

## **“1984: A Tragedy Complexified”**

The Editorial in *The Sikh Review* (June 2008) suggests compulsory reading of the Indian sub-continental events since 1947; but you have not give a reference to the comprehensive account of history. Please make sure history is a truthful description of events without bias, exaggeration and malice, so that it becomes most credible. I am sorry to say that we do not have evidence based Sikh history because it was perhaps not a fashion to record history. All we have Epics in Braj bhash by poets, not historians, in Chhandbandi and imaginations.

All events happened in our lifetime and they may be recorded. What I have read so far are exaggerations and biased stories and false claims by both sides. The so-called White Papers by the government and SGPC are far from the truth. I would appreciate if someone could give reference to true history.

**JODH SINGH**

New York

Email: xjsa@aol.com

\* \* \* \* \*

## **“Are Sikh being targeted for Conversion”**

The article under Dynamics: “Are Sikhs being Targeted for Conversion” (SR: May 2008) confirmed to me what I had suspected all along. I have been thinking about this issue since my personal encounter. After reading the article I have coalesced my thoughts and written an article.

The issues that really bother me are related to ‘guaranteed salvation’, and ‘resurrection’, no questions asked: with acceptance of Jesus, the Saviour! However, when I heard about the book by Dr. Dallas Willard, titled “The Divine Conspiracy”, 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 our great Gurus, can be watchful against 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 SGGS to save Sikhism in its heartland Punjab.

**BHUPINDER SINGH**

Email: singhbo@gmail.com

\* \* \* \* \*

## **Be Warned: A Letter from USA**

I am not surprised. In 1976, I attended a interfaith meeting, the audience was mostly 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 being posed as another ‘Satguru’. Our own Sikh Missionaries are too 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 availing of the opportunity. Can we blame them? Punjab is a 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 dhayye"!

Parminder kaur

\* \* \* \* \*

This refers to the correction provided by Gurcharan Singh Thind [SR, July 2008, p 72] that Guru Gobind Singh did not compose the hymns attributed to him by some Sikh scholars due to a flawed study of our history. There are many pieces of Sikh literature that have been presumed to be as sacred as Gurbani of Aad Guru Granth Sahib. For instance, in the Vaaran of Bhai Gurdas (Vaar 13, Pauri 2) the stanza "Vaheguru gurmantar hai jap haumein khoi" is available.

wihgurU gur mMqr hY jp haumY Koel [ 1

A careful study of Gurbani provides evidence that word 'mantar' in the spellings used by Bhai Gurdas has been used in Aad Guru Granth Sahib *only once* in the sloka of Namdev on page 1165 . This sloka, along with its meaning by Dr Sant Singh Khalsa, in an improved form, is given for favour of perusal by readers:

dust sBw imil mMqr aupwieAw krsh AauD Gnyrl ]

igir qr jlu juAwlw BY rwiKE rwjw rwim mwieAw Pyrl ]3] 2

i.e. the 'council of villains met and resolved to put Prahlaad into a life of terrible troubles. Prahlaad was thrown off a mountain into the water and, later on, into a forest on fire; but the sovereign IKOoh, the God, saved him, by controlling the whims of nature [3].

A careful examination of these two slokas and their sources shows quite a significant shift in the context in which the word 'mantar' in its two spellings in Punjabi has been used in the Gurbani of SGGS. However, Bhai Gurdas has used it in the context of its meanings usually found in its association with Hindu literature or daily life in Punjab.

The use of word 'mantar', more profusely in Gurbani of SGGS, in another spellings is illustrated below:

hrn Brn jw kw nyqR Por] iqs kw mMqR u n jwnY hor]2]16] 3

Sukhmani M 5 SGGS p 284

The Providence < destroys and creates in the twinkling of an eye. No one knows Its mysterious ways of working [2.16].

iehl Acwr iehl ibauhrrw AwigAw mwin Bgiq hoie qumHwrl]

jo iehu mMqR u kmwvY nwnk so Baujlu pwir auqwrl ]3]28] 4

Asaa M5 SGGS p 377

This is the right conduct, the correct life style and right type of worship to obey the Hukam, the commands of IKOoh, the God. One who practices this mantar, O Nanak! Swims across the terrible world-ocean. [3.18].

mY AauKDu mMqR u dljY gur pUrY mY hir hir nwim auDwrlAY jlau ]3] 5

Majh M 4 SGGS p 95

Give me the medicine of 'mantar' of the perfect Guru; the Naam of IKOoh, the God, that has saved me [3].

According to Sikh history, Bhai Gurdas has been actively involved during the compilation of SGGS and grammar of gurbaani. His *Vaaran* are treated as sacred writings by most of the Sikhs. He himself has created this difficulty for Sikhs by using different spellings for the word mantar in his *Vaaran* that do not conform to the standard set in SGGS for distinguishing between two forms of mantar that complies with its context of meanings in two forms of spellings in SGGS. Despite such flaws in his writings, Sikhs continue accepting

Bhai Gurdas as the doyen of Sikh philosophy and accept his book as if it is Gurbani.

The second point is related to word *mantar* itself in Sikhism. All the Sikh Gurus and Bhagats have nowhere accepted the concept of '*mantar*' in the Gurbani of SGGS that was followed in Hindu literature. The question arises how to get out of this confusion. The publishers of *Vaaran* by Bhai Gurdas are requested to pay attention to this anomaly and correct the spellings of word *mantar* in the *sloka* under discussion in future editions of this book. However, the question of acceptance of concept of '*mantar*' in Sikh praxis is to be sorted out through a dialogue and discussion amongst Sikh scholars and the Akaal Takht Sahib.

**Sarjit Singh Sandhu**

Former Professor, Guru Nanak Dev University

Amritsar, Punjab

Email: sarjeetsingh@juno.com

