

RELIGIONS OF THE PEOPLE OF INDIA

Edited by Sukharanjan Saha

Published by The Registrar, Jadavpur University, Calcutta. 700 032

Pages 419 plus index. Price Rs. 400/-

This impressive volume assembles 34 essays on the religions of India. The Department of Philosophy, Jadavpur University, Calcutta, is better known to readers of *The Sikh Review* for its Guru Nanak Chair of Sikh history established in 1970s in celebration of the Quincentenary of the advent of Guru Nanak Dev*. In the recent past, the university department of Philosophy held a national conference on religions of India to promote a deeper understanding of diverse faiths practised in this multitudinous subcontinent.

It is to the credit of Professor Sukharanjan Saha who patiently pursued the theme and collected the final versions of various papers presented and discussed at the 1998 conference and brought this cyclopedic work to fruition. His introduction bears testimony to the onerous task that has gone into the compilation.

Saran Singh's paper: "An Outline of the Sikh Doctrine" and Sunil Kumar Das' Paper: "Kabir and Nanak: A New Tradition" deserve special mention. On the whole the book offers a valuable frame of reference for the study of religions in India.

S.S.

THE KHALSA & THE PUNJAB:

Studies in Sikh History upto the 19th Century

Edited by Himadri Banerjee*

**Published by Tulika Books, 35A/1, (3rd Floor) Shahpur Jatt.,
New Delhi 110 049**

Pages 192. Price Rs. 375 (Hard cover)

This is the third in the series of publications to mark the Tercentenary of the Khalsa, the previous two being "History & Ideology - The Khalsa over 300 years" (1999) and "Sikh History from Persian Sources" (2001). The latest volume consists of fifteen selected essays presented at the 60th session of the Indian History Congress, covering a panorama of historical perspectives from some of the best known scholars and historians, past and present.

The collection has an illuminating introduction by Professor Himadri Banerjee, the Guru Nanak Chair Professor of Indian History at Jadavpur University, and a preface by Shireen Moosvi of the Aligarh Muslim University.

S.S.

DHARMI FAUJI ATE OPERATION BLUESTAR

[Punjabi]

By Amrik Singh

**Published by The Spokesman Trust, 3037 Sector 19-D,
Chandigarh 160011**

Pages 120. Price Rs. 200 (Hard cover; illustrated)

One of the most poignant aspects of the Sikh Struggle precipitated in the 1984 assault on Sri Darbar Sahib is the fact that the Indian army, inheritor of the glorious tradition of valour, was employed in the infamous "operation" to dislodge a small band of Sikh militants from the precincts of Sri Akal Takht. It is all the more tragic that the incredible news triggered a series of mutinous uprising among a few units of the Sikh Regiments then engaged in the defence of India at different locations. Some of the so-called "deserters" were killed, others apprehended, court-martialled and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment.

The Sikh nation - already in deep trauma - paid scant attention to this band of extraordinary but misunderstood men who later came to be known as *Dharami Faujis* or Soldiers of Faith. This slim volume, published by The Spokesman Trust gives glimpses of many of these brave servicemen who suffered because the government of the day had blundered. Their rehabilitation remains one of the unfinished tasks. The Spokesman initiative is timely and commendable.

S.S.

VIBRANT CELESTIAL MEDITATION

A SPONTANEOUS EXPERIENCE IN SUPER CONSCIOUSNESS

By Bhai Sahib Bhai Kirpal Singh Gill®

Published (for World Spiritual Foundation) by National Book Org., H-39 Green Park Extension, New Delhi. 110 016. India or "Kripapuri", 8 Jalan 16/5. 46350 Pataling Jaya. K.L. Malaysia®

Pages 260. Price Rs. 390 (\$9.50 £6.00)

In a work of striking depth and clarity, the title says it all - except for the uninitiated who are too engrossed in coping with their material preoccupation to listen to the spirit within that awaits to be manifested. Although prayer is a universal practice common to all religions, meditation is the key to self-realisation.

Bhai Sahib Kirpal Singh Ji is well known as the most enlightened among the practioners of *Naam Simran*. His preceptions are rooted in the revelatory message of Guru Granth Sahib and every other scripture of the world. Synoptic and uncomplicated the book offers insights into a number of religious traditions. But *Gurbani* itself explores the human soul in all its depth and subtlety. Rarely can such perceptions be articulated or codified. Yet a lay reader is gently guided towards exploration of the Divine principle within us and perception of the all-pervading soul. By passing theologian debate, the author steers the reader to the world spirit, the methodology of meditation, the comparative advantages of time, place, mood and mode. He dwells on the concept of *Gurukripa* or Grace, the need to dissolve one's ego and the submission of self that unfolds God's pervasive power - leading upto ecstasy and relaxation, an enveloping sensation of peace and sublimity.

The idiom used by the author appeals to every denomination. Indeed the practice and goal transcend conventioned religion. Meditation in the final analysis is our path to self-discovery and our vision of the Creator who is timeless truth - our refuge and our goal. The book is the common man's practical guide to the uncommon celestial experience.

S.S.