

SGPC Website on Sikhs

Sir: It is very commendable that SGPC has finally decided to get its act together and put together a good usable, informative website on Sikhs, "with 'Live' audio from Sri Harmandir Sahib to enable Sikh Sangat, around the world, to listen to live *Kirtan*."

Permit me, in this context, basic English mistakes in the contents, the grammar and in the usage of incorrect sentences on the site. A few examples are given below:

1. On 'Ten Gurus' page: it is written "Forth" instead of "Fourth".
2. At Guru Ram Das Ji's page: The tense used in sentences is inconsistent. In para, 1, there is a sentence "He spends five year ..." whereas, based on the tense, it should be "He spent five years ..."
3. In Guru Hargobind Sahib Ji's page: third para, second line ends: "... Sikhs to take part in the military training and marshal arts." It should be 'martial' and not 'marshal'!

The Sikh religion has always put great emphasis on education, and the SGPC site, figuring such minor grammatical/spelling mistakes gives a poor impression, I suggest a thorough editing/review of the contents, to fix these mistakes urgently. This will make a big impact on the minds of people in the Western world who may wish to refer to this site to learn about Sikhism. I shall be happy to organize this seva subject to your approval.

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Competing Jathedars?

Sir: A piquant situation had arisen outside the Akal Takht last month, when SGPC task force and hardliners roughed up Jathedar Giani Iqbal Singh of Takht Patna Sahib and did not allow him to attend the meeting of the Sikh clergy.

The local Akal Takht maintains that it has the sole right to resolve the common Panthic matters. Other four Takhts can take up only regional issues. Sangat should not raise any controversy over hymns of the Dasam Granth.

The very notion of five takhts, based on Punj Piaras, of Guru Gobind Singh sounds very democratic and well ahead of those times, when autocracy was the order of the day.

Five Jathedars standing for five votes could unite the sentiments of the present day Sikh community. The majority can win, in keeping with our modern day conception.

Dasam Granth should be not be challenged as such. However the Punj Piaras of Guru Gobind Singh, too, point out to community right, to take up the matters, for the benefit of the Sangat. I am not mixing up the moral turpitude with religious philosophy. The charge of bigamy against the Jathedar Iqbal Singh is a separate issue. Let the law of the land take its own course. To place an undeclared ban on the entry of Giani Iqbal Singh, in the meetings of Akal Takht, is not on. It sounds like a monarch of the earlier historical times, imposing decisions. The times have changed. Keep him out, through democratic norms through majority opinion and feeling. Vote him out and not push him out, with physical force!

A split force situation cannot benefit the Sikh community in any manner or form. The division can be only detrimental to the Sikh community, as well as the nation.

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Conversation on Conversion

In SR May 2008, I read the article: "Are Sikhs being targeted for Conversion" under Dynamics. It confirmed to me what I had suspected all along. I have been thinking on this issue since my personal encounter and after reading the article in the May issue I have coalesced my thoughts and put them on the piece of paper.

The issues really bothered me were related to guaranteed salvation, and resurrection in heaven, no questions asked only with acceptance of Jesus as the savior. However when I heard about book by Dr. Dallas Willard titled "The Divine Conspiracy", read portions of it, the issues which I was struggling with became clear. I want to share my findings and thoughts with the readers of **The Sikh Review** and Sikhs in general so that we the believers on the path shown by Gurus can be watching out for this onslaught. If this writing helped even a single individual then it will be well worth it.

Let us all work together with the guidance of Satguru, save the nursery of Sikhism in its heartland Punjab and the hinterlands around the world.

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I am not surprised. In 1976 I attended a interfaith meeting, most of them were Christian Pastors. They were interested in knowing about the Sikh Religion. I happened to glance through the set of papers in front of the pastor sitting next to me. He had a full lesson plan about Sikhism, how to become friends with the Sikhs, how not to belittle their belief system, how to start socializing with them and over this time period how to introduce them to the Gospel. **Christian missionaries have never given up, members of the royal family of Kapurthala converted a long time ago.** It is becoming easier to convert people now. With many Sikhs running after sants and babas, Jesus is coming to them as another Satguru. Our own Sikh missionaries are so busy arguing with each other. **There is no concerted effort to preach and promote Sikhism.** Whenever a vacuum is created there will be rush to fill up the empty space. Christians are only availing of an opportunity to fill that space, can we blame them? Punjab is fertile ground for conversions, one can see churches springing up all over. Most missionaries are Sikh converts to Christianity, who are moving back from Canada or other foreign lands. "*Ghar ka bhedi lanka dhayee*".

PARMINDER KAUR

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A Wake-up Call

I accidentally found about 20 copies of **Sikh Review** (pertaining to the years 2003 to 2007) in a Durham Gurdwara N.C. and read almost all the Articles so well written by eminent scholars and theologians. The approach of all the intellectuals is instructive and constructive.

The articles are informative, educative and enlightening. **The Sikh Review** is doing a commendable job, whereas the Panth is facing big challenges - with attacks from all sides. **The Sikh Review** is projecting the Divine message of divine Gurus in a scientific way. It covers all aspects: spiritual, moral, social, cultural, political and educational. The dire need

of the time is to give a practical shape to the ideas which our scholars are projecting.

It is imperative that following points needs are considered, with the sense of high urgency:

1. How to revive Sikhism in Punjab? The new generation is drifting away from the mainstream. In case of education, economy, social life and religious values, etc. Punjab has lagged behind. Population growth in comparison with other communities has declined. Crime is rising and drug addiction is increasing. Politicians are exploiting the common masses - to grind their own axes. Lions seems to be in sound sleep, so the Jackals have a free run. A storm is blowing away our house, built by enormous sacrifices.
2. Let us also uplift Sikligarhs, Lobanas, Vanjaras and Satnameese to decent living.
3. Let SGPC install a Sikh T.V. channel. Sikh artists should stop projecting a distorted picture. The importance of T. V. channel is known to everybody, but no one is coming forward for this noble cause.

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Sikh Affairs in Indian Parliament

It was a pleasure to read the speech in Parliament by Sr. Tarlochan Singh, MP. It is polite, but firm. It is an eye-opener for those who did not know about commitment made by PM and the slithering efforts made by the top brass to tone down these commitments.

One small correction: at page 48, name 'Bradshaw' should read George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950).

Can national media publish this exposition?

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SGGS: Gift of Divine Music

I recall my short meeting with Sr. Kultar Singh in the Fremont Gurdwara, and hearing his wonderful '*vyakhia*' of the Shabad - '*Jap man Nar-Hare Nar-Har Swami....*' from '*Raag Sarang*'. He expertly explained the meaning of '*Pad-Tal*', *the changing Rythem and Tal, of Asthai and Antras*. I was so inspired that I remembered my own days, around 1998, when I was doing the *sewa* of setting the 'Meditation Page' of *The Sikh Review*. It was my effort to give explanation of the specific Raag in which the Shabad was enshrined.

Sr. Kultar Singh's '*vyakhia*', appealed to my mind when he said that '*Dhur ki Bani*', first descended in the form of *keertan*, in specific *raags*, later inscribed in holy Guru Granth. It is important that the ambience of the *raag* should be created first before any hymn is sung.

Accordingly, when I met Kultar Singh Ji, - I suggested that he should take over you yesterday and told you to get associated with us in doing the *sewa* of the 'Meditation' Page.

In this context I pay my respects to his father's departed soul, Late Sr. Avtar Singh Ji. About three years before I met him in the Rochester Hills Gurdwara, Michigan, and he sang the Shabad '*Oohâ Prem Piri..*' in Raag Asa, on my request, (as I was very often used to hear it from the Sikhnet) he accepted my request to sing it the next morning during *Asa Di Vaar*, I was truly overwhelmed.

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