

Faith and Reason

Sir, - We, as physical entities, imagine the metaphysical, the supernatural, in some shape or form, to concentrate in our prayers. Else it is very difficult to control one's thoughts and fanciful imagination. Here we can refer to the various stages of meditation, ending up, with Cosmic meditation. One in a million may achieve it and reach cosmic illumination. Guru Nanak said, that one could not describe God. It would be like locking him in a box. The almighty is supernatural and omnipotent whom we can feel around us and admire his creations. For easy understanding of that supernatural force, we look to human shapes, like Jesus Christ in Christianity, Krishna and Rama in Hinduism, and Prophet Mohammed in Islam. Mohammed the man, goes in a trance, and acts as a medium to deliver the message of God. Through that stage in human history, it is the individual playing the key role.

But the politico-socio and economic factors trail alongside and exert their own influence on the individual. The individual cannot escape the society, be he the follower of Manu and his life span of 100 years, divided in four parts, or that of the Buddha where the individual has a prominent roles to play, as against the society.

Guru Granth Sahib concentrates both on the individual and congregational prayer - *sangat* to reach God. It is Guru Gobind Singh, who introduced the role of the community, to interpret the teachings in the Granth Sahib for the collective welfare and a free and just society. Thus the role of the community or the group, becomes important.

We move on to Prof. Darshan Singh Maini's "Establishment today". With human feelings, failures & self importance coming in, it is to be expected that bad practices would intermingle with good objectives, to bring about a fall in the social values of the society.

Personally, I am not enamoured of bodies like Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee, which have become tools for misuse under the garb of religico upliftment. The *pradhans* are using this platform, for their personal selfish ends.

The gullible public, see the tinsel glamour "*chamak and damak*", like the gold plating work at the Golden Temple, take it as a part & parcel of the Sikh philosophy and do not crib, when the price of "*karha prasad*", increases, with the decrease in quantity of it, for specified amounts. Let us ask ourselves: what has it to do with Sikh philosophy. Would it not be better in the service of His creation if these vast amounts were spent on their upliftment, both economic and spiritual? Let us not forget the *Sakhi* of Guru Nanak & Bhai Lallo. Whom do we need; those who produce "milk" of simple, honest, sincere community service, or "the blood" of clever, manipulator and dishonest. The "Sikh Establishment" of Prof. Darshan Singh are sucking "blood" from our masses. They stick together, to achieve their own ends which, in fact, clash with those of the community.

Therefore the tussle goes on, between good and evil, honesty and dishonesty. Is that the hallmark of our times? As some would say, it is kalyug!

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Emergence of "Waheguru"

Sir, - The following is in response to Mr. Ravi M. Chopra's article under Naamology [SR April 2002].

On page 7, Mr. Chopra argues: "However, now 'Waheguru' – Wondrous Lord – has assumed a special significance as a name of God for the Sikhs, as for instance, Allah is for the Muslims, Ram and Ishwar for the Hindus. This development took place much after the formation of the Khalsa." To me it does not seem right, because: On pages 1402-3 of Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Waheguru is sixteen times hailed and addressed by the Bhatt poet Gayand, in all his thirteen *Swayyas*, before the next bard, Mathura takes over. From this, it is clearly evident that this "Waheguru" as "*Sat Nam*" was preached and practised by all the Sikh Gurus, including Guru Nanak, and his nine successor Gurus and their follower Sikhs. Specially when Guru Arjun Devji tells us that "*Sat Nam*" is the *primal name of God*, His/Her other names are attributory : *Kirtam nam kathey tere jihba*, "*Sat Nam*" *tera pra poorbla*, ie "This tongue Thy Attributive names alone utters. Thy Eternal Name is transcendental, primal" (please see page 2201, Volume 3 of English Translation by Gurbachan Singh Talib).

Bhai Gurdas ji has used 'Waheguru' at least ten times in his 40 *Vars*, which again corroborates the fact that Waheguru as God's name had a special significance right from the very inception of Sikhism.

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Discovering Sikh Americans

Sir: In the aftermath of 9/11, a gem of an one-hour TV program for PBS has been completed, called "Discovering Sikh Americans", through the eyes of a lovely young American girl who discovers the plight of the Sikhs in America after 9/11. She explains to mainstream America and worldwide TV audiences what happened after the terrorists attacks and the mistaken identity racial profiling of Sikhs in her country... simply because Sikhs wore turbans and beards.

The young American then takes on the mission to "explore who are my Sikh neighbors", what is Sikhism, by visiting gurdwaras, discussing the history of Sikhs and Guru Nanak's universal

teachings, the history of the early Sikh settlers over a hundred years ago, and what Sikh entrepreneurs have contributed to the U.S. economy.

It is a celebration of "cultural diversity programming in US television" after 9/11 where young people are questioning why it happened, and how ignorant they have become with the mainstream American media giving no real answers to their questions. This incredible TV program was on display at MIP-TV in Cannes (15019 April 2002) and is being invited to several of the leading TV program festivals around the world.

We want you to be one of the first to know about this TV program - filmed in spectacular colors - and present "as the first ever TV program to eradicate ignorance of Sikhs living in America... with 58 min 30 sec space of time ... to offer a sense of concern and respect - beyond their suffering - as a proud ethnic group of some 500,000 Sikhs living in USA.

Our next venture is Sikh Entrepreneurs and what they have contributed to US and world economy. We would be very interested in inviting your members to be our successful entrepreneurs, as a unique role models for Sikh youngsters and young people all over the world.

We look forward to answering any questions... with a presentation of the first part of the Sikh trilogy for US and worldwide television.

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SR: 50th Anniversary

It is a pleasure, each month, to go through the luminous articles and, in particular, the perceptive editorials. The August issue was no exception. It must be the deep faith and unshakeable conviction that sustains *The Sikh Review* and its world perspective, amid diverse religions and cultures. Your pragmatic approach, forged through long experience of human affairs and the remarkable gift of conveying your thoughts in a lucid manner has much to do with the quality of the magazine.

It is just as well that the Journal provides a forum for sober and erudite debate apart from historical reminiscences, even as it begins with the excerpts from Sri Guru Granth Sahib that are both instructive and inspirational, inviting attention to the wealth of wisdom that guides the reader to deeply realized truths for treading the path of spiritualism.

The prominence given to the contributions from *Sehajdhari*s and foreign scholars is commedable feature. It might be a good idea (i) to have a section devoted to the development and well being of younger children - that entertains and uplifts. One or two articles could bring out the nobility and bliss of living a true Guru Sikh's life of continence, integrity and devotion.

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