

Guideposts for Youth

For quite some time I have been on the look out for a person who is good at mass communications and also is a devout Sikh, I think my search ended when I read your article "S.G.G.S. a guide post for Human Integration" in **The Sikh Review** of July 06.

The reason for my anxiety is the question on every one's mind, i.e. what are our youngsters headed for and naturally what can be done about it.

Every member of a Gurdwara committee in the land, every Granthi Sahib, every Sikh with an iota of Sikhism left in him is today worried about the pace of increasing apostasy among the youth in our rural and our urban population in Punjab and elsewhere. If you look back, you will be able to see that the rise of apostasy has conceded with the increase in the numbers of Deras and their Babas, and the increasing exposure of the kids to stimulating world wide programs on the idiot box.

One wonders as to what has led to this curse in our short life of comparative peace and prosperity, a period of rising of Sikh institutions like Chief Khalsa Dewan, Singh Sabhas, SGPC, etc, since 1925.

Well in my humble opinion the causes for the rising apostasy are as under:

- a. The British policy of divide and rule in their last days.
- b. The adverse reaction of the Brahmins to the route of their VARUN theory due to the *Chardi Kala* of the Khalsa Panth, instead of decreasing with time the intensity of reaction has increased many folds, resulting in the rise of Arya Samaj in Punjab and ultimately leading to the Sikhs being branded as CRIMINAL TRIBES (Sachi Sakhi by S. Kapur Singh I.C.S.). Ironically terrorism in Punjab was goaded by its own police force and some misguided and misused people who responded to divide and rule policy of the govt. in power.

The Brahmins are worried that they shall be deprived of their livelihood and sustenance and power if the Khalsa thinking is adopted by the people on a large scale.

Basically, the govt. functions through the Brahmin lobby (57% of the top posts in India are being held by the Brahmins whereas their population is only about 4%) because of their intellect and intrigue. They have reduced our strength in the armed forces and sponsored the Rashtrya Sikh Sangat to back-stab us whenever a chance arises. They have managed RIOTS in Punjab. The Blue Star incident and the gruesome Ghalughara of the twentieth century when thousands of people were mercilessly murdered just because they happened to be SIKHS. Not a single person has been punished for the same even after half a dozen commissions of enquiry.

The result is that young parents who today have young children, have been adversely affected by fear and intimidation and have given to thinking of life in brahminical terms and to say that Sikhs and Hindus are the same and come from the same stock and should be counted among Hindus. It is only recently that our separate identity has been reaffirmed by law. (Sikh Review April 2005, Page 66).

In parenting the most important thing to ensure good children is for the parents to set a good example. For reasons outlined above our young and middle aged parents have unfortunately not been able to do, thus resulting in wholesale apostasy.

Next we come to the contribution of the Gurdwaras for the decline of Sikhi in Sikhs. Mostly the managing committees are elected by the votes garnered by every thing expect suitability for the job. We know that there are many committee members who may be amritdharis but hardly are they regular in their *nitnem*, and what is the percentage of the *nitnemis* who care to know as to what they are reciting. Who is bothered about the effect

their evening neat peg or on the rocks has on their kids. They don't understand the meaning of what they recite twice a day. The granthis are sailing in the same boat. People like me who can't write their names in gurmukhi often are appointed granthis in most places. Their only qualification is that they are "*Penthi Akhri*" literate. They hardly know anything about the grammar of the SGGS, or the philosophy of the SGGS or the meaning of the text and they are supposed to lead us towards "JYOTI JOT MILLI SAMPOORAN THIA RAM" (SGGS page 846). They don't like the kids asking them any questions because poor chaps they are not capable sometimes of even understanding the question leave aside answering it.

The kids in Gurdwara service are usually encouraged to handle *Jorahs*, do manual or sometimes what we call menial work only.

Inspite of the fact that some youngsters are well educated (not just qualified) they are not allowed to participate in the decision making processes of the Gurdwara. The Kids, observing democracy all around (though sometimes sham democracy) want to participate in the making of decisions they are expected to obey, and when they can't do it, the disgust for the system is natural and obvious.

Your see you can't educate your kids and then ask them not to think.

So what I have been thinking is that if only we could survey the youth in the schools and colleges as to what kind of activities they would like to see in the gurdwaras and other Sikh religious institutions. In my humble opinion a survey of the institutions affiliated to your University could give us statistically reliable results. Anyway you are the best judge of these nitty gritty details of the proposal.

Thus we will be able to know the mind of our young people. The survey should be done scientifically and in a very professional manner by sincere and qualified people like yourself or some dedicated institution. We will thus have a fair idea of what we want to see being done in our Gurdwaras and other institutions.

Once we have finalised the list of youth requirements which are feasible we can start working on enlightening our Gurdwaras and the public at large.

The enlightening campaign will have to be sustained over a few years before we can get Gurdwaras to respond suitably by coming out with customized programs with our youngsters kept in mind and managements to respond to and change the mind set of our youngsters. I strongly feel that if our youngsters are going astray we are squarely to be blamed.

If only you could do the spade work then we should be able to garner support from the two or three Gurmat Colleges and Guru Gobind Singh study circles in Punjab and elsewhere for the holy task.

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Canada Journal: The Gursikh

The Management of the Gursikh Sabha Canada (Scarborough Gurdwara) is really grateful for your letter appreciating our efforts for the publication of "**The Gursikh**" Monthly Magazine. As a matter of fact this achievement has only been possible due to the blessings of Satguru and guidance/support of our friends like you.

We are going to give wide publicity to your letter in our own Magazine as well as in some other Punjabi Newspapers. We are requesting the Sikh masses to acquire its copy every month, read it themselves and pass it on to their children. In addition, we are also

encouraging them to subscribe towards “*The Sikh Review*” monthly English Magazine, as its subscription rates are very reasonable considering the wealth of information that every ‘Sikh Review’ issue carries about Sikhism.

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A Matter of Calories

The manner in which you have advocated vegetarianism, supported by holy hymns, is indeed interesting. Avoid meat and rely more on vegetables. Food is essential for living and survival. However, the Parsees even today, follow the old custom of leaving their dead bodies on a high tower or at great heights, for the birds and the bees to eat them, as their food, for survival. However the old times have gone, except for odd trace of old customs. Let us talk of the present.

Scientifically, it is the amount of calories intake through a balanced diet that a body needs for healthy living. Calories are related to one’s age, height, weight and the physical exertion. Varying from person to person. It is immaterial, whether these calories come from a vegetarian or non-vegetarian diet. It is a personal choice as you commented at the end.

No one will dispute, to go beyond our desires and to live a simple life, quoting Guru Nanak. Desires vary from individual to individual and the conception of simple life is not one unified code. Here we have to distinguish between materialistic and spiritualistic simplicity. Guru Nanak has combined both, in the shape of body survival through eating something and achieving NIRVANA through BHAGTI at home. No need to go to jungles for prayers.

This editorial is a commendable effort, to give a modern touch to an old conception. Congratulations.

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The Vegetarian Cult ?

Sir: The August month’s editorial by S. Dimpy Gurvinder Singh, “Compassion and Sensitivity towards all living Beings is the essence of spirituality” was difficult to digest as an editorial of *The Sikh Review*.

The views in the article seemed rather narrow minded since *The Sikh Review* is a universal magazine read by people of different religions.

Evidently, the editorial represents a personal view of the Associate Editor and not the views of *The Sikh Review*. Kindly clarify. Are Muslims, Christians and other meat-eating communities not spiritual? Do only vegetarians have this monopoly?

It pains me to point out that even the meaning of the “quotes” from Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji have been used in support without understanding the essence of the entire shabad.

The first reference ਇਕਿ ਮਾਸਗਾਰੀ ਇਕਿ ਤ੍ਰਿਣੁ ਖਾਹਿ ॥ ਇਕਨਾ ਛਤੀਹ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਪਾਹਿ ॥ ਇਕਿ ਮਿਟੀਆ ਮਹਿ ਮਿਟੀਆ

ਖਾਹਿ ॥ [SGGS: 144] When the full *shabad* is read, it clearly indicates: **firstly**, that different type of food is eaten by different people, for some “Yoga”, and for others *Naam* is “food.” But those who have trust in God are never let down.

The third ref. shabad, ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥ ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥....

[SGGS: 16] when the four Rahaos are read with care, indicate that word ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ means ‘eating more than required’ (excess) and does not mean any “other food”.

Guru Nanak’s shabad ਮਾਸੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਝਗੜੇ ਗਿਆਨੁ ਧਿਆਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਣੈ ॥ ਕਉਣੁ ਮਾਸੁ ਕਉਣੁ ਸਾਗੁ ਕਹਾਵੈ ਕਿਸੁ ਮਹਿ ਪਾਪ ਸਮਾਣੇ ॥”...[SGGS: 1289] rightly resolves this issue: ਏਤੇ ਰਸ means delicacies and not non-veg.

Such articles can be controversial as an editorial.

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N.B. - We broadly agree with Sr. Jasmit Singh’s viewpoint.

- Ed. SR

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“Dasam Granth” & its Historicity

Prof. Chhanda Chatterjee (SR: July 2006) mentions on page 20 that “Guru Gobind Singh at Ponta Sahib..... “atlast came out with Classic: The Dasam Granath of the Tenth Guru which can be called a treatise on the art of goverance in the use of Weapons.” This is not correct historically.

It is agreed among almost all scholars of Sikhism that “Dasam Granth” or (anything like this) did not exist up to the time of death of Guru Gobind Singh ji. Some 17 years *after* the death of Guru Gobind Singh ji an anthology was compiled by Bhai Mani Singh ji, which was named “*Bachitter Natak*”. The existing edition of that compilation is now called “*Dasam Granth*”. Most scholars - and even the SGPC agree that all the writing in it are not of Guru Gobind Singh ji, but mostly contain the writings of other court poets. About 15 years ago SGPC agreed to organise a committee of learned scholars to sort out these writings to separate gold from chaff. So far they have not brought out any “authorized version”.

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