped in November 1984 in the capital of India. Even today, the culprits remain at large because the police say that specific persons can't be identified among murderous mobs.

Torture and rape of Sikh women detainees in Punjab was a regular feature of the India state police and federal security forces in the 1980s and 1990s. In Kashmir, the Indian security forces are reported to be raping Muslim women as form of collective punishment and humiliation for the Muslim community.

In September 1998, two Christian nuns were gang-raped by a local mob in Madhya Pradesh. Many accused have never been brought to justice.

Why does India tolerate the continued use of rape as a tool for the persecution of the religious minorities? Because the world's most populous democracy views the brutal rape of women as an effective tool to humiliate and 'show minority faiths their place'.

(Dr.) TARUNJIT S. BUTALIA

Secretary, Sikh Educational & Religious Foundation.

P O Box 1553, Dublin,

Ohio, USA.

Email: butalia.1@osu.edu

* * * * *

Dya Singh's Heavenly Kirtan

Sir, - It is shame that some Gurdwaras do not allow Dya Singh to do *keertan*. He sings Gurbani, while his non-Sikh musicians only play instruments. I guess the traditional *Ragis* and *Bhais* feel threatened by Dya Singh's popularity with the youth. His CD on *Amritvela Bani* is worth experiencing. The CDs for little children are really good too.

PARMINDER KAUR DHILLON

Email: pkdhillon@aol.com

* * * * *

Hate Crime in USA

Sir, - I have been in the USA for the past two years. When you see the ten-o'clock news on TV, you will be shocked to know that, leave alone world-news, they hardly devote any time to international news. Their news hour is filled with news about houses burning; Clinton's dog's death; priests fondling children; kids kidnapping; long pending cases which span long explanations over weeks. For proper news, we have to depend on BBC, CNN (international only) and, of course, Zee News.

In fact 99.9% of the America people have never heard of Sikh community. These people are so ignorant that ask them what constitutes the world and they will answer back - United States!

Hate crimes against Sikhs did not start after 9-11; it started since 1979 when Americans were made hostages by Khomeni in Iran. In reality hate is not against Sikhs it is only mistaken ID. The Americans who know about Sikhism are very helpful to Sikhs. Only thing we have to focus on is to teach Americans the difference between Muslims and Sikhs and we can and will do it with the grace of Guru Nanak Dev ji.

SAROSH SIPAHI

* * * * *

Justice for Sikh Army "Protestors" of 1984: Minority Commission's Plea

Dear Shri Fernandes,

Due to the trauma triggered by attack on Golden Temple Amritsar by Indian Army in 1984, many Sikh army men left their barracks and left for Amritsar. Some were shot dead as deserters. Most of them who were arrested and sentenced by Court Martial are lodged in several jails. It has been reported to this Commission that these Sikh army men have been denied normal remissions in jail term for good behaviour. They are serving life sentence whereas the convicts are released after 10 years. Further, the jail authorities are treating them more harshly than civil prisoners.

It has further been reported that undertrial Sikh army men are not given the benefits pending final judgements. Normally it takes more than two years for pronouncement of judgment, and these army men have not been given that benefit of two years remission in their sentences. Similar is the case of giving these convicts the facilities of going on parole, which is normal in all jails of the country. The Sikh servicemen are required to get a "special certificate" from the police and a 'NOC' before going on parole.

I request that such discrimination be stopped and the prisoners given the same facilities which are available to other convicts. The army authorities may write to all the state government not to discriminate against them.

TARLOCHAN SINGH

Vice Chairman

National Commission for Minorities

New Delhi. 110 003

* * * * *

Europe denied TV relay of Gurbani Kirtan

Sir, - I wonder if anyone in SGPC or UK Sikh bodies care to monitor the satellite TV and the relay of Gurbani Kirtan. For a few weeks we, in Italy, had the rare *ruhâni* pleasure of watching LIVE telecast from Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar thanks to *Gurbani Sagar* programme of ETC TV. It was only meant for UK subscribers and the existing three channels and Zee Alpha TV (Punjabi), the 4th channel demand \$ 3.99 more!

But for us here in Europe, we have only two Zee TV/Zee Cinema through 'Eutalsat/Hot Bird-3' A Belgakon Communication's system.

Now, since mid-August 2002, there is no relay of *Gurbani*, on Zee TV nor no Punjab programmes, or Punjabi "news from Chandigarh" on Zee Cinema. All this will be on Zee Alpha TV (Punjabi), since 4th Zee Newtwork Channel is only for the UK subscribers! We in Europe who pay yearly Euros - 399 can't have any more of *Gurbani kirtan* or other Punjabi programmes, not even on Wednesdays/Thursdays on Zee Cinema.

While UK has the largest Punjabi population, we (European viewers) of *Gurbani* & Punjabi News are deprived of *Gurbani kirtan* on ETC/Zee TV programmes.

Maybe *The Sikh Review* can persuade SGPC to intervene for us?

AMARJIT SINGH TAJ

Via Giacomo Puccini, 129

06077 Ponte Felcino (Perugia)

Italy

