

Chakravyuh was an impregnable army formation resorted to by the Kaurva Commander-in-Chief, Dronachariya, common teacher of both Pandavas and Kauravas. Abhimanyu (16), the younger son of Arjun and the nephew of the Kauravas, was isolated and killed by seven opposing knights by trapping him in this particularly contrived military manoeuvre. It was a formation which none other than Arjun and his son could penetrate and only Arjun knew how to destroy it. Arjun was lured far away from the scene by deception. At the time of killing, young Abhimanyu was unarmed. It was against the earlier settled laws of war and customs of chivalry prevalent in the age, to kill an unarmed warrior. The highest ranking knights owing allegiance to forces of evil, ganged up to fight and to kill him though only one of them could have legitimately engaged him, and that only when he was armed. All Indian political parties have erected a Chakravyuh around the Sikhs who have common ancestors with other Indians. They are doing this to the Sikhs behind the facade (Chakravyuh) of secular, democratic state with written constitution. The object is also the same - to gain exclusive, unlimited political power over all other nations inhabiting the sub-continent.

**TO**  
**THE ORDER OF THE KHALSA**  
**THE IMAGE OF THE IMMORTAL**  
**THE ARCHETYPE OF MORTALS**

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English rendering of the Amarnamah has been attempted also with the help of Dr. Ganda Singh's Punjabi translation of it.

I thank the Institute of Sikh Studies for agreeing to undertake the publication.

It is customary to accept responsibility for the mistakes and inadequacies, which remain. So finding no way out of the situation, and bearing in mind that computers are universally recognised as blameless, I freely and generously own up the mistakes, especially those, which I can't blame on my wife or the printer.

## INTRODUCTION

The universal scope and character of the teachings of the Sikh Gurus have struck those who have studied them carefully. The moral responsibility, stress on self-respect and sense of honour, insistence on right conduct, concern for the welfare of others and co-existence with other cultures have been elevated by the Gurus as the prerequisites for spiritual living and individual salvation. Very firm doctrinal basis for co-operation with all cultures has been provided in Sikhism. This totally obviates the urge for conversion on the religious plane, completely eliminates the need to claim cultural exclusiveness or superiority by any group over any other, and, above all, it is destructive of the passion for political domination over others. These along with a host of other valuable cultural traits, mental disposition, value system conducive to the common welfare of all humankind, and unique work ethics, are recognised by Sikhs to be born of the deliberate spiritual stance adopted by Sikh Gurus. Any host society or religious order concerned about the future of humankind, would have regarded the discipline of Sikhism as a valuable addition to human progress and would have welcomed and encouraged it. This has not happened in India.

On the contrary, Sikh society has always faced deep-rooted hostility from protagonists of the Brahmanical order. For instance, certain aspects of Sikh culture are in complete contrast, for instance, to the dehumanising Brahmanical caste system. Such differences are found to be intolerable by those elements of Hindu society which do not regard Brahmanism as an unfortunate later development in Hinduism, but conceive of it as its essential part. The aforementioned is an entirely faulty and destructive approach since the essence of what was the best in ancient Hindu culture has been preserved in Sikhism, the advent of Sikhism was a God-sent opportunity for Hindus to shed the sharp angularities of Brahmanism. Wisdom demanded that, on the authority of the Sikh Gurus, Brahmanism should have been regarded as a dispensable superstructure and thrown off. While the Sikh approach to Hindu society has always been friendly, constructive and co-operative; that of Brahmanism has been in total contrast.

The situation has become grim since British de-colonisation (1947-50). The developments, which were to take place in consequence of it, did not materialise. The promise held out by the Independence of India Bill or the British Cabinet Mission Proposal of May 16, 1947, were belied. A modern democratic federal republic with widely advertised safeguards for minorities, had been contemplated. When the Constitutional egg hatched on January 26, 1950, what emerged from it was a Hindu Imperial power claiming hegemonic control over the political affairs of minorities. It was and has remained a totally centralised set up, intolerant of dissent, both political and cultural. The exterior of a modern democratic republic was maintained for external consumption and as an effective public relations exercise. The exercise and the pretence have been so effectively projected that it has been difficult to draw attention to the true picture. Several honest thinkers have been misled into believing the appearance to be more than skin deep. The West, a votary of democracy, welcomed even the sham democracy. A Nelson's eye was turned to all the basic faults in the Indian system. On the map of Asia dominated by the red and green of totalitarian regimes, the saffron of Hindu India was a welcome contrast. It is the belief of minorities, that by such deceptive appearances India was able to maintain an honourable and healthy appearance although it was rotting on the inside.

The cultivated gullibility of democratic forces allowed India to freely control the destinies of minorities in detriment to their vital interests. A very subtle and original form of neo-colonialism,

which has existed since British de-colonisation, has gone unnoticed by the world. This is a proposition, which is difficult to substantiate to a casual observer. A roving eye can see only the superficial. Indian ruling classes were able to create a Chakravayuh, a formation that has enabled it to retain a stranglehold over the destinies of minorities.

There were many ways of exposing this stranglehold and drawing attention to the plight of minorities. Of them, the Sikhs have tried several. One manner of doing so was of courting martyrdom. Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman, Baba Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhinderanwale and his associates effectively presented it to the world. Their martyrdom showed that in India there was no conflict resolving mechanism as is inherent in all democracies and that a large section of the population, the custodians of a vital message for humankind, is feeling suffocated and fears extinction. This should have made the world sit up and try to penetrate the make-believe so cleverly contrived by the Indian ruling classes. That has not happened so far. It was primarily due to a Sikh leadership failure, particularly in the period after the remarkable martyrdom of the Sant. The Chakravayuh factor also had its role in rendering the obvious so obscure.

Of the many other options of establishing the true nature of Indian democracy and secularism, is the presentation of recent history in form nearest to the objective. A study of some documents of contemporary history was born out of the necessity of discharging a moral obligation to preserve the will of Darshan Singh Pheruman. It became the occasion for studying these documents in the context of modern history. And so it should have been for a martyr never sheds his blood in vain. Some other documents were selected somewhat at random and they lent themselves spontaneously to the natural and the only inference being drawn here. It is unfortunate but true that the form of government presiding over the destinies of the Sikhs that emerges from the study is not democratic. It can rather be described as a perversion of democratic tradition and a new and subtler species of colonialism.

The last will and testament of Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman became more meaningfully relevant in the above context. The earlier decision to simply tag it on to documents relating to the supreme sacrifice of Bhai Nand Singh and presenting it in an even shorter monograph was revised. The failure to see it through the press in that form since 1994, suddenly became a substantial advantage. With the inclusion of several other documents and photographs; it was then rendered somewhat more useful to a student of contemporary history. In juxtaposition with other documents, some of comparatively recent origin, it presented a more coherent, comprehensive and a telling story. The privilege of preserving the will, which was developing into a burden, eventually presented itself in the form of a unique opportunity.

The decision to add the English translation of the Amarnamah was initially made purely for the sake of convenience. It was thought appropriate to append it here because the small size of the document did not justify a separate publication. That it is in the nature of the last will and testament of the Tenth King was regarded as additional justification for the inclusion. A much stronger reason is the anti-Brahmanism nature of the message it conveys. In its last part particularly, the Guru unequivocally forbids the Sikhs to trust the votaries of Brahmanism. The language used is such that no Sikh can ever disregard the instructions. The Guru reminds the Sikhs that basically Brahmanism is responsible for the death of his four sons. The tremendous emotional potential of putting it in that context is obvious. The non-compliance with his instructions has resulted in the situation with which the Sikhs are faced today. That is also the basic theme of the present undertaking. This inclusion occasioned a change in the name of this book since it could now no longer be called

Documents of Contemporary History, as was earlier contemplated. New nomenclature was required. It is just as well since, the present one, Chakravyuh is much less prosaic and serves the purpose better.

Now, since the Rubicon had been crossed, it became much easier to include the other document which is vital to the expression of the theme of this publication. This is the open letter of Professor Puran Singh to Sir John Simon written on 21<sup>st</sup> of October 1928.

Professor Puran Singh was one of the most perceptive persons of this century. His works on Sikhism are remarkable. His poetic expressions are most sensitive, humane and full of love of humankind. The letter being quoted here shows that, unlike his mentor Bhai Vir Singh, he did not remain ever oblivious of the political destiny of the people among whom he was born or of the country of his birth. He had a remarkable insight into the political behaviour of both the Hindu and the Musalman. His observation about the ‘cunning and aggressive people who would twist letters of law and the constitution and make them work on communal bias,’ indicates what has since become the bane of Indian polity. This mentality indicated by him will be seen to ooze out of every document presented in this book. He noticed Hindu arrogance: no impartial observer could possibly miss it. With remarkable insight he pinpointed, ‘Hindu tyranny of caste masquerading as religion of love’ to be the main reason of conflict with Sikhs and Sikhism. He perhaps had a prophetic vision of Article 25 of the Indian Constitution of 1950, which he expressed as the intense desire of the majority “to include the Sikhs in the Hindus”. He was clear that adult franchise, in its pure and simple form would only become an elaborate, counter productive mechanism, merely enabling, “one party to get into power and crush the others”. Hindus who have sneaked into power behind the façade of liberal, democratic and socialist republic are now busy destroying the Sikhs, Christians, Muslims, Tribals and Dalits left out there in the open. The “civil anarchy” that he predicted is there for all to observe merely after half a century of British de-colonisation.

Another Puran Singh, writing some sixty years later has summed up the evil effects of communal colonialism predicted by the earlier one. This is the reason for the inclusion of Bhagat Puran Singh’s letter to the President of India renouncing the honour of Padma Shri conferred upon him.

The remaining documents serve to demonstrate the inevitable fate of a people who ignore the clear warnings of their intellectuals and the explicit orders of their prophets. Puran Singh’s beloved Punjab is again a colony. In addition, it is now treated in a more brutal fashion and subdued much more violently than ever before. Everyday of existence since 1947, has been a battle experience of Saragarhi for the Sikhs, culminating in what the Media popularly dubbed as the Third Sikh War of June 1984. The Sikhs, however, prefer to call it the Third Holocaust. The first had been perpetrated by Lakhpat Rai, and the third of course, by Indira Gandhi.

Amritsar was for the Sikhs what Kurukshetra had been for Abhimanyu. The exact venue was the Government Hospital at the time of Darshan Singh Pheruman; it was the Akal Takhat some twenty-five years later. Then came a time when Katra Ahluwalian and every Indian street was Kurukshetra for them. They were systematically eliminated in Delhi and almost all the prominent North Indian cities. The chariot wheel had been Abhimanyu’s last defence then; car tyres were now weapons against the Sikhs. If Mahabharat is any guide, Abhimanyu will have to die many deaths before sense is dinned into the present day Dhritrashtra. His present incarnation is also blind to all sense of justice and equity and entertains grand and ambitious design of imperial proportions. For his battles, however, he is able to find many allies blinded by the glitter of gold and false hopes of



establishing dynasties. These allies are also from amongst both the politicians as well as bureaucrats. Here, they are referred to as 'slave drivers from amongst the slaves'. Such people will reveal themselves to the readers through at least a dozen documents presented in this book.

I have been watching some of the doings of our political leaders very closely since at least 1966. I am in a position to observe that, with very few honourable exceptions, they have behaved like crude agents of the new colonising power. Partap Singh Kairon industrially developed only the Hindi region, which later formed Haryana. He surrendered, without compensation, most of Punjab's river water and hydroelectric power to Rajasthan, Himachal, Delhi and Jammu & Kashmir. Later on the Punjab would set up three thermal power stations, at a stupendous cost, to make up for the power shortage. He tried to crush the agitation for the Punjabi language, played a prominent and ignoble role in replacing Master Tara Singh a leader of the patriotic Sikhs, by the user friendly Sant Brothers. He made it his life's mission to firmly oppose Sikh causes. He was not even remotely true to the Punjab. Yet in several ways he was much better than many of his successors. We will have occasions to observe the doings of the others referred to.

Only one conclusion is possible from a study of at least the last fifty years or so. The Sikhs have lost a great deal and will continue to do so unless far reaching changes are implemented. In the present circumstances, they are likely to seriously jeopardise their existence as a people. It will be a great pity for they have a distinct contributions to make to the future world civilisation. The disaster, if it comes about, will be traced to their inability to choose the proper kind of leaders to lead them and to their failure in holding these leaders responsible for deliberately letting them down. Harsher language would be permissible, but it is deemed better if the reader employs it after going through this book.

The general Sikh masses cannot escape responsibility for what is happening. Their apathy must also take the blame. The situation has been brilliantly summed up by a Punjabi poet: ditham ajab tamasha sajjan, hik dehun tain darbare. ibnalwaqat muajjaz theende jan nissar khuarae. 'I witnessed a strange spectacle at your court one day, my friend. Time servers were being honoured and true patriots condemned'. Of a people who do that and still hope to survive, Baba Farid says in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, lore dakh bijoria, kihar beeje jat. hande unn kataida paidha lore patt. 'Farmer sows the thorny acacia and hopes it will yield the best grapes; weaver weaves the used coarse wool and expects it to turn into fine silk'. In the semblance of democracy that we have in India, the situation was capable of being deftly handled to the advantage of the people. It is not readily understandable why the Sikhs are neglecting to exploit every little advantage they have. Surely they are not entitled to treat themselves so badly.

There is no reason for them to throw up the kind of leaders they have been promoting since 1947. The general excuse is that leaders of all political parties are bad, this is the general situation all over the world. It is just like Indira Gandhi saying 'corruption is a world-wide phenomena'. They must expect more from their leaders. They ought to consider this at least in the ter-centenary year of the birth of the Khalsa, that 'all others' were not created Khalsa in 1699. They also had no martyrs pouring their blood to see them always on God's path. They must remember that the Khalsa was 'created to be a guide and an example to mankind'. It is a great responsibility to have proper leaders; one which cannot be lightly shaken off by employing worn out clichés. It is also a responsibility, which they themselves will have to discharge.

The Sikhs must restructure their leadership in such a manner that the effective political power falls into the hands of a large collective body (*Sarbat Khalsa*) which cannot but be incorruptible. The advance of technology and means of communication have rendered this possible. It must work through a fairly small and manageable executive committee perhaps of five persons modelled on the Panj Piare concept of Guru Gobind Singh. This would be no novel experiment because the Panj Kaunsalis of Khalsa armies after the death of Ranjit Singh, were modelled upon it. This 'democratic experiment', the English neighbours concluded, was so dangerous that it could not be allowed to continue. It became the most potent cause of the two Anglo-Sikh Wars. Karl Marx also took note of, what he called the 'democratic' and 'anti-feudal' stance of the Khalsa. In the contemporary world we have the Panj Kaunsali Akali Dal launched by Sirdar Kapur Singh and others on October 5, 1969. A photograph I had taken to commemorate the launching at Patiala is presented elsewhere in this monogram. A Sikh political party must function on the principle of 'empowerment of all' (*hanne hanne mir*), though it does not necessarily mean that everyone has to cast his vote at the polls. There would be a case for restricting franchise without jeopardising the representative character. Both procedures are an integral part of the Sikh theory of polity. The Sikhs must popularise the Sikh concept of sovereignty and must learn to shun short cuts and immediate results. Their Gurus took almost two and half centuries to make them aware of the sad plight of human existence and the great opportunity contained therein. Theirs is a long journey and constant labour. The task is formidable and requires infinite patience. The canvass is wide and they have to paint a beautiful picture, one worthy of pleasing God Who is a hard taskmaster. The concept of a nation state with the necessary ingredient of territorial sovereignty, has been causing havoc all over the globe. It is the most visible portion of the Chakravayuh. It is the cause of militant movements all over the world and deserves to be discarded for that reason alone. In any case, it stands completely discredited and subverted, as is indicated by recent developments. This is the fate it richly deserved after causing so much misery to millions of people all around the globe.

The Order of the Khalsa has completed three centuries of its existence and perhaps it is time to reflect and plan the future in accordance with the Guru's instructions contained in his Word. It must claim its rightful place in the community of faiths. Guru Nanak indicated the rightful place when on arrival at Multan he was politely confronted with a completely filled bowl of milk. By such delicately contrived symbolism, the oriental mind was diplomatically suggesting that the town was full to the brim with preachers of faiths and that he would become one too many. The Guru's reply was to carefully place a fragrant and dainty jasmine flower petal on the milk without spilling a drop. He let it be known that his mission was to enrich all faiths and to make them all fragrant and beautiful. The Order of the Khalsa is heir to this legacy.

Initially it was not the purpose of this monogram to present a cogent interpretation of history, not until a co-relation between documents left no options but to delineate a rather definable theme. Perception of Sant Fateh Singh's role among his contemporaries like Nand Singh and Pheruman alone suffices to serve as basis of a cogent theory. In the larger context of the history of the Punjab, the essence of this presentation could be summed up in three words signifying three historical phases: Colonisation (1849-1947), De-colonisation (August 15, 1947-January 26, 1950) and Re-colonisation (1950 onwards). The basic purpose, which still remains, was only to help a student of contemporary events in understanding the undercurrents of history as they are now becoming visible. It is hoped that the documents presented will, it is hoped, draw attention to many aspects, which tend to get ignored and even blurred by the breakneck speed of modern living which leaves no time to reflect or even to 'stand and stare'. The entire emphasis is on aiding a reader in noticing other than officially recognised prime movers, which are shaping contemporary history. It is

believed that, looked at thus, perhaps a different perspective of the present day Sikh and the Indian world will emerge. An obligation to present some sort of cogent narration of events on lines suggested by these documents, remains. Some scholars bold enough to venture into uncharted sea, will perhaps one-day take up the issues for detailed examination. At present, I am content with attempting a preliminary analysis of all the issues involved for fulfilling this obligation. It is obviously not exhaustive, but perhaps will suffice to explain certain aspects of the Sikh situation.

Detailed justification for including other documents is given where such documents have been inserted. It is hoped that it will be considered sufficient in the context of the present undertaking.

On looking back, it appears that the endeavour to understand recent history through some documents selected almost at random has been rewarding. The nature of economic exploitation of the Punjab has always been popularly understood to be on the colonial pattern. The effective camouflage of the written Constitution, free Press, functioning democracy, impartial judiciary, elected legislature, efficient bureaucracy, active human rights organisations and so on, has been deflecting casual observers from making an independent judgement based on ground realities. The myth of a written constitution has been easy to explode, when it has been officially suspended from operating in the Punjab for decades together. This demonstrates its use as a mere fig leaf. Those working on human rights abuses in the Punjab are in a position to expose the total hollowness of the claims of the present set up to pass off as a functioning democracy. The Sikhs have been in conflict with four other empires in the five hundred years of their existence. Employing all objective criteria for making a historical judgement, it is possible to assert that the present set up is the cruellest, the most violent and the most dehumanising of them all.

Potentially, it is also more dangerous. In a way it is several times more hazardous since it takes refuge behind a democratic smoke screen, which not all eyes can pierce. Several empires and political leaders have sought the destruction of politically motivated Sikhs in history. But it is for the first time, if we overlook Lakhpat's misadventure, that we have a political power intensely interested in destroying both Sikhs and Sikhism, 'root and branch'. The euphemism used is, 'to bring the Sikhs in the mainstream'. The mentality, which inspires this attitude is dangerous also because it steadily keeps on expanding its area of operation. New ideologies and new and more ideologically motivated political parties are coming into power to carry on the destruction more efficiently. For those who know the operational logic of such ideologies, the large sweep of their reach and the deep and lasting impact on affected minds, know that nothing and nobody is safe in such a situation. Everybody's turn will come. Fascist ideologies spare none. Christians are now being targeted in a big way. Raping, disrobing nuns has become a routine matter and priest killing only attracts attention if the method used is particularly inhuman.

Sikhism promotes a culture that has the potential of playing a major and wholesome role in human history - particularly in the context of the impending conflicts of civilisations. This is why the Gurus themselves became martyrs in order to preserve it. 'It is always to be borne in mind that under no circumstances can the world do without it', says the Guru in the 'Seal Verse' to Guru Granth Sahib. (*eh vast taji nahi jai nit nit rakh urdharo*).

No matter how one looks at it, the truth that emerges is that it is the duty of the Khalsa to take up the challenge. There is no doubt that a section of modern Sikhs has travelled far away from the original aim of Sikhism and a lot of effort will be required to get it to pick up the gauntlet. But it

is an effort worth making. If so much of misery is perpetrated on such a large number of people in the sub-continent, in spite of the existence of the Khalsa, then the Khalsa will have existed in vain. The Tenth King did not strike the ever-reverberating Ranjit Nagara for no purpose. It must continue always to instil the fear of God in the evil doers. They must never sleep peacefully as long as the Khalsa lives to respond to its sonorous sound. (*sukh savan na dendi dujjana noo naubat Gobind Singh saché patshah di*). The Sikh people must also understand, that the present Sikh leadership is not going to be of any help in the impending war on evil. In fact it has itself become an inseparable part of the evil and is likely to grow to menacing proportions on the path it has chosen for itself. It is also fairly certain that the evil it represents and collaborates with, will not go away on its own. Dalits have been persecuted for more than fifty centuries and the operation is still on in all its strength. Evil will have to be effectively confronted.

The Khalsa also has the duty to answer the distress call of the persecuted, including that of the Sikhs. Not only because it is the spiritual successor of the Tenth Guru, doctrinally, it is also his very embodiment. The ever-living Guru in part, lives in the Order of the Khalsa. There is much substance in the traditional Sikh belief that to assume the role of the destroyer of evil is the surest and the shortest way to salvation. This is the only meaning of the Khalsa war cry *jo bole so nihāl, sat siri akal* (Eternal felicity to him who answers the call of persons in distress. For surely that person, thereby, becomes one with the Deathless). The dehumanising extent of the Indian establishment can be gauged from the incident, which recently happened at Chhapra. A nun belonging to St. Joseph's Convent was abducted, stripped naked and made to drink the urine of her assailants. This has happened very near Patna Sahib, the birthplace of the Tenth Guru. Can there be a bigger shame for the Sikhs? Can this country live if its womanhood continues to be so degraded? The Sikhs must realise that under the present dispensation this macabre destiny is reserved for all the women of the sub-continent. This development is to be efficiently resisted. There was a time when the Khalsa had reacted to the Mughal practise of spitting into the mouths of Hindus. Khalsa armies taught Ahmed Shah Abdali a lesson for abducting Maratha women after the Battle of Panipat (1765). Can the Sikhs now remain silent after witnessing such barbarities? The Sikh people have an additional duty towards the country of their birth. Those, whose communalism divided it into three parts in 1947, are again on the prowl to destroy it completely. The situation cannot be allowed to deteriorate further.

Perhaps, this is not the time to use conventional weapons and means of usual war. However, striving in the fashion of a true knight is in tune with the spiritual discipline of Sikhism and with the spirit of the age. Sikhs must make it their business to resist this despicable colonial trait of permanently trying to control the destinies of a large number of people perceived to be aliens. It is the same frame of mind, which had inspired the medieval potentate Aurangzeb and his modern counterpart Hitler - the two foremost enemies of humankind. New methods and weapons, in consonance with modern sensibilities will have to be forged. Fortunately immense possibilities on that front exist. The Khalsa must immediately muster the spiritual and political will to reject the more degrading neo-colonialism. De-colonisation of the Punjab can either be made a part of the overall scheme or can be made to await its turn. Everything will however be lost if the Khalsa continues to hold the *kirpan*, Avtar Singhs and Mandeep Singh Sodhis continue to be pilloried by the agents of the imperial forces and miseries continue to be heaped on hapless women. The nun of Chhapra is none other than the Sarabjit Kaur of Beas or the Kulwant Kaur of Batala. In the brutal murder of Reverend Steins and his children the Sikhs must see the equally brutal elimination of Kulwant Singh, his wife and their three-year-old son.

The Order of the Khalsa must take all the oppressed under its wings and wage a relentless struggle until oppression is eliminated altogether. Hundreds of thousands of human beings cannot be allowed to be wiped out of existence just because they are Sikhs. Temples sacred to all humanity, such as the Sri Darbar Sahib cannot be allowed to be attacked with impunity. Pigeons around the Pool of Nectar must not be disturbed ever again. Akal Takhat will never again be available for felling by anyone including a tyrant with dynastic ambitions. All brutality, in every form must be ended. Imperial visions of permanent cultural majority are not in keeping with the official stance of a 'socialist democratic republic' adopted by the 'world's largest democracy'. It is alien to the spirit of the new millennium. Such domination is sought in gross violation of the well-defined democratic rights of others. Such designs must be challenged and curbed by all legitimate means. The Khalsa must spearhead the movement to bring this about. This is the tribute the Khalsa must pay to itself in the ter-centenary year of its birth. It must rise to its ordained height. No other motive is necessary and none must be sought. Sikhs and Sikhism must once again effectively exercise the history making potential imparted to them by the infinite grace of the benevolent Guru, *Akal Purakh*.

Chakravyuh was a deadly army formation resorted to by the Kaurva Commander-in-Chief, Guru Dronachariya, common teacher of both Pandavas and Kauravas. Abhimanyu (16), the young son of Arjun and the nephew of the Kauravas, was isolated and killed by seven opposing knights by trapping him in this particularly contrived military manoeuvre. It was a formation, which none other than Arjun and his son could penetrate, and only Arjun knew how to come out of it. Arjun was lured far away from the scene by deception and fraud. At the time of killing, young Abhimanyu was unarmed. It was against the settled laws of war and conventions of chivalry prevalent in the age, to kill an unarmed warrior. The highest ranking seven knights owing allegiance to forces of evil, collaborated to fight and to kill him, though only one of them could have legitimately engaged him, and that too only while he was armed. Mahabharat continues to rule the Hindu mind and condition Hindu behaviour. All the Hindu political parties have erected a Chakravyuh around the Sikhs who have common ancestors with other Indians. They are doing this to the Sikhs behind the façade (chakravyuh) of secular, democratic, republic with written constitution and all the formal paraphernalia in attendance. The object is also the same - to establish a charavartin Hindu empire with no rival power to stand up to it. An all exclusive, unlimited political power with hegemonic control over all other nations inhabiting the sub-continent is the final aim of the Hindu exercise in India.

# SECTION – I

## ANALYSIS AND COMMENTARY

### CHAPTER 1

#### *AMARNAMAH* AN IMPORTANT DOCUMENT OF SIKH HISTORY

*Amarnamah* is a short document of Sikh history written in the Persian language. It can be presumed to be an combination of two different documents on two distinct subjects, as Piara Singh Padam believes. It comprises one hundred and forty-six couplets in all. Nathmal Dhadi, the famous ballad singer who served under Guru Hargobind and all the subsequent Gurus, is believed to be its author. It was discovered in manuscript form in the possession of his descendant Bhai Fatta, who claimed that Nathmal was present at Nanded at the time of Guru Gobind Singh's sojourn and had brought it back from there. It was found appended to a copy of *Sri Gursobha* a contemporary work by Sainapat, in all probability also completed at Nanded during the same period. At the time of discovery it was transcribed in Gurmukhi characters and was later rendered into the original Persian by Dr. Ganda Singh with the help of well-known scholars of Persian. It was published by the Sikh History Society from Amritsar in 1953. This is the edition we are using here. It is one of the rare early documents, which clearly mentions the date of its origin in the text. It was completed on October 08, 1708 just one day after the demise of the Tenth Guru. It is possible to say that it was composed well before October 07, and was dated to October 08, after recording the event of the previous day. Another identifiable date recorded by it is that of the solar eclipse which took place on September 03, 1708, the day Banda Bahadur met the Guru.

This document of great importance has been much neglected by students of history. Its neglect can be only partly explained. The facts it reveals were taken as axiomatic truths at the time of its discovery and no confirmation of them was deemed necessary. By the time its utility became apparent it could not be used, for it then supported no new interpretation of Sikh history or Rahit. It simply gave new information on the tradition, which was being discarded for 'lack of evidence'. Clearly it was an inconvenient document in the age of iconoclasm. Its being available only in Punjabi and Persian may have contributed to its comparative obscurity. One factor that certainly contributed to it was its composition in a style used by ballad singers. They did not care much for continuity and because their singing was interspersed with narration of events, it could make sense only when it was interpreted in that light. This was not attempted.

An English translation of the original is being appended to this short analysis of the document. An attempt has been made to render it somewhat more intelligible to students of theology and history by presenting it as two distinct documents. The background of traditional rendering of ballads has been kept in view while trying to understand it. A careful reading of the text yields unmistakably that Nathmal is its author. His use of the first person while representing the Guru is no more than a customary poetic licence, which is in vogue even today. It need not have misled Ganda Singh into believing that the author was trying to pass it off as the Guru's own composition. On another plane, non-comprehension of this fact has led to a great bulk of the compositions of the so-called *Dasam Granth* being ascribed to the Tenth Guru, although several of

its authors have clearly indicated their authorship in the text. These names have been assigned to the Guru as his pseudonyms. It appears that our ignorance of our own traditions is taking a heavy toll of truth. It is necessary to interpret our records in the context of the times in which they were written, and keeping in view the traditions, which governed their recording.

It can be reasonably inferred from the circumstances of its writing, as it has been done by most scholars who have tried to understand it, that it contains an eye-witness account of the last days of Guru Gobind Singh's life on the banks of the river Godavari. In so far as it records some of the last statements of the Guru, it partly constitutes his last will and testament.

It begins with an account of the Guru's arrival in Nanded. He located his tent near a graveyard. This was much resented by the Muslims of the town. The authorities found nothing wrong with it and the fears of the Muslims were allayed perhaps with the aid of an ingenuously constructed myth. The writer claimed that the Guru had established his prior claim by exhibiting a miracle which establishes that he owned the place from times immemorial.

At that time the place was located in a forest area; in the middle of the nineteenth century we find the central shrine surrounded by a thick forest of keekar trees. Forest dwelling tribes surrounded it. We get a hint from the present work that they had no social interaction with the people of the town. They had no status within the Hindu society and are referred to as 'out-castes' in the present work. The Guru naturally had immense sympathy for them. The choice of residence amongst them also points to this fact. They tried to befriend the Guru and appear to have been regular visitors to his court. Lombada and Banjara tribes are still found in large numbers around the place. These tribesmen and women, clad in their traditional attire, still throng the shrine in large numbers on festival days. The intensity of feeling with which they come to the shrine singing hymns of devotion from the Guru Granth Sahib, to the tune of traditional tribal music, is to be seen to be believed. The Guru became interested in their welfare and started imparting the elementary teachings of Sikhism to them. They would stay on for a meal and would be offered food from the common kitchen. The Guru loved to give them the delicacies that they normally could not afford. Nathmal gives a detailed account of the proceedings: 'The Guru showered his bounties exclusively on the poor people. He gave them an elephant and five tall he-buffaloes. There were large-scale festivities after they had eaten. Ballad singers sang to the congregation in the afternoon. Then came the evening prayer (*rehras*) and *ardas* or congregational supplication. Sacred pudding was distributed at the end. (In his discourse) the Guru asked them to remember God who alone sustained all, exhorted them to have faith in the *Akalpurakh* whom he also worshipped and not to believe in many gods like the Hindus. One must pray only to the Omnipotent *Akalpurakh* and must bow to Him alone'.

The document is useful for shedding limited light on certain aspects of Banda Bahadur's life. However, four aspects of his life and character come through very clearly. First, 'I can say this without the slightest hesitation that his mode of worship is according to the doctrines of Guru Nanak'. His seat rivalled the imperial throne in opulence. The Udasis are known to be fond of rich lifestyle and good clean clothes. From all this it can be deduced that Banda was, perhaps, an *Udasi* Sikh. Second, that he enjoyed a well-established reputation of being a miracle-performing saint with acknowledged dominion over a part of the unseen world. This gave him considerable clout with the rich and the influential of the area. Third, it is certain that he was a strict vegetarian. Fourth, he was of a haughty temperament. Perhaps it was this trait which lost him much following in later days and paved the way for his eventual ruin.

Banda's initial reaction to the Guru and his entourage ('those who worshipped God alone') was that of rejection. Banda, in all probability took the Guru's preaching to the Lombadas, as an attempt at weaning away his flock, and was deeply resentful. Nathmal found him 'full of pride and devoid of love altogether'. He disliked the newcomers. From the seventh and the eighth couplets it is possible to infer that Nathmal was carrying on some dialogue with Banda in behalf of the Guru. Banda perhaps wanted to satisfy himself regarding the Guru's credentials before recognising him as the Tenth Nanak. It was important for him because he would have to end his present life-style and yield all his influence to the Guru if he indeed were Nanak. It also appears that he expected the Emperor to support him in case of a conflict with the Guru. Nathmal was a regular visitor to Banda and was invited to speak to the congregation on the day of the solar eclipse. He attempted a rational explanation of the phenomena ('I stated, this is periodical occurrence'). Banda favoured the traditional common explanation of devils pursuing the debtor sun and seizing him to realise the debt. It is clear from what transpired on September 03, 1708 the day of the solar eclipse, that eventually Banda's objection to submitting to the Guru was on the single point of vegetarianism. The Guru had no time for protracted negotiations and decided to wait no longer. The master psychologist that he was, he forced the issue in such a manner that Banda would be left with no other choice except either accepting him as the Guru or firmly denouncing him forever. Anticipating what was to come, he did not distribute any cattle to the Lombadas on that day. He ordered the Sikhs to get ready for visiting Banda's place. On reaching there, they found him absent. Guru gave instructions for slaughtering Banda's goats. This was immediately done. The jungle-folk knew from experience that the meat was meant for them and came immediately to wait upon the Guru in anticipation. Incidentally it, resulted in providing the audience most relevant to the meeting between the two.

Banda appears to have patronised a small force of well-trained men whom he perhaps advertised as supernatural beings. He dispatched five of them to liquidate the Guru. They came with the enthusiasm inspired by their belief in their own invincibility, in addition to believing themselves to be supported by supernatural evil forces. The Sikhs, however, soon overwhelmed them. They discovered discretion to be the better part of valour and readily submitted, offering to join the *panth*. Thus the only issue of the battle was resolved and they were allowed to return to Banda. They informed him that they could not prevail against the Sikhs and the Guru's supernatural defenders who were more numerous and more efficient. This was a good explanation and made much sense in that age and in those circumstances.

However, Banda's decision to pursue the matter with the Emperor reveals that he did not himself seriously believe in the world of magic and make believe which was woven around him. This is in spite of the fact that he encouraged others to believe in his magical powers.

Banda enlisted the help of the Hindus of the town after sufficiently arousing their religious feelings against the slaughter of his goats on the auspicious day of the solar eclipse. Local leaders of the Hindu aristocracy went in a deputation and waited upon the Emperor with much humility and putting up an effective demonstration of grief and injury, demanded justice. One Nand Lal, an adviser to the Emperor, persuaded him to postpone the decision until after he met the Guru and discussed the matter with him informally. The Emperor took the advice and went to see the Guru along with the deputation. He scrupulously observed the formalities in vogue at the Guru's court and was in return received with the customary courtesy. It is remarkable that Nathmal does not give undue importance to the Emperor's visit. For him the Guru was the true emperor. He represents



the Guru as throwing away the customary gift made by the Emperor in order to bring out his disdain for worldly treasures.

The subject of Hindu resentment was finally brought up. The Guru expressed that the outcastes had a right to be fed and comforted. There was also nothing wrong with the slaughter of goats on the occasion of a natural phenomenon, such as solar eclipse.

The Hindus persisted in the interpretation grounded in their mythology. The absurdity of the devil seizing the sun in order to recover the loan was adequately brought home by the Guru by suggesting that in that case the Hindus must petition the Emperor to resolve the feud between the sun and the pursuing devil. The Hindus soon discovered that their argument was untenable. They were quite embarrassed by the mean nature of charges brought up against the Guru. Eventually they withdrew to their houses with-out insisting on the grievance being redressed.

The Guru continued to perform his mission of relieving suffering and of removing ignorance from wherever it existed, no matter how well entrenched it was, comments the *Amarnamah*. He became the refuge of the tired and the helpless. Banda soon realised that it was immaturity, which led him to deny the Guru's Divine wisdom. Having thus decided to become the instrument for the Guru's purpose, he fell at the Guru's feet in humble supplication, begging for mercy and expecting grace. Eventually, 'the Guru gave him five independent minded Singhs as companions and commanded them to proceed towards the Punjab'. The number five is also significant. Couplet 136, in which the Guru affirms that 'Sikhs have been granted sovereignty of both the worlds and must remain happy under all circumstances' makes more sense when read here.

The other issue he has dealt with at great length is that of a person dying on a cot. Among the Hindus it was customary to transfer the dying person to the ground. Dying on the cot was considered a major sin and condemned the dead person to the supra-natural existence of a *pret*. This condition was an insurmountable hindrance to the final release of the soul or *moksha*. A *pret*, constantly howling mournfully, hovered about between this world and the next, unable to cross the dreadful baitarni river in between the two. In the context of a society having a firm belief in the transmigration of the soul, this condition of the departed person became a matter of great concern for the near and dear survivors. A soul in that situation needed help, which could only be provided by the living through the intervention of authorised persons. This is where the services of the Mahabrahmins or Pandas became necessary. They resided at the places of pilgrimage or *tirthas*, literally rendered the word means a ford. These Brahmins believed themselves alone to have been ordained to receive gifts in behalf of the dead. In return they were believed to have the capacity to take on the sins of the deceased upon themselves, much in the fashion of Jesus Christ, thereby making it possible for the departed person's soul to attain salvation by fording the crucial river.

Since, dying on the cot was a condition, which could not have been extremely rare, the priests exploited it to their benefit. A major portion of the *Amarnamah* (sixty couplets) is devoted to the fate of those who die on the cot. It was perhaps the most exploited condition by the Brahmanical priesthood. Nathmal describes in detail how the grieving relatives would be relieved of all their belongings whenever a dying person could not be removed to the ground to die. They were always tormented with the fear that the deceased had missed going to heaven on that account and would readily sell all their belongings to satisfy the priest who promised to set the matters right for a fee. This was at that time perhaps a great issue; it was certainly the one which rendered the relatives most prone to exploitation.

He relates two such incidents ; one of which took place at the time of the Fifth Guru and the other happened at Nanded before his eyes.

The Guru was informed of a Sikh dying on a cot. It was feared that he would perhaps not attain *mukti* because of that. The Guru's instructions on the manner of disposing off the body were also sought. The Guru assured all those concerned with his eventual fate, that the deceased had most certainly gone to heaven as he was a man of great humility and, in addition had fixed his mind on the Guru in the last moment of his life. They should have no doubt of that. He asked them to perform the *ardas* and to consign the body to the river Ganga (Godavri is popularly known as Dakshin Ganga in the South). No other rituals were found necessary. The rituals performed by Brahmins were specifically forbidden, the Brahmin priest was also not to be called on the occasion. Panegyrics composed by Nathmal were sung to conclude the ceremony.

The other is a long story of a person grappling with the situation created by the death of his father who likewise died on a cot. It brings out his helplessness, heartless psychological exploitation of private grief inspired by superstition, the greed and rapacity of Mahabrahmins who prescribe meaningless rituals aimed at expropriating the meagre belongings of the poor. Futility of pilgrimage to the Ganges is reiterated. It is affirmed that the well at Shakarganj is as sacred as the Ganges at Hardwar. Visiting the places of pilgrimage ceremoniously in order to help the soul of the departed to attain salvation was therefore not necessary. A visit to the Guru's well at Shakarganj was just as good and served the same purpose.

A section is devoted to the Guru's decision 'to go to his permanent abode where, by God's grace everlasting peace prevails', and to the last instructions he gave on the occasion. He greatly stresses the need to shun Brahmanical ways. Sikhs are forbidden to deal with Brahmins who are held responsible for the death of the Guru's four sons. Rituals prescribed by them are to be discarded as they entail unnecessary hardship. Instead, the Sikhs are commanded to sing the songs depicting great deeds (composed by bards). With obvious satisfaction, the bard Nathmal notes that it was prescribed as an alternative mode of worship. The Dhadis are to be well looked after particularly when 'the Sikhs attain to power and glory'. Here there is a clear reference to the Guru's command to the Khalsa to assume political power, for which purpose Banda and his companions have been dispatched to the Punjab.

The Sikhs are commanded to regard Guru Nanak as 'the chief of all incarnations and prophets'. They are exhorted to 'be courageous and to partake of *amrit* of the double-edged sword'. *Amrit* is also to be administered to a newborn baby and to a dying person. The object perhaps is to wean the Sikhs away from elaborate birth and death rituals prescribed by Brahmins. An adult is to take it by way of commitment to follow the Guru's path.

A model procedure of conducting a congregation of the Khalsa is also mentioned. Singing of Gurbani and of ballads commemorating mighty deeds is central to it. After which, all are to sit and eat in the common kitchen. Specific instructions are, 'let no hungry person go unsatiated'. Animals are not to be killed by the process of halal. There is also a mention of the Singhs having greatly increased in numbers.

There are several couplets devoted to the importance of Dhadis in general and of Nathmal in particular. Sikhs are asked to be indulgent towards them. The composers traditionally did all this.

Since their forte was singing praises, poets found it quite in order to put in a few words about themselves. This was not so with the writers of prose, which was considered a deliberate exercise. Poets on the other hand, felt themselves inspired and felt that in praising themselves they were only praising their kind and ultimately the source of their inspiration, that is, God.

An interesting inference, that perhaps the *Sri Gursobha* was also written at Nanded during the Guru's sojourn there, is possible. This inference can be drawn from the concluding note given by the author at the end of the work. Equally significant is his observation that Bhai Nand Lal was also present at Nanded during this period and was up to that time, in the good books of Bahadur Shah. Thus we see that *Amarnamah* is one of the most significant writings relating to the last days of Guru Gobind Singh. It reiterates some of the central Sikh teachings, which the Guru particularly wanted to emphasise during the most crucial phase of his life. It sheds invaluable light on the life, beliefs, reputation and the mission of Banda Singh Bahadur. Some important points of the Sikh *rahit* are highlighted. This small document of colloquial or spoken Persian contains more vital information on the all-important phase of the Guru's life than any other work. As such it has a valid claim to engage the historian's and theologian's attention.

After this brief discussion, a translation of the text of the *Amarnamah* may now be appended:

When the Pure One exercised His great mercy, all the worlds became inhabited (1).  
The Guru pitched his tent at a place on the banks of the Godavari, where existed the graves of those who had found acceptance (at God's court). (2)  
The Muslims made a lot of noise. The Guru exhibited a spectacular miracle (which calmed them)(3).  
There (nearby) resided an ill-tempered mendicant. He claimed dominion over people of the jungle as well as beings of the nether world (4).  
He possessed wooden sandals and a vessel of milk believed to be endowed with miraculous powers. His seat rivalled a royal throne in opulence (5).  
His heart was full of vanity and devoid of love altogether. He hated those who worshipped (Truth) God alone (6).  
I can however, say without the slightest hesitation, that his mode of worship otherwise conforms to the doctrine of Guru Nanak (9).  
He visibly did not relish our proximity with the Emperor (7).  
In the presence of thousands of those (assembled on the occasion of solar eclipse), I stated that this is only a normal (periodical) occurrence (8).  
(One day), after taking the sacramental offering, the Sikhs were ordered (20) to rejoice in the name of Guru Nanak, to relax and to take a swim in the Godavari (21).  
After the promulgation of these orders, distribution of cattle was stopped and no more cows were distributed to the people of the surrounding forest (22).  
(After reaching his place and) on being asked by the Guru to kill the goats belonging to Banda, the obedient Sikhs (11) complied and killed all of them (12).  
(On seeing this) tribal people (of the vicinity) rushed like the wind, betraying eagerness to cook the meat (of slaughtered animals) (13).  
He gave such bounties to none but the poor (who would rarely taste such delicacies) (14).  
An elephant and five he-buffaloes of unusual height were once given away (15).  
It was not his practice to give away cows particularly to forest-dwellers (16).  
After the poor were fed, real royal festivities took place (17).

It all ended by reciting the evening prayer (*rehras*), after which the congregational supplication (*ardas*) was offered. Sacramental pudding (*kerah prasad*) was then distributed to the people (19).

In his heart was the remembrance of the One Sustainer, like whom there is none other (23).

“Do not even think of following the Hindu path (of polytheism). Always have faith in the Akal Purakh I worship (24).

One should bow only to One Omnipotent God in prayer, and from Him alone man derives power and glory” (he preached).

A fourth of the day was left. Singers of ballads then entertained the people (18).

After crossing the Godavari, Banda saw his goats drenched in blood (26).

He sent five of his *birs*, (strong men or the supernatural beings). Each one of them vies with all others to kill the Guru (27).

They tried to hurt, or to hurl devils at the Guru. But the Guru was ever sheltered by the Deathless Being (28).

Banda’s agents ceased their attacks only when overwhelmed by the Guru’s Sikhs (29).

But seeing no other means of saving their lives they submitted to the Guru and offered to join his *panth* (34).

Much harassed and embarrassed they returned to Banda, bleeding profusely from wounds received in battle with the Guru (30).

They reported that they had been badly battered and could save themselves with great difficulty (31).

‘Countless other warriors were prepared to sacrifice their lives for the Guru, and even the unseen horsemen were supporting him’ (32).

‘We are not afraid of the sixty-four Amazons of the (nether world) nor of the fifty-two Archers’, they said (33).

Banda rushed to the nearby Nanded town and collected a large number of Hindus for support against the Guru. (35).

He told them that the Guru had killed his goats at the auspicious time of the solar eclipse (36).

The Hindus supported him fully and approached the Emperor in his behalf (37).

All the well-to-do Hindus, *amirs* and *wazirs*, having access to the Emperor, (38)

Lamented that the Guru had ruined them. (39).

All the appellants stood before the Emperor in great humility and implored for justice (40).

They were extremely resentful and highly demonstrative of their grief. It made the Emperor seriously consider their petition (41).

One Nand Lal was amongst the advisers of this powerful sovereign. (He persuaded the Emperor to personally discuss the matter with the Guru) (42).

In extreme anxiety all the Hindus accompanied the Emperor to the Godavari to see the Guru (43).

It was a wonderful time and the Guru was in deep meditation (44).

The Emperor made the customary offerings of a couple of diamonds and a (costly) pearl (45).

To his great surprise the Guru threw the pearl into the river (46).

To the Sultan he explained that the river had sought the offering from him (47).

The Emperor, who had already heard of the Guru’s greatness, folded his hands in courtesy (48).

Seeing nothing evil, the Guru graciously offered him a seat beside himself (49).

The Sultan then approached the subject of Hindu resentment and unrest (50).

The Guru explained the reality and said that he only gave to those people the food that they relish the most (53).

These outcasts loved alcohol and meat and that is why he had given the goats to them (54). The Hindus (sticking to their proposition) asserted that the cause of the solar eclipse was the seizure of the sun by the demon (52).

(To bring the absurdity in focus,) the Guru suggested to the Emperor that in that case he (that is, the State) should do justice and relieve the suffering of the sun by clearing its debt (51).

All the Hindus felt ashamed and embarrassed (over the frivolous charges they had brought against the Guru) and retreated to their homes (55)

He (Banda) fell at the Guru's feet in humble supplication, begging for mercy and grace (56). Commanding him to proceed to the Punjab, the Guru deputed five independent minded Singhs to accompany him (57).

As directed by God, the Guru continued his mission (to relieve the suffering) in this world inflicted with sorrow (58).

He spoke, as a man of Truth should. This is why many frustrated and helpless people sought refuge in him (59).

None can, however, help those immature people who, being steeped in ignorance, do not accept the divine wisdom of the Guru (60).

His mind was made up. He wanted to go to his permanent abode where by God's grace everlasting peace prevails (61).

The Singhs must never let their minds waver and must always contemplate on the deeds of heroes, sung by minstrels (62).

Sikhs must not do what the Brahmin commands. Do not kill animals by the process of halal (132).

Sikhs should be ashamed of worshipping Brahmins, because they were responsible for the death of the four sons of the Tenth Guru (140).

Guru Nanak was the chief of all incarnations and prophets (134).

He who lives in the Guru's will, shall have his wishes regarding progeny fulfilled (133).

Sikhs have been granted sovereignty of both the worlds and must retain high spirits under all circumstances (136).

The Guru commanded the Sikhs to be courageous and to come to him for taking *amrit* (of the double-edged sword) (137).

Those who would be Singhs must look forward to having *amrit* at three important stages in life. A new-born baby must be administered *amrit* (142).

So that the enemy does not overwhelm him, he should take baptism when he attains youth (143).

At the time of death *amrit* is a source of comfort and leads to the Guru's *darshan* (144).

One of the Singhs residing at Nanded died on a cot (66).

The Guru was immediately informed that there was no one with him when death struck (and hence he could not be shifted to the ground) (67).

The informants were worried that the deceased, (according to popular superstition) would not attain release (*mukti*) (68).

They sought instructions regarding the mode of disposal of the body of a person who had died in such a situation. They wondered whether it was to be consigned to the river or fire (69).

The Guru instructed them to shed all apprehension regarding the eventual fate of the deceased. 'For surely like all men of humility, he had earned a place in heaven' (70).

Of this there is no doubt since with his last breath he contemplated on the Guru (71).  
 “Perform the *ardas* (congregational supplication) and consign his body to the Ganga. Do not entertain any fear or doubt on this account (72).  
 “Do not summon the Brahmin priest to perform the last rites, nor invoke his ancestors”. Instead Dhadis be asked to sing vars (odes to heroes) composed by Nathmal (73).  
 “Remembering God, set the corpse afloat in the Ganga” (74).  
 Another case of a person, who died in similar circumstances, has been recorded. Guru Arjun, the Fifth Guru, has related this story (75).  
 It is about a resident of Bakala. The incident took place at the well in Shakarganj near Kartarpur (76).  
 The person was poor and humble. He had a wife and a fine horse (77).  
 All his worldly possessions consisted of a small piece of land and one bullock. His father was very old (78).  
 He was out sowing the *Kharif* crop. His wife had also gone to deliver his food at work (79).  
 Leaving his father to the care of God. The old person died in the cot (80).  
 When the couple returned home, the incident became the topic of discussion in the community (81).  
 But because that blessed man had uttered the Guru’s name, he was admitted to heaven along with the cot (82).  
 The Sikh approached a Brahmin priest who advised him as follows: (83)  
 “Your father has died as a sinner. I will perform ceremonies which will bring about his deliverance”. (84).  
 For the sake of his honour in this world and salvation of his father in the next, (86),  
 Steeped in sadness, the Sikh agreed to do whatever the Brahmin demanded (85).  
 The Brahmin extorted all the money that the poor man could arrange. (87).  
 He advised him to cremate his father, and to proceed to the Ganges for giving additional liberal alms (88).  
 After a visit to the Ganges, it would no longer be a sin for him to drink water from a well (89).  
 The Sikh consulted his wife and cremated his father (90).  
 He sold off his bullock and along with his wife, left for Hardwar (91).  
 Of the proceeds, he spared only three coins for his wife and gave away the rest to the Brahmin (92).  
 They left Batala after having parted even with his wife’s ornaments (93).  
 The couple crossed the river Beas and reached Kartarpur (94).  
 He expressed to his wife his desire to see the Guru, which would be a meritorious act (95).  
 The lady readily agreed to the good proposal and they resolved that they would proceed to the Ganges thereafter (96).  
 With hands folded in supplication, the couple made their obeisance to the Guru (97).  
 The Sikh paid sincere tributes to the Guru who blessed him and his family (98).  
 However, he could not help crying as they prepared to depart. The Guru asked the good man where he was proceeding to (99).  
 He replied that he was proceeding to the Ganges to atone for the sin of his father having died on the cot (100).  
 ‘Before the calamity, I used to till my fields with bullocks and had no worry about earning my bread (101),  
 Relieved of whatever we had, we have started on the journey to the Ganges’ (102).  
 This distressed the Guru. He expressed his annoyance at the Brahmin (103).

Then he instructed the Sikhs not to give anything to such greedy people. ‘The Guru is the real refuge of the Sikhs and is ever merciful to them’ (104).

The Guru held the Sikh’s hand so that he could see his father in heaven (105).

The Guru had sent the lucky man to heaven along with the cot he died in (106).

The deceased was also overjoyed to see his son and wondered who had brought him there (107).

Calling him the luckiest man on earth, he advised him to love the Guru’s name even more dearly than his life (108).

‘Through your kindness I have been so blessed. People suffer much when they turn away from the Guru’ (109).

He heard this, returned to Kartarpur and offered his prayer in the Guru’s presence (110).

The Guru said that God’s greatness has been revealed to the Sikh, which is normally concealed from people of this world (111).

He sent the pure minded Sikh to fetch some Ganges-water for the Guru (112).

Commanding him to bring it back in the vessel entrusted to him, besides the one normally used by pilgrims (113).

But the Sikh lost the container given by the Guru while bathing there and could not trace it in spite of best effort (114).

So he replaced it by purchasing one from the local market (115).

He filled it with Ganges-water and returned to Kartarpur (116).

The omniscient Guru already knew of the episode of the vessel (117)

And commanded the Sikh to tell the truth (118).

On his admitting the loss of the container in the Ganges, the Guru remarked that he would recover it from the river (119).

The Guru sent him to the well at Shakarganj to collect the same vessel (120).

The Sikh saw the Ganges flowing in the well, and found innumerable vessels floating in the water (121).

Since the Guru had told him to pick out the particular utensil only, although he may see many more (123);

Without hesitation he prayed to the Guru to identify the particular container (122).

Eventually the Ganges herself called out to him and pointed out the required utensil. The Sikh returned to the Guru, extremely happy (124).

He declared that the Ganges was no more at Hardwar, since he had seen it flowing in the well at Shakarganj (125).

Addressing the Sikh as ‘brother’, the Guru asked him to consider whether pilgrimage to the Ganges would confer more spiritual merit than the one to the well at Shakarganj (126).

When the Sikhs hold celebrations, it is proper for them to listen to vars by Dhadis (135).

One mode of worshipping God is also listening to poems of heroic deeds from the Dhadis or traditional singers side by side with the exposition of the Guru’s word (129).

Wasn’t it the practice of Guru Nanak who always retained Mardana by his side? (138).

Inspired by Guru Nanak’s example, the Tenth Guru always retained Nathmal Dhadi with him (139).

Dhadis must always accompany the Singhs who must not eat without the Dhadis (being around) (137).

Let Mardana’s descendants (or those who follow his practice) first sing the Guru’s *shabads* and thereafter let the Dhadis take the stage (130).

Thereafter sit with decent people and eat from the common kitchen. Let no hungry person remain unsatiated (131).

By now the Sikhs have greatly increased in numbers (and for their edification) this *Amarnamah* was bestowed by the Guru on Nathmal (145).

The singing minstrels are as dear to the Guru as the Singhs are. This account of travels, *Amarnamah*, will be loved much by singers (63).

They were asked to often recite the *Amarnamah* to the Singhs (64).

A Dhadi surely is an asset to adorn any gathering (of the cultured) and *Amarnamah* enhances the worth of a Dhadi (146).

When the Singhs attain to power and glory, they will ensure prosperity for singers (65).

Here ends the *Amarnamah* of the Tenth King. (It was) completed in compliance with his orders in the month of Katak the year 1765 *Bikrami* (1708 CE). (It is being) added on to the book *Gursobha*, written to enhance the glory of the Guru.



## CHAPTER 2

### EARLY WARNING BELLS

Dear Sir John Simon,

The Indian situation is indeed very complex and baffles all kinds of genius to find a royal road to India's freedom. It may not be out of place at this stage when changes in the Constitution are under contemplation to write to you a few thoughts that occur to me as one of the ryot. They may be of no direct help to you but I am sure they would reveal a bit of the mind of an Indian who is in the thick of all mental confusions and naturally reads more of the minds of his people than any foreigner can.

I see the boycott of your Commission is already getting weak. The most ardent boycotters have published their proposed Constitution. Thus they have put their views indirectly before you. It appears to me even if they had boycotted you completely as they intended, this temporary loss of temper on their part could have been treated but as trivial. Let me say frankly there is no ghost of a chance of a successful revolution in India at least at the call of these intellectuals. If it could come at their call, it is certainly overdue because in the verity of things, there is nothing like freedom. In reality, there are many sudden turns in the affairs of men, and your countrymen are also afraid of a possible revolution, of course till it does not actually come. An armed revolt being out of question, I know, between you and them, there will be much of the usual give and take, a lot of crossing of t's and dotting of i's. This business of writing of Constitution by Pundit Moti Lal Nehru or yourself is of little interest to us poor farmers of India. And why?

#### *1. The Witches' Cauldron*

When things descend to melancholy, details of daily life and to the carrying out of these fine Constitutions in the spirit of practical sympathy, there is very little man material in India which can be singled out truly as cultured and rightly trained to deserve the title "Indian" which means one who, like a Japanese or an Englishman, will place before himself the interest of the country as a whole, first and foremost, and who would burn with a passion for its service. There are Hindus, Sikhs, Moslems, Christians, Parsis, and Jains, in India but very few Indians. And strange as it may sound, it is quite true that those who have removed those labels are empty bottles, without having any character of wine, of acid, or of poison. They are of no account, because, for centuries, in India the formation of character has been associated, not with the practice of broad-minded patriotism but with certain racial prejudices and social superstitions. It is, therefore, not extricable from the so called religious bias and bigotry. Self Government in India means Government by the very few cunning and aggressive people who, once put in possession of authority, would twist all letters of law and constitutions to their individual wills and make them work on the communal or the so called religious bias.

The Moslem does not believe in any country as his own. He believes in a brotherhood which, by its sheer number, must conquer the whole world. To him, political advancement of the Moslem brotherhood is his real progress. From a racial point of view, this Moslem outlook is worthy of praise, and as such a community of people, unless forced by compelling circumstances, forever refuse to live under any alien domination. The Moslem essentially desires to rule over the world and even his children dream of a pan-Islamic Asiatic Empire.

The interest of Moslems in India cannot be national in the sense that the national Congress of the Hindu Intellectuals so far has been declaring to mean. Men of exceptional outlooks can be found in all races, and in India's Moslems also. To get such exceptions together at Lucknow and find agreements merely on the surface of things in certain wordings of a few formal resolutions to agree to the Nehru Committee's Draft, is to me a ludicrous unreality of the so-called history-making announcements.

I was going to say, it is indulgence of the Indian intellectuals in happy phrases when the country is slowly and surely going from bad to worse. For the reason given, which is in the very constitution of the Moslem mentality, he can come to no terms with the Hindu but those that give him the domination and advantage over the Hindu and all other low-lying communities living in India. Any compromise arrived at would collapse as soon as the Moslem finds out that it is not to his interest and he would be thereby put merely in a position of disadvantage. Agreements bought at such a price are not worth the paper on which they are written. Surely, the Nehru Report is not founded on true patriotism nor true nationalism in which the individual community merges into the larger nation with a flaming passion.

Come to the Hindu. He is the implacable but cowardly foe of the Moslem. He does not trust him and in the heart of his heart, he considers him filthy, cow eating, treacherous, barbarous, one capable of any tyranny, rapine, plunder and cruelty. Even the touch of a Moslem pollutes his food! The Hindu believes his own culture and caste superior to all other human institutions. He alone is pure. For this very attitude, in him also, there can be no genuine feeling akin to that noble patriotism which shapes the destinies of nations to their freedom and progress as in the West.

Thus there are two distinct mentalities at daggers drawn, in spite of professing friendship and political union and social amities. One is aggressive, self assertive, revengeful mentality of a united people of one religion, one creed, one caste, with a dream of an empire driving them onward. The other is the self-centered bias of a highly conservative, non-progressive, over-individualized, indifferent, disunited, dollar-loving people who have consented to be slaves for centuries. The Hindu is still referring, for orders, to his old scriptures from where no more orders come. He cannot raise the marriage-able age of the girl. He cannot remarry his child widow. He cannot give up caste and superstitions. He is hopelessly bound with the past, somewhat like the Russian peasant tied to the superstitions of the Roman Catholic Church. This eternal difference between the Hindu and the Moslem is seen by Dr. James Cousins even up to the method of wearing the Hindu dhoti and the Moslem trousers.

TANSEN -

It is, your majesty,  
And it would be a song most pitiful  
That Akbar's legs were traitors to his feet,  
And after these long miles of journeying  
Flaunted discovery. An hour ago  
I died to Islam and was born to a Hindu  
But you are struck halfway from life to life  
Loins downward shamelessly a Mussalman

AKBAR -

I have seen Hindu trousered.

TANSEN -

Very true,  
But there is something deeper than the fact  
That has escaped you. Take a pair of trousers  
From Muslim's legs and put them on a Hindu's  
And they will seem alike aliens of the race.  
Aye, perverts from the faith. No, no too much  
Hangs from your waist to risk. Here take this cloth  
And reincarnate quickly.

AKBAR -

If my limbs  
Could ape the Hindu as glibly as your tongue  
Takes on his language. I far more would fear  
To lose myself in that which we assume,  
Than be unmasked, and so I rather choose  
To don the Hindu than to slough the Muslim,  
And being both be either at the need.  
*(He has put on a Hindu dhoti or skirt)*

TANSEN

“Well, well the risk at least is covered up. “-

The King's wife.

Then there are Sikhs, for example, amongst many important newly created nations. And each of these minorities is pulling in its own way because each one believes in a new inspiration and a new life that it wishes to save by cutting itself from the Hindu stock. If the mother-stock shoots up, the beauty and life of the new graft will go. For example, the Sikh believes in the inspirations of the Ten Gurus. His past begins from Guru Nanak and his future lies in the progress of his ideals. His masters did cut off a portion from the dead stock of Hindus and infuse a new life into it. They isolated the Sikhs from the disintegrating people called the Hindus who are self-hypnotized slaves of a peculiar theological tyranny of complex intrigue of Brahmanism. The Sikh Gurus moulded a fine strong nation out of the terror-stricken masses. All historians admit the worth of this great experiment of the Gurus and appreciate how Guru Gobind Singh infused a spirit similar to the Bushido Spirit of the Japanese into his Sikhs. The Guru isolated them from the dead mass around. The Sikh keeps long hair, wears a sword. However ridiculous these signs may appear to the modern, considered under the local social conditions of India and the environmental context, they are the fruits of an act of genius which has concealed the new life of a whole nation under such trivial things-the knot of hair and beard-as nature conceals the lightning spark in the soft wool of clouds. Hindus have seen that this process is against them. The Guru has declared the Hindu dead as long as he does not join his Khalsa for his emancipation. The Hindu cannot tolerate such experimental condemnations of his caste and religion as the Guru makes by the very reactivity of his fresh inspiration on the masses of the Punjab. The Hindu turned down Buddhism in the past and is thinking of devouring Sikhism, because both systems condemn the Hindu tyranny of caste masquerading as religion of love. A few straws show which way the wind blows. Mahatma Gandhi preaches against keeping of hair. He denounces those Sikh shouts of conquests as communal as against national, with which they battered the Mughal tyranny and became a free nation. The Sikh

will die if he cuts his hair and assumes the Hindu shape. The patronizing attitude which the Nehru Constitution adopts towards the Sikhs is the policy of the Hindu Congress to include the Sikhs in the Hindus.

Dear Sir John Simon! There yonder are the witches who have put their cauldron on fire. And these matters cannot be settled till the witches' cauldron boils and incantations are murmured. Vapours rise and in them there are acting and reacting upon each other the communal tensions and inflammable prejudices.

You might have already seen the scene of the Walpurgis night of Goeth's Faust in India. There is some fearsome conspiracy against the poor people who till the soil. What can be done by you or any one to help them? Biblical truth that thy enemies shall be of thy own household appears to be true of the Indian intellectuals, who deceive themselves in imagining that they are the saviours of the poor people-Saviours with what? They but organize an empty handed protest and noise of wayward meetings of the mob against the British.

### *A few imaginings*

Let us indulge, while face to face with the witches, in some imaginings, if, perchance, some stray flight of the flying horse of the Arabian Nights might take me and you out of this ghostly darkness. Ah! could nature send its bolt from the blue and break this huge peninsula into small little islands! Ah! could the Engineer divide it by many a Panama canal. Failing this geographical division, could India be cut up and divided anew to make more harmonious Presidencies with the population of the Hindu with his various castes that in practical life form many small nations in themselves, and the Moslem, equally balanced in the practical exercise of political power that the British might give them out of their great mercy for fallen nations!!

I put it down merely for making the impossible possible. Suppose, as one the suggestions, Gujrat, Kathiawar, a portion of C.P., the Sind, the Punjab and the North Western Frontier are made into one Presidency, a portion of Bombay goes with Madras as a second Presidency and half of Madras is lumped up with Bengal as the third, Bihar and U.P. and a portion of C.P. constitutes the fourth Presidency.

The Hindus in this division of India can be treated as many diverse communities. Because the differences between Brahmin and Non-Brahman are as acute as between the Hindu and the Moslem, between the Hindu and the Sikh. And these new Harmony Presidencies of India could be conveniently sub-divided into small independent States governed by one Presidency Legislative Council and one Governor. To give the latter to small Provinces would be ruinously costly. On the other hand to have large Harmony Presidencies would be too unwieldy for administration of justice etc. , if they are not cut up into small autonomous States. This administrative cutting up of India would set in process for the development of India into the future independent United States of Asia. You are asked to hand India over to us by the Nehru committee. Failing the re-division of India into New Harmony Presidencies, it would be a much better feat of farsighted statesmanship to hand it over to a benevolent dictatorship of some kind.

Perhaps you will say I am wasting your time; but I assure you, you and your friends will be equally wasting your time if you, only as constitutional lawyers, sitting down like Pandit Moti Lal Nehru and the men of his mind, write Constitution for this India where the witches' cauldron is boiling and Walpurgis night is on. Any Constitution coming in here like this essentially means the

domination of one community over all others which must be kept in a permanent state of suspended animation. All progress under such Constitutions shall be one-*communal* and not *multi-communal*. It would no more be dyarchy but it would be a form of civil anarchy in administration run by an autocratic and communal majority. The herd and its vote does not really matter. The whole District is run by a few officers. They are not chosen by the people. They are the real autocrats. And if the services are corrupted by communal bias, it is the more powerful community that shall drive the others in practical details of administration. The Hindu if he is in the chair would tease the Moslem mass and if the Moslem is in authority he would injure the Hindu mass. Votes for electing a truly representative Legislative body under such conditions of communal tension in securing the monopoly of authority under any such system as adumbrated by the Nehru Committee shall, for all times, be wholly impotent and ineffective in maintaining the morale of the public services. The adult franchise is but the herd vote.

By giving the Montford Reforms you took away all the *noblessee oblige* of the "Steel frame" services which did work like irresponsible autocrats but in a spirit in which there was some odour of benevolence. After the Reforms, India has become no one's land, the cost of administration has gone up and the spirit of the services demoralized. The past cannot be brought back and the future cannot be assured, neither as you might wish nor as they might desire. It has become no one's business for example, to *look after the costs of the Government*.

You have tried for the last hundred years to teach us and to make us into a free nation as you say, but, unlike the Afghans who are much less civilized than ourselves, in spite of your intentions, we, as a people, are but a set of women who can just dangle their bangles on their wrists and pose beautiful. America threw your tea into the sea and Washington led and then was the Constitution drafted. One can understand Abraham Lincoln proclaiming from the housetops his grand political maxim-*the Government of the people, by the people, for the people*. That was some culture, some education which grew restless and effectively restless for its freedom. But a trained statesman must laugh in his sleeves at the impotence of men like Gandhi and Moti Lal Nehru, who wish to be Abraham Lincolns of India without the substance which entitles the people on this earth with human nature as constituted, to liberty. I have said you have tried a hundred years to educate us and look at this great and disappointing intellectual disaster. There is not one Amanullah in this country of India, there is not one Kamal Pasha. This fundamental problem of education which you also have taken into your hands is such as cannot be solved *by systems but by men*.

If you really wish to lead India to independence or Dominion status which practically means independence with an empty and courteous bow to England, I say, do not give the poor people of India, Constitutions, do not define their rights. Let all these things come later, but give us say a real Dictator to train at least one province, say the Punjab, at the cost of the whole of India and make it really *independent* and see incidentally with what sport other provinces bear this wonderful concentration for the sake of the uplift of their brothers of blood of the Punjab. So far, either you have not done your best to educate us or you are unfit to organize nations to freedom. You must confess either unwillingness to make us men, free men, or the utter incompetence of your system and men as you have so far given us. The education our Universities are giving is the imitation of that luxurious academic training which you give to your youths to enable them to run the Empire and its Embassies. Of what use is it to us? Afghans have arsenals, aeroplanes, but we are rendered so impotent that our youths cannot earn their living!! We get mere crumbs that fall from the Olympian Tables. All, in India, must overwork to death to have one meal a day or die of starvation. We the farmers are crushed under steel heels.

### *A bit of brutal frankness*

Coming to practical problems which I am afraid the more you think about, the more theoretical and unpractical they grow, you would see some great minds become mad while thinking of India. The sign of madness is that they go on preaching but one fad. You must agree with me that if we were a people and we had any power or if we were less civilized and more manly with some ground under our feet, you would have not entered our house and said: "Now boys be quiet, we run your home for your good". You must admit that your proclamations are only political speeches which mean very little, because if you really wanted, you would have by these hundred years and more made us men fit for self-government. As I have already pointed out, if this is not correct then you as a nation are hopelessly unfit for organizing people to their political freedom. Hence we think you only know how to run the Government and utilize the country in your own ways for your own good. Whatever may be the case, our suspicion is that you did not and perhaps do not mean to help us to freedom.

On your side, there are suspicions against us. If you arm us, we may revolt and be free. Of course if you had meant to give us independence you might have taken that risk. But you did not and naturally you would not.

The general man strength of this country is getting low every day in various ways. Defective education, slow and systematic economic drain, and want of opportunity for our being made armed soldiers for the defence of this country are a few amongst many. Dadabhai Naroojee and William Digby say that India is being bled white. Lord Curzon supports them in the contention that India is the poorest country in the world. Imagine, if this country belonged to you in another sense, you would have secured long ago her economic independence. That indeed must be your first concern even if for doing it, you have to make India an English colony like Australia. Why has Australia grown into a power in such a short time? The Indian thinkers should have given up their case for her political independence even in their "class rooms" of these mockeries of Legislative Assemblies, had they not come to the grim conclusion that because of our being helpless dependents, ground by your system of drainage of our wealth and consequently of strength, we cannot possibly secure our economic independence till we get rid of you.

It is the irony of fate that there may be prosperity in our budgets and in the trade statistics, but the *masses* are growing weaker and weaker for want of food. We the tillers of the soil are famishing. Millions there are who scarcely get one full meal a day. They are good soil for the growth of plague germs, malarial parasites, kala azar and consumption. Man and woman material is fast decaying. This is the fundamental indictment against your policy of drift. Closely connected with this policy is the academic knowledge being imparted to the youths of the country by our Universities. This knowledge falsely stimulates the intellects. The stimulated intellect wishes to surround itself with higher standards of life than the productive capacity of the country can permit or its undeveloped resources can afford. What is that strange system that does not change for the good of the people, aye for keeping them alive? As I will show later, this has given birth to an artificial prosperous middle class in the country mainly made up of the variety of Government services. I, therefore, appeal to you to realize the situation as it is in reality, and do something substantial to avert this disaster. What use indeed are those ponderous unwieldy Royal Commissions on Industry and Agriculture that came and went. You will see that the Agricultural Commission has clearly left the problem as it was. Their conclusions and suggestions are mere yawns of an exhausted listener who has been made to hear so much volume of vague and vaporous opinions. It was not necessary that they should have come all the way and gone through all that

travail to tell His Excellency the Viceroy of India that the Economic condition of the Indian farmer needs immediate looking after. The Commission on Industries came to the ridiculous conclusions of tow more Imperial Services! You must admit that this is not how living nations are doing their business of development now, nor how the Japanese would tackle a life and death problem like this.

Provision of cheap and good food to the millions of Indian farmers is more important than the declaration of the rights of the people. Much is being side shunted for purposes of political show. Allow me to put a little suggestion here. Mahatma Gandhi, for example, thinks that we men should spin like women and he repeats the gospel of khaddar, as I have said, like genius gone mad when thinking on the complex problem of Indian freedom. Thus he wishes to give useful employment to the farmers to clothe themselves, but what use is clothing of men who are starving and have no strength for any extra employment? Why is the dairy industry dying all over? It is a prominently agricultural occupation. There are no pastures provided. For example, Government sells land in the Punjab colonies by auction to raise as much money as possible. This is helping the capitalist and killing the farmer. No lands have been reserved by the Government as open pastures for each village. Consequently, it has become uneconomical to keep herds of milch cattle. This has led the farmer to adulterate his ghee with hydrogenised oils. If people could be helped by grants of large tracts of lands as pastures all over India, the home industry of ghee making would pay better than *khaddar*. They would have plenty of milk to drink. It is better to go nude but well-fed. When they are well-fed, *khaddar* making certainly can be an additional advantage and the women could spin like old Eve, and the poor masses could again throw up some coppice of life.

The very foundation of the society and the Government, *the Indian tiller* is being sapped. The permanent settlement system in Bengal has worked havoc. The Taluqdars of Oudh and the United Provinces are a kind of ransacking "permanent settlement of Bengal". The Taluqdars are the middle men between the tillers and the Government. They overtax them and overwork them. Practically the middle class which should be consisting of the tillers and the farmers in this most agricultural country in the world, as we happily yet find a little in the Punjab, has practically disappeared in Bengal, in Bihar and in the United Provinces. I am afraid it is also fast disappearing from the Punjab. Consciously or unconsciously the Government has helped the rise of men the type of the late Sir Ganga Ram in the Punjab, who are engines of destruction of the real middle class of wealth-creative labourers who form the back bone of all nations of the world. And why have such men made millions? Because the Government is so hopelessly devoid of true experts. The experts of the Government gaped like wax toys in utter astonishment finding men like Sir Ganga Ram succeeding in lift irrigation which they had not even imagined as profitable.

Thus, when the flood is sweeping on the very foundation of the Government and society, the farmer and the tiller of the soil, will you sit to define the rights of the people or first save them from death?

The economic condition of the Indian farmer can be improved by the future Indian *Constitution siding with the farmers and the tillers of the soil and not with the capitalistic combines and influences working in India or in England*. Real improvements in Indian agriculture would come through the Constitutions and special Legislations and not through the so called agricultural experts till the economic condition of the farmer goes up to a certain standard. The Agricultural expert is of very little use to him. The application of modern agricultural knowledge which is so far advanced and has become popular knowledge in other countries is a matter of propaganda for a long time yet in India. This propaganda reaches home through commercial concerns better than through these huge

and luxurious Imperial departments of the Government of India. The very first thing is to abolish the Imperial Science Services and reorganize the Scientific Research. The Government Services should be reduced and expenditure on the remaining few and essential few must be cut down to very minimum. The Japanese Prime Minister is getting less pay than that of an ordinary Deputy Commissioner of India!

All salaries of the Government services form a part of the general plunder of the farmer and the tiller on whom the only addition to services, the class of lawyers, the Government contractors, and suppliers should be considered parasites living on the revenues of the country. As said above, the Government servants and his class of people constitute an artificial middle class in India who keep up a show of prosperity. They are consumers of wealth and not the producers thereof. All the fire-work of prosperity is being displayed at the grim cost of the farmer's body and soul. A contractor who may not be able to earn by his own power even one hundred a month does manage by some fluke to make hundreds of thousands from the Government. The Government muddles up things when they find themselves being looted in broad day-light. For example, they start stores purchase department, not knowing that this service would add another middle man to the numerous middle men between the Government and the manufacturers. So any remedy made out by the Government is generally worse than the disease. The Government is run on files that are mostly very clean and well-written! All is well with the files, but the broad day-light waste is rampant.

Again the centralization of all commercial concerns... the Railways, forests, store purchase, construction, buildings and roads... as Imperial services and departments is hopelessly costly and inefficient. The bulkiness of the country and its requirements needed splitting up of work, giving commercial concerns to commercial people or to public companies. Failing to find English and Indian experts commercial boards of international experts of all nations can be asked to come in and run these concerns in a pure business like way. The policy of not bringing in foreign experts whenever required apparently either for political reasons or for reasons of jealousy to provide high billets only to Englishmen, tends to inefficiency that can never be found out by any Government however well meaning and anxious for the welfare of the people. But there is something rotten in the State of Denmark. These very countrymen of yours manage things so well, say in Australia. One is driven to the conclusion -split up India, reduce the cost of administration, and increase the efficiency of the men who work in the systems. Ring out policy of false prestige and waste and ring in the Policy of Honest Work for the uplift and development of the people. The greater the number of Government services, the more costly and less efficient the general administration. The hugeness of office work takes away the genius of Government for the efficient management of the State affairs. To use a military metaphor, the present Government of India with its variety of Services is like the Army in the trenches without the general staff behind. The Government looks like an emergency Government even in times of peace. The Government shows huge profits of these departments, but never considers at what comparative cost. It is wrong to be satisfied with the declared profits. Can those profits be made still more and at a very much less cost? Could not the land-tax be decreased and the tillers of the soil given relief. What is the meaning of a policy that makes profits and spends on the consuming and unproductive artificial middle class?

In commercial departments, to lend the security and prestige of the Government service leads to excessive corruption as in the case of Railways and to neglect of duty and general inefficiency as in the case of the so-called Research Departments in India. Scientific Research should never be departmental. It should be surrounded by the whole world's critical atmosphere where no third class mediocres be able to breathe. To make Imperial Departments of science and



scientific enquiry is immoral, considering that no Government can well criticize its experts. Research should be handed over to the Universities. The Universities should not be merely examining bodies as they are at present in India but great cultural world centers. They should be not Indian but International in the greatness of their teachers and in the quality of their work done by their laboratories and their luminaries. The staff should rise or fall by their international reputation. The merest types are put in charge of the Research Departments.

My plea is that you should define in the new Constitution the real and limited function of the Government. Running business concerns as Imperial Departments should be discouraged. Scientific Research, as said above, of India should be under the Universities of fame, under the governance of men whose reputation for honest, scientific work is beyond doubt. What use is any Scientific Council of Government officials? The great men can wear no yoke. It is men of true scientific independence and of the unbiased scientific mind that shall control research. Surely not the mere file-makers and Imperialistic experts.

### ***The Proposed Remedies***

I have pointed out what occurs to me as fundamentally wrong in the Constitution of the people and the Institutions of the Government of India. I have drawn your attention to the economic condition of the people who are the backbone of the Government and how the Government unnecessarily feeds its huge bulky and inefficient services at the cost of the ryot. There is the false glitter of an artificial middle class in India, which consists of Government servants and parasites.

What are the remedies then? It is for you to find them out and not end as did the Industrial and Agricultural Commissions.

Let us look at the remedies proposed by more brainy people than myself. The remedy proposed by Gandhi is "*khaddar*, non-violent non-co-operation and eventually civil disobedience. "He, too, however has seen the scene of Walpurgis night in India. The witches on the hearth are against him. In India alone you have mob-war on the Sikh-made mutton and the Muslim-made mutton, on music before the mosque, on the killing of cows! They are ephemeral vapours of the witches cauldron. The impossible condition attached with Gandhi's remedy is self-sacrifice without an end. All self-sacrifice in political matters is for the gain of political ends. When these advantages are never in sight, self-sacrifice in such matters can never become the religion of the people. Gandhi wishes to make the politics of India some such religion which can only be the impossible religion of a few Christ-like men, and of the minds who can never stoop down from those heights.

And the Nehru draft. The Hindu has bowed down to the wind. It is ushering in of evil anarchy in which, heads, one community wins and tails, all others lose. In fact the Muslim has floored the Hindu by creating a Kohat and a Lahore for him. Mahatma Gandhi and others all say as India is not homogeneous for there is the Muslim, this is the best compromise under the critical local conditions.

Supposing you were to go and leave the country, there would set in an anarchy, in which all communities will have an equal opportunity to fight to any fate of freedom or eternal slavery. And the Hindu-Sanskrit culture and intelligence will be put again to a military test. One Khilji did walk over from Delhi to Cape Comorin with a few armed soldiers unopposed by the Hindu millions. He who occupied the Punjab occupied the whole of India with one pitched battle near Delhi or Agra.

This is the history of the Hindu's defence of his country and of himself. The same is the case to-day. He who governs the Punjab governs the whole of India. In the Nehru Constitution, the Muslim has completely defeated the Hindu. The great anarchy, creative of equal opportunities for all and the victory of one community over all others, is not to come but this incipient consumption-like civil anarchy is welcomed in the Nehru Constitution by all kinds of men! It shows how in their zeal for mere tall talks on national work, they are blind to the practical effects of their proposals on the governed masses. If it is not the collapse of the Hindu, on what principle, by the way, should Sindh be separated from an advanced province like Bombay and made into a backward pure Muslim province? And why should the Sindhi merchants, mostly Sikh and Hindu, who trade all over the world be compelled to agree to it for the sake of the Nehru draft and an academic agreement? If that principle is granted why should not the Central Punjab be made into a Sikh Province? - Because the Majha and malwa Sikhs have so far not created a Kohat and a Multan, what else? The Nehru Committee has ignored the Sikh because he is not as many in numbers as the Muslim. But conquerors like Ahmad Shah acknowledged the Sikh as the only entity in the Punjab. Perhaps it was Nadir Shah who remarked "*from this nation comes the odour of Sovereignty*". "The English commanders, one after the other have spoken in glowing terms of the outstanding bravery, chivalry and the upright character of the Sikh soldier. The present Commander-in-Chief in India once remarked that he would trust his wife and daughter for their safety to a Sikh soldier. And it is in the Punjab that the *Misals* of the Sikhs were formed. A Sikh chief would throw his saddle in a village or a town and thenceforth it will be his private estate. The Punjabi Hindu could not oppose the Sikh saddle. Under Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Punjab was never a Muslim province but a Sikh province. The Muslim ministers of the Maharaja remained faithful to the last, while the Hindu and the Brahmin ministers proved traitors. It may be remembered Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the Sardar of the Sikh *Misals*, was invited by the Muslim choudhries of Lahore to come and be their King. Hari Singh Nalwa struck terror in the den of the lion. The Frontier Pathans still say to their crying children "Harya Ragla" "Hush, Harya has come!" How can the Nehru Committee to-day extinguish such a community by a stroke of the pen. Is this their Hindu fairness? Sindh must be separated because that is the Muslim demand and the Sikh is but a Hindu, ignore him. The Hindu if he were a man should have stood up for the Sikh and proposed the separation of the Central Punjab as the Sikh Province. It is all non-violent civil anarchy giving all advantages to a powerful and well combined community who shows mailed fist. Let me say openly if the Sikh Jats get into their heads that they can have a province to rule, they will die to a man and create many Kohats. The Sikh knows how to fight for his rights but why should such activities at all be inspired by the Nehru report?

Let us take the population basis and the adult suffrage on which the whole of the theoretical reasonableness of the Nehru Report is being preached, broadcast.

In this country, where one powerful Zamindar of Bengal has thousands of his galley slaves to sweat for him for a starving pittance, where even in the most virile Punjab, the secret of Agricultural prosperity in the most prosperous irrigated colonies is the perpetual indebtedness of the tiller who gets but the barest subsistence and works more for keeping his flesh and blood together than to earn a wage that may make life worth its joys, and is under the thumb of the moneylender, what an absolutely hypothetical value is attached in this Report to the voter as if he were an old Athenian peasant or a Roman citizen!

With the old Roman citizen, as even with the Greek peasant, the political sense was, so to say, the sixth sense. An illiterate voter would go and ask a literate citizen to write down for him the name of his chosen candidate. He behaved as a citizen. Even then, we know how the oratory of the

Anthones and others swayed the political-minded mob. And exactly similar is the case in England and other Western countries now.

For ages, the masses of this country have been terror stricken, not only by the foreign invaders, but by the habitual and slow daily tyranny of the little Neros of India. The Indian Kings and Zamidars and the Bankers and have been driven like the bleating sheep that are led to the slaughter house. It is simply sickening to find such an uninformed population made as the basis of an adult vote. And when practical modern administrators of experience laugh at the school-boy like proposals of the Nehru Committee, the ill-organized noise of the Congress Camp, utters a hooting shriek. However, able these Hindu lawyers of India may be to make the purely academic debates hot and saucy in the Assembly chamber, they cut a sorry figure in practical administration. The Japanese statesman has the same poor opinion about the quality of this highly intricate Hindu intellect.

It is an open secret how an audacious A.D.C. and some of the Secretaries made the late Lord Sinha uncomfortable. I dare say a Sikh Sardar or a Moslem Zamidar of the Punjab would have known better how to sit in that chair.

What is then the significance of the Nehru Report when it is vitiated by the fundamental mistake of determining power to vote by mere populations and mere adult suffrage in this country where it is impossible to get an independent voter?

Mahatma Gandhi has failed to give a remedy. Pandit Moti Lal Nehru has not asked you to leave the country, as he should have done, to violent anarchy, but wishes you to set in that form of consumption which would naturally eat up the weaker communities. It would be the same thing if you agree with Nehru's draft or make yourself a similar one with a few modifications, both will be useless unless you re-divide India into four or five Harmony-Presidencies with all *communal power* well nigh *equally balanced*. If the wisecracks tell you that this re-division is impossible, then no Democracy can be made to work equitably in India. Better put back the hands of the clock and bring in one efficient impartial, stern, but benevolent *dictatorship*.

### ***What should the Englishman do?***

So there is no remedy as far as thought devoid of fiery imagination can go penetrating the details of human affairs in India and the details that have been here for centuries as rigid facts. I now come to what the Englishman should do under the circumstances. To be brief, if he is a Cromwell, he should frankly say not only to India but say so in the face of the nations of the world: "*O, Indians! Do your damndest, we will govern you as we like. Go away. On what grounds and in what way is India more specially yours than ours? Aryans conquered it, they have gone. We occupied it when you were all fighting amongst yourselves, we will occupy it as long as we can. Come. We will die to a man and govern you as best we choose.*" After this proclamation, he, the Cromwell will guide the Government of India on a new basis of that benevolent and bias-less autocracy of his Puritan type. Abolish all religious superstition, all social iniquities, all backward tendencies of these diseased people by law put into force at the point of the bayonet. Guru Gobind Singh made a living people out of these willy nilly johnnies by a moral power. Let his idea be now carried out by a military power. The writer of "Mother India" has written scandalously, as Gandhi says like a drain inspector. But what use is writing "Unhappy India" and "Father India" in reply? We must frankly admit all those shames are inherent in the constitution of our society and admit that we are mostly as she says. The way out of

it is not any reply to her but a change like the one coming over Afghanistan and Turkey. Let military law do with us what so far moral law has not been able to do.

And if he is a Bentham, or a Burke, then certainly he shall make no compromise with miserable political conditions in India as the Nehru Committee has done in a most miserable way, and as they expect and wish you might follow. It is an enslaved country from centuries and all these communal conditions have come about under encouragement of one kind or another from the subtle tone of administrative machinery. Also, denominational education of Aligarh, Benares, Lahore and Amritsar have added fuel to the fire. The lure of coveted Government services and powers of municipal chairs and authority of District Boards have added to the flame. As a straight-forward Englishman, bent upon doing substantial service to the people of India, in helping them to Self-government and Independence, you must discourage all such conditions that have artificially created communal differences. There is no doubt, wrong administrative partialities shown at different times to one or the other community are responsible for these miseries.

Due to these partialities shown directly or indirectly, the people surmise that your policy is divide and rule. You must put a stop to all this nonsense. In the new Constitution, there shall be no compromise of any kind with one community or the other. Your Constitution must afford equal opportunities to all who live under it. The truly Democratic Constitution should not allow one community to get into power and work mischief through the democratic institutions to crush the other. In the grant of your New constitution, the right of all people should be equal in the eye of law. Public services shall not be demoralized by selection of candidates on any communal basis. No more shall English servants of the Crown take sides. Deterring punishments shall be freely meted out to those who might in any way corrupt the services.

The crux of the introduction of the truly democratic Government in the country is the question of franchise and such franchise that would automatically and mechanically make the electorate *non-communal*. You are expected by afflicted lovers of the progress of the Indian peoples to determine it under the Indian conditions. I may just suggest that the question of franchise cannot be properly settled nor a non-communal general electorate be made possible and efficiently workable without taking away the great errors of history which have been made by your countrymen in making provinces and sub-divisions in India. The Nehru Committee has taken lying down the arbitrary and imaginary administrative lines that are supposed to divide one province from the other. Wipe out the provinces as they are for a universal franchise based on equitable ground by which no one community should be able to dominate. So far imagination has been lacking in removing these errors because your nation went on making little bits into separate administrative units. Under pre-Reform autocracy, such divisions worked fairly well. And any divisions could work well under a strong Central Government. With the democratic institutions and the provincial Autonomies coming in, these divisions need further casting. And the principle of dividing provinces on the communal basis is axing the very root of the political progress in the country. It is simply un-statesman-like to treat Sindh, North-Western Frontier and Bengal as the Moslem-majority provinces when these provinces can be either split or lumped up into better working divisions than the present ones. The real work of genius should be the system of conditioning the franchise in such a way as to balance power. As long as military power and the army are with the Central Government, this balance of power can be effectively secured in all the new Harmony Provinces. It goes without saying that for a real and effective change some hard discipline is essential for some time to let the new change settle to function properly.

I would suggest not only to make the Constitution impartial and non-communal but to so divide India administratively that the joint electorate may be possible on non-communal basis in a fool proof way. The franchise should be granted under certain limits of revenue-paying capacity, education and the human substance, also on the soldier yielding capacities of different peoples. With the new division of most harmonious provinces and with the new limits of franchise, the elected bodies would be coming forth to work the new constitution in a non-communal manner befitting sensible men and true citizens. My point is to so re-divide the country that there may be a fairly balanced opportunity for all communities and castes and the franchise may be so limited and elastic that best representatives of all communities may have equal chances. Thus, either bring in true Western conditions of running the democratic institutions by completely ignoring the communal differences not in a theoretical way but in a practical manner, considering the local conditions of prejudice and ignorance and tenant slavery or go back to benevolent autocracy of a dictator. The latter is impossible now. It would be ridiculous in the eyes of the civilized world if you do not grant us Dominion Status forthwith. Therefore the only possible alternative is to give a fool-proof franchise to secure the balance of the political power that manifests itself most acutely and effectively in the selection of the state servants. If this is done, the various minorities may also be let alone to take care of themselves.

### ***Conclusion***

In conclusion, I would request you not to be so small as to be partial in any way to any community and not to be so large as to give over India into the hands of one powerful community and thus reduce the other minor communities to eternal slavery even under democratic Institutions. By cutting up the country into Muslim provinces and Hindu provinces, you would be only introducing a slow eating consumption of civil anarchy which could kill the weaker communities. Where the Hindu prevail, Muslims shall suffer and where the Muslims prevail, the Hindus shall suffer. And as I have already said virile communities like that of the Sikhs may risk to fight to death to ask for a purely Sikh province.

The moment is great and the English people have to show a political imagination which they have not shown so far.

I pray the Highest in you may help you to rise to your full moral stature and you may be able to surprise the Indians with your New Constitution. Give a franchise on the new-India-nation-making basis and let the limits of the franchise be such as no one community may swamp the majority of votes. It is simply unwise to build the New Constitution on the population basis. It is the worth that counts. A race horse is worth a million of donkeys. And in determining these limits, your genius has to come into full play. Wipe out by your Constitution the Hindu and the Muslim as such and bring in conditions in which the "Indian" may become possible, who may truly represent the dumb driven masses of India.

The Nehru Committee has drafted a Compromise Constitution on the crater of a volcano. I, therefore, appeal to you to recommend a Non-communal Constitution. Secure the economic Independence for us as it is being achieved, say in Australia. Reduce the bewildering varieties of Government services and the Neroic cost of administration. Let the tiller of the soil be relieved of excessive taxation by reducing the overhead charges to a minimum. Only then will the economic conditions of the tillers of the soil go up and a real middle class of the wealth-creative labourers come into being.

21<sup>st</sup> October, 1928.

Your sincerely,  
PURAN SINGH  
P.O. Chak No. 73/19  
(via Nankana Sahib, N.W. Ry., Punjab)

### CHAPTER 3

#### OH! FOR WANT OF A LEADER!

The British weeded out many indigenous accounts of the Anglo-Sikh wars. One that survived was that of the patriotic Shah Muhammad of Batala. It is presumably because it being in the poetic form, was immediately committed to memory. This coupled with its powerful appeal ensured its survival. Its loudest lament is that the Sikhs lost the Khalsa Commonwealth because of being incompetently led. The treachery of, particularly the non-Sikh and non-Punjabi leaders of the Khalsa has since become proverbial. Shah Muhammad's perception came to be later misrepresented as the word 'sardar' which he used for leader, came to be replaced with 'sarkar' — a word commonly used for the person of Ranjit Singh. This was disastrous in a way, because it meant that during the crucial militant phase of a struggle for independence, the Sikh popular perception was denied a correct perspective of the battle review of the most critical battles in Punjab history. Akali Dal was also in the making during the early decades of the century and leaders were emerging. Maybe it could have made a difference had proper perception also been popular. On examining the issue, it appears that the change from 'sardar' to 'sarkar' came to be made when lithography was discarded in favour of more modern printing. No one bothered to look up the tedious lithographic prints and the error persisted. At about the same time the same thing happened (or was deliberately done) to Giani Gian Singh's Panth Parkash. Giani Kirpal Singh noticed how that led to material distortion of history only in the early eighties of this century. Reproduced here is page 21 of the relevant text in lithographic print. It will be clearly seen that the crucial word at the relevant place is 'sardar' and not 'sarkar'. This page has been taken from a copy printed in the 421<sup>st</sup>. Year of Guru Nanak or 1890 CE printed by Munshi Naval Kishore and published by Maulvi Mahmood Ahmed.

For the benefit of the English reader the translation of the relevant portion by Mr. P. K. Nijhawan from the manuscript lying with me is also being given below:

The battle of Hind and Punjab now raged furiously.  
On both sides were ranged huge numbers.  
Had the Sarkar been alive today, he would have certainly valued  
The reckless bravery the Khalsa showed on the field.  
Not just men, elephants too got blown up  
As they fell on the ground along with the howdas.  
O Shah Muhammed! But for one Sardar  
The forces lost the battle they, in fact, had won.

## CHAPTER 4

### OMINOUSLY COVERGING PLANETS

The aim of Hindu policy towards the Sikhs in free India was set very early in the day. The choice of Maratha polity and society as models for the Indian political and social reconstruction, which came about in the early years of the century, constituted a sure indication of the direction in which the wind was blowing. This choice was irrational. But more irrational was its corollary that the choice necessitated annihilation of the Sikh polity and society that was a genuine model most suitable to India. Once, however, the decision was taken, it was pursued relentlessly. This approach to understanding the history of the period is well documented and is characterised by a degree of objectivity. As the true perspective on Indian de-colonisation emerges, Sikh historians dealing with the period will have to re-assess the factors responsible for the Sikh unrest in India after 1947. Had this been appreciated earlier by the Sikh leaders, perhaps the gloomy situation as it emerged for the Sikh people, could have been averted. There would have been no 1984.

Clear indications of the policy to be pursued were also available sufficiently early. The following tell-tale incidents related to the elections of 1937, held for the first time under the Government of India Act 1935, could have sounded the alarm bells. Hindu section of the Indians was exercising political power for the first time after twelve and half centuries. Bombay remained the only province in India in those days of provincial autonomy and the Congress in power, where restriction on the length of the kirpan was not withdrawn. More than fifty Sikh bodyguards of the provincial governor of Bombay were thrown out and were replaced by the Hindus. Sikh contractors from all over Bihar were asked to go back to the Punjab. In Uttar Pradesh, conversions of scheduled castes to Sikhism were all but officially banned. The Gurdwara Shahid Ganj affair was the product of Congress ingenuity in inducing strife between Sikhs and Muslims. Muslims had no difficulty in letting it remain a Gurdwara even after the partition of the country. By putting up apostates Kishan Singh and Comrade Teja Singh a Communist, on the two Sikh seats during the elections of 1937, a clear indication of the desirable variety of Sikh leadership had been already broadcast. The tree was in the seed and the Indian National Congress policy of eliminating Sikhs and Sikhism has since become the universal Hindu aspiration in India. The 1984 army attack on Gurdwaras and related incidents neatly fit the frame provided to us by recent history. This is clearly so because Indian polity is not conceived as secular or democratic but is only so advertised. The basic aim has always been to maintain hegemony of the Hindus at all times and in all places regardless of their numbers. This is especially so in the Punjab.



## CHAPTER 5

### SHEDDING THE SHEEPSKIN

The story of the great betrayal of the Sikhs has been repeated quite often. It is yet the belief of the Sikhs that another narration will do no harm. One of the most powerful recitals was on the floor of the Lower House of the Indian Parliament on September 6, 1966. The occasion was the discussion on the Reorganisation Bill to carve out a Punjabi speaking state. It was a historical moment in the life of the Punjab and the narrator Sirdar Kapur Singh was himself an actor on the stage of history. He had lived the deprivation of the Punjab over and over in his mind, had shared the pangs of a people relegated to a dark corner of history. He had fought all his life to defend them and their culture. It was a remarkable speech he had made that day.

Ever since the birth of Sikhism, the Hindu response to its ultimate purpose as well as to its existence has been destructive. The enlightened opinion, upheld by history ever so often, is that this approach is self-negating and an exercise in futility. It has achieved nothing more than thwarting the spiritual and mundane progress, of largely the Hindu society and in consequence, that of India. It is also true that the Sikhs have been thereby prevented from realising their historical destiny as catalytic agents for the transforming the human psyche. This constitutes a universal loss and does no credit to the society which has acted as a stumbling block.

The violence thus done to the Sikhs has taken several forms in history but has been distinctly recognisable in every incarnation. In India since de-colonisation, it has progressively become more and more pronounced. It begins in 1947 with insisting that the displaced Sikhs must settle only in the East Punjab. Soon all Sikhs were declared as crime prone and the administration was instructed to deal with them sternly. 'Mahatma' Gandhi's carried on a regular tirade against the Sikhs at his 'prayer meetings'. On November 2, 1947, Maharaja Yadavendra Singh of Patiala wrote to the Home Minister, "but the tragedy is further heightened by the fact that a very well organised propaganda is being carried out against them in America, Great Britain and other places outside India to fasten the guilt of blood upon them, although they are themselves the victims". (See, *Sardar Patel's Correspondence Vol. IV*, Navjivan Trust, Ahmedabad, November 1972, page 332). After August 15, 1947, the measures for the protection of minorities agreed to by the Constituent Assembly before that date, were abandoned. A pledge to establish a truly federal State was reversed. This was followed by total non-applicability of even the 'moth eaten' constitution to the Punjab as evidenced by handing out of diametrically opposed judgements by the Supreme Court where Sikh and Hindu interests were involved. Stout resistance to the demarcation of Punjabi Suba and the loot of Punjab's natural resources and hydroelectric power are some other indications of the same malady. The list is by no means exhaustive.

The story of the great betrayal began immediately after the British de-colonisation. The locale was 2, Telegraph Lane, New Delhi. The main actors were three bigwigs of the times. They were Babu Purushottamdas Tandon, Hari Har Nath Shastri and Lala Achint Ram. They were all first ranking nationalist leaders of the times. The last named was the father of the present Vice-President of India, Krishan Kant. Sardar Jagjit Singh author of *The Sikh Revolution* related this story to me. He was one of the two persons who had accompanied Principal Niranjana Singh, brother of Master Tara Singh on this trip to Delhi.

Niranjan Singh had always described himself as a nationalist Sikh, in contrast to Master Tara Singh who was perceived to be more concerned about the destiny of the Sikhs after de-colonisation. He had persuaded himself that free India would be a secular democratic republic with all citizens enjoying equal rights regardless of religion, colour or caste considerations. After all, this was what all the nationalists engaged in the 'freedom struggle' had come to swear by. He, like other Sikhs of his kind, placed too much faith in the secular and nationalist credentials of the Hindu leaders. Their final argument was that since India was contemplated as a secular, democratic republic with a written constitution, free Press and independent judiciary, there was no cause to worry about the future of the Sikhs in free India. They stubbornly failed to appreciate that they could be wrong in their calculations. Those who believed in all that were termed nationalists and those, that like the Master demanded safeguards for the minorities, were derided as communalists and were regarded as belonging to, a sub-human species. Niranjan Singh, in particular, never felt there would be any hindrance to the practise of Sikhism in India after de-colonisation. He had a number of ardent adherents. Sardar Jagjit Singh and Professor Ram Singh were amongst them. Those who did not agree with this group called them 'Nirinjanias' after the traitorous 18<sup>th</sup> century Sikh sect, which was the mainstay of foreign invaders.

Master Tara Singh and other Sikhs felt that the Congressmen and others leading the so-called nationalist movement were nothing more than Hindu leaders trying to establish a Hindu majoritarian state. They were essentially communal in nature and wanted the liquidation of the minorities, which they hoped to be able to absorb in Hinduism in the coming years. Those who could not be so disposed of were slated for being dominated in the right imperial fashion of the British and Mughals before them. All the Sikh leaders of this group were not equally ideologically clear. Even Tara Singh, for instance, did not share the vivid perceptions of Giani Sher Singh or even of Giani Kartar Singh on this subject. The suspicion about new dangers to Sikh identity in consequence of Hindu revival in new India was perceived to varying degrees. The solutions thought of also naturally varied with the keenness of individual perceptions. While Giani Sher Singh would have nothing short of a sovereign third state, Giani Kartar Singh toyed with the idea of an autonomous region with constitutional safeguards. Tara Singh, who eventually prevailed, was prepared to settle for mere promises of an autonomous region and was sure the cultural affinities of the Sikhs with the Hindus would take care of the rest. They laboured under the impression that because the Sikhs had fought many Hindu and Indian battles against the Mughal, Afghan, Iranian and the British imperialists in India, the Sikhs would be treated as some sort of blue-eyed boys of the new administration in India.

Niranjan Singh had come to the important meeting as a random representative of the nationalist Sikhs and had brought two friends along for consultation should it become necessary. It had been indicated to him that he would be required to discuss and participate in the process of nation building, which was to be deliberated at the meeting. He left his companions at the India Gate Memorial and walked down to 2, Telegraph Lane to answer the call of the stalwarts living there. When he came back he was quite bewildered and what follows is the gist of his report to his companions. 'All three of them were present. After small talk, they came to the subject of discussion scheduled for the day. The Sikhs have played a great role in the struggle for freedom. They complimented him for personally remaining in the forefront. Time had now come to play as great a role in the cause of national integration, which was the need of the hour. It was apparent, in the background of historical proximity that the Hindu and Sikh religions were identical. It was on this assumption that the nationalist Sikhs had co-operated with the Hindus in the ordeal under the British. The Sikhs had protected the Hindus very well in the past and now since the Hindus had

attained sovereignty, the Sikhs were no longer needed for the purpose. They expected him to give lead to the Sikhs in the new circumstances. It was now necessary that the Sikhs should merge completely with the majority community. They, especially the nationalist Sikhs, had no ideological barriers and were almost one with the Hindus in all respects. The only nagging difference was in appearance. So, would Sardar Niranjana Singh advocate complete national integration and symbolise it by shaving off? The next step would be to persuade his companion nationalist Sikhs to do the same. The process would continue until the whole Sikh community followed the example set by the nationalists'.

Niranjana Singh heard it all and then gave the following reply: 'I always took you all to be great nationalists. It now appears that you were wolves in sheep's clothing. I am shocked at our own naivety in taking you to be true patriots. Now, since you perceive no difference between the Sikh and the Hindu faiths, I will propose another very effective method of national integration. Why don't you all grow facial and head hair so that Sikhs and Hindus appear identical? You should lead the Hindu population on this truly national integration path. Believe me, I am coming to know of your base (*kehot*) motives for the first time. Had I known your intentions earlier, I wouldn't have been with you under any circumstances'. Saying this he withdrew from the meeting though all of them entreated with him to stay on and continue the parleys.

## CHAPTER 6

### BAATCHEET IN THE TONE OF AURANGZEB

In the authoritative bulletin of the Indian army, *Baatcheet* of June 1984, we have a rare political document, which completely lays bare the imperialistic design hatched by the Hindu leaders of our times. This confirms the worst of what has been attributed to earlier leaders and goes much beyond. It is a document, which totally confirms the predictions of Puran Singh about the communal nature of Indian polity. The invectives of Rabindranath Tagore against the creation of Khalsa, which were later borrowed by the Bengal school of Sikh historians and presented in a more civilized language, become forcefully alive in the context of this document. It provides conclusive evidence of the mentality, which has been noticeable throughout history. Around 1922, the whole of the Hindu Congress leadership in India adopted the implications of Tagore's analysis of Sikh history. These are fully represented in the *Baatcheet*.

Every basic proposition of this bulletin is inspired by the imperial designs of a permanent cultural majority. This single document would suffice to completely sum up the majoritarian arrogance assumed by the Hindus in de-colonized India. Some of its salient features may be analyzed here. It is in order to state in the very beginning that this is one of the rare statements every word of which is untrue. It is now known to one and all that the army action in the Punjab had been planned much earlier and the army had been given proper training to assault the different buildings in Sri Darbar Sahib complex. A life-size model of the complex had been used. More than one honorable witnesses have confirmed that it was Indira Gandhi who reneged the agreements with the Akalis, arrived at on her specific instructions, by her accredited emissaries. Still the *Baatcheet* asserts that the Akalis could not reach an agreement and that the army assault 'was the last resort'. There was no element of 'reluctance' in the attack but the events were so ordered as to make the final attack a deliberate celebration, which would yield to conversion of votes at the coming general elections. The fiction of the 'extremists' having taken over is persisted with. It is well known that Sant Baba Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale insisted on maintaining that he was merely following the policy of the Akali leadership and strictly conducted himself according to his profession.

The police and para-military forces had surrounded Sri Darbar Sahib for at least two full years before June 1984. The complex teemed with policemen in plain clothes and regular secret agents. There was no place in the complex, which could be hidden from the public eye. It was a part of the *Chakravyuh* erected to propagate that the complex had been fortified, arms had been collected there and that extremists had taken shelter therein. It was obvious that whatever and whosoever was allowed to filter through the thick sieve of government cordon woven outside and inside the Darbar complex, could only reach those inside the complex. In the notorious White Paper, the government had given photographs of fortifications ostensibly made by the militants. Later several of these fortifications were identified as those actually erected by the Central Reserve Police Force. Photographs of some had already appeared earlier in the Press with that identification. It is also well known that just a few months before the attack, the government was worried that there were no weapons inside the complex to justify the drastic action it had decided upon. So arms were smuggled across from Pakistan by the government's own secret 'Third Agency' and dumped into the complex. I personally know the facts. In the summer of 1983, I was first chosen as one possible smuggler of weapons into the complex. The approach was crude and direct. A serving Brigadier, posted at Jalandhar came along with my acquaintance in the official army Jonga driven by

an army-man and attended by an orderly. Posing as a good Sikh, he pretended to be worried that though the attack on the complex was coming soon, the Sant had no weapons. He offered a truckload, which I could take into the complex in a kar-sewa truck. I had taken my National Cadet Corps service and my army attachment seriously and it was easy for me to smell many rats in the proposition. So declining the singular honour came almost spontaneously to me. I later learnt that the deed was done by the acquaintance who had accompanied the Brigadier on the occasion of this meeting. That the truck carrying them was intercepted by the district police and was allowed to proceed to the complex on orders from the 'high ups'. This fact was reported in the Press at that time. I also know that these weapons were maintained by the secret agents inside and were never available to the beleaguered, defiant Sant.

'Bad elements wanted by the police' carrying on 'illegal activity' from inside the complex – is a fiction which is difficult to maintain. When the then Home Minister of India first made the allegation, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) offered to surrender all such elements and asked for a list of such offenders. The list supplied by the Home Minister included a large number against whom no complaint had been registered anywhere, many who were already in police custody and a few who were dead. It also included several who were freely roaming around outside. Bhai Ranjit Singh was surrendered by the SGPC around that time. Against Sant Baba Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale himself, there was only one mandatory First Information Report of a 'crime'. It pertained to an intemperate speech he was supposed to have made while addressing the congregation at Manji Sahib. The only proof of Pakistani nationals having entered Darbar Sahib 'dressed as Nihangs' was the alleged discovery of dead bodies on which *sunnat* had been performed. There is no knowing as to whether these were actually discovered or whether the *sunnat* was a post mortem contribution, as no independent witnesses were allowed by the army authorities into the complex after the killing spree lasting upto at least June 7, 1984. By supreme irrationality, *sunnat* was taken to be the final proof of nationality. The attempt to create a rift between the Sikhs and Muslims is plainly discernible in the insinuation.

The cliché about 'honouring all religions' sounds so pleasing in the Indian context but 'except Sikhism' can almost be axiomatically read into it. The attack on Sri Darbar Sahib was deliberately made on the martyrdom day of Guru Arjun Dev. The crowd was expected to be the thickest on that day and the curfew around the complex was relaxed for a few hours to let in the maximum number of people. They were all trapped to be killed as is borne out by the events which followed. Forty other shrines all over the Punjab were also similarly besieged and attacked simultaneously. The Sikh Reference Library in the complex was burnt to ashes in the style of the Medieval Muslim crusaders. In this context can also be read the spurious claims of being 'pledged to democracy and secularism.'

The punch line is still to come. First the prelude; *Baatcheet* defines "*Amritdharis*" as 'innocent countrymen' who have been administered religious oath 'to support extremists'. They are condemned as people 'pledged to commit murder, arson, terrorism'. All this is from an army which has razed the holiest shrine, killed scripture readers, women and children and had just set fire to the library stocked with manuscripts many of which were more than two hundred years old. Such are the benefits of Chakravayuh and the maya in which it is basically wrapped, that anything can be made to seem anything opposite to it. Young people fighting for their legitimate rights and in defense of the shrines of their faith are dubbed criminals while those raiding temples are termed patriots and restorers of sanctity and preservers of unity and integrity of the country. Those, whose forefathers had shed more blood to defend the honour of their countrymen than the water in all the five rivers

of the Punjab are condemned as criminals committed to terrorism. We hear an echo of the petty hill-kings around Anandpur Sahib and of M. K. Gandhi's pronouncements at prayer meetings in the words, 'these people wearing miniature kirpans around their necks' are to be 'subdued'.

Those who like to verify facts for themselves, can read, 'the army has exhibited great restraint and discipline by not even pointing their weapons towards Harmandar Sahib.' Then they can then go and count the 380 bullet marks all over the Harmandar. Amongst the martyrs at the shrine have been counted the priests and a sacred manuscript volume of the Holy Scripture.

Those who may not have read the 'white paper,' need to do so no longer because there is nothing in it which is not there in the *Baatcheet*.

### ***BAATCHEET* — INDIAN ARMY BULLETINE**

Serial Number 153, June 84

#### Introduction

1. It is amply evident now that the decision to employ the army in Punjab to deal with the tragic situation was taken by the authorities reluctantly as a last resort. Akali Dal could not be brought to the negotiating table. No final settlement could be accomplished. Unfortunately, the Akali movement ultimately went out of the control of the moderate leaders and the extremist took over. The places of worship became their secure bases from where they carried out their unlawful activities.

#### The Army Action

2. Being pledged to democracy and secularism, it has been a practice of the Government to honour the religious sentiments of every community. Accordingly, police entry into the places of worship was not permitted, although there is no written law, which expressly prohibits it. Government showed utmost patience in dealing with the terrorists, who had taken shelter in the gurdwaras and were issuing death warrants, killing innocent people all over the country belonging to every community. Lawlessness prevailed over a long time. These terrorists, criminals, murderers, smugglers and other undesirable elements wanted by the police, taking shelter in gurdwaras, started organising themselves for anti-national activities. A large quantity of arms, ammunition, sophisticated transmitting equipment recovered by us during the action and Pakistani nationals dressed as Nihangs prove their evil designs. Countries inimical to us and some disgruntled ex-servicemen also helped extremists by training them. The temples were converted into fortresses and unlawful activities continued unabated. Some of our innocent countrymen were administered oath in the name of religion to support extremists and actively participated in the act of terrorism. These people wear a miniature kirpan round their neck and are called "*Amritdharis*".
3. Under such circumstances, the Government had to act promptly and sternly, for the benefit of all of us, to protect the sanctity of our religious places and preserve unity and integrity of the country as a whole. Besides the police and para-military forces, the military also had to be brought on the scene to deal with the situation.
4. The Army's action has been appreciated by all. Our officers and men have shown unprecedented courage in facing the terrorists who indulged in the most brutal acts of even blowing up our men with lethal devices. The army has exhibited great restraint and discipline by not even pointing their weapons towards Harmandar Sahib from where the terrorists kept showering bullets on them. Those who took part in the action belonged to all communities.

Having taken oath to maintain sanctity of the holy place, they displayed indomitable will and unprecedented loyalty. Everyone of us is proud of our men that even under great provocation they maintained their balance.

#### An Appeal

5. Although majority of the terrorists have been dealt with and bulk of the arms and ammunition recovered, yet a large number of them are still at large. They have to be subdued to achieve the final aim of restoring peace in the country. Any knowledge of the "*Amritdharis*" who are dangerous people and pledged to commit murder, arson and acts of terrorism should immediately be brought to the notice of the authorities. These people may appear harmless from outside but they are basically committed to terrorism. In the interest of us all, their identity and whereabouts must always be disclosed.
6. We must keep our ears and eyes open; never listen to rumours and malicious propaganda being planned and carried out by the enemy agents.
7. Our integrity and loyalty to the country could never be questioned. We have a long tradition of sacrifices for our Sacred Mother Land. Our forefathers taught us to always live for the well being of the country as a whole. It is our bounden duty now to protect the National interest at all costs.

#### CONCLUSION

8. Army is absolutely an apolitical organisation. Narrow considerations of caste, creed and communal feelings have never betrayed us. We belong to the country and re-dedicate ourselves to sacrifice everything for its honour, unity and security. Whatever happened was unavoidable. We must learn a lesson from it that we do not fall prey to the designs of external forces.

## CHAPTER 7

### Foreign Scholars to the Aid of Cultural Imperialism

Since complete annihilation of Sikh culture has been the aim right from the beginning, Sikh history has been constantly distorted. Sikh literature and sacred writings have been periodically vandalized with the climax coming in the wake of the 1984 attack on Sri Darbar Sahib when even libraries were set on fire. The alternate practice has been to discredit settled Sikh tradition, to prop up rival apocryphal Granths (religious texts) and to raise doubts about the authenticity of Sri Guru Granth Sahib (the only Sikh canon). These processes have been witnessed with increasing intensity ever since the first day of Indian de-colonisation and have often been taken note of by the Media.

One such attempt was made through the agency of Piar Singh of Guru Nanak University (funded completely by the state) and some foreign scholars. They suddenly discovered, out of the blue as it were, a new recension of Guru Granth and made far-reaching conclusions. This was done to sow doubts about its originality. What was stranger about this sordid affair was that no attempt was made to know the history or circumstances attending on the discovery of the manuscript under discussion. It was purchased from a bookseller, designated MS 1245 by the Guru Nanak University library and suddenly proclaimed the very original recension simultaneously here and abroad. The attempt can be compared to some nihilist guerrilla strike on a centuries old firm citadel of tradition. Sardar Daljeet Singh went to Amritsar and had a discussion with the bookseller Sardar Harbhajan Singh Chawla. From this it was clear that this particular recension had no history worth mentioning. Harbhajan Singh later appeared at the Akal Takhat on May 5, 1993, and made a clean breast of it. The document being presented here is his statement at the Akal Takhat.

Rendered into English, it would be somewhat as follows:

‘I, Harbhajan Singh Chawla (of the) firm Harbhajan Singh Harcharan Singh Chawla of Bagh Jallianwala, deal in manuscripts, paintings, and handicrafts. Today on Wednesday dated 5.5.1993, I am presenting the written statement to Singh Sahib Bhai Manjit Singh Jathedar of Akal Takhat at the Akal Takhat as below:

‘The manuscript marked as MS 1245, now present in the library of the Guru Nanak Dev University was purchased from me. This is how this MS 1245 reached me:

‘During my business tour of Rajasthan in the years 1979-80, I obtained it from a petty scrap dealer doing the round, on bicycle, of the city of Raisinghnagar of district Ganganagar. On enquiry, I came to know that he had bought it from some house in a village as scrap. It was lying with me for about three to four years. During this period I showed it to a Bhai Karnail Singh who has interest in manuscripts and works as a scripture reader at Sri Darbar Sahib and asked him to give his views about it.

‘It was his opinion, about this manuscript, which I wrote in a note describing it. The librarian of Guru Nanak Dev University bought this manuscript from me for the university library. I received its sale price. The note about the resencion written by me is not based on my research about it. Whatever Bhai Karnail Singh told me, is what I wrote in my note’.



5.5.93

sd./Humble servant,  
Harbhajan Singh Chawla

Place - Sri Akal Takhat Sahib  
Shop - Harbhajan Singh Harcharan Singh, Bazar Jallianwala,  
Amritsar

Now that the reader knows about the origin of the note appended to the manuscript by the antique dealer, s/he will be shocked to find out that the three or four points made therein, tallied absolutely with the research diligently conducted by Doctors Piar Singh and Pashaura Singh. It was on the basis of such research that textual study of the Sikh scripture was seriously suggested and the original — which is in existence, has a continuous history of custody and has been examined by hundreds of scholars for nearly four centuries — was challenged. When this was pointed out, many eminent scholars cried persecution, pleaded academic freedom, questioned the ability of us ignorant easterners to understand the intricacies of western scholarship and conjured up images of medieval inquisition and witch hunting on Spanish and French models.

The only ‘punishment’ meted out to the offending scholars for the well-established crime of blasphemy, was to do voluntary social service at a shrine of their choice and for a period of few weeks. It must be remembered that even such punishment can be traditionally inflicted if the offender freely consents to undergo it. In the present case the consent was obtained. The greatly offended Western scholars can contrast this with the treatment meted out to Thomas Cranmer Archbishop of Canterbury or to Joan of Arc and a hundred thousand others.

## CHAPTER 8

### SIRDAR OF THE COMMITTED

Sirdar Kapur Singh, was in reality a man of no possession. Among the material things that he actually valued, was a very well done painting of Bota Singh. This, the silver plaque he received on his appointment as National Professor of Sikhism and an etching of the scene of the Battle of Nowshehra in silver were to go to his son, as he told me once. I do not know what became of his will of which I was to receive a copy. When and if discovered, it certainly will be worth going through. For the present I have to be content with giving one of his photographs.

The document presented is the text of one of the more profound speeches of Sirdar Kapur Singh. It was hurriedly written by him on October 13, 1973, while sitting under the shadow of Sri Akal Takhat and on the bank of the 'pool of immortality' surrounding Sri Darbar Sahib at Amritsar. The day happened to be the birth anniversary of Guru Ram Das. The speech was meant as an address to the Khalsa Panth on the occasion of his being created a 'National Professor of Sikhism'. The act itself constituted protest against the distortion of the history and culture of minorities in India. This goal was to be achieved by the rewriting of history by motivated scholars. The idea inspiring the rewriting was that history written by the national historians could be a rediscovered version of the past in the context of the present day needs. It was presumably a necessity of those who could not look back to anything considered well done by usual standards of human endeavour. Such persons were created National Professors by the Indian establishment for carrying out such objectives. Those who had a profounder sense of history resented these crude attempts at distortion of the past and the intended indoctrination of minorities. Sirdar Kapur Singh's elevation to the honour was an attempt by the Sikh people to see that their original wholesome concepts were preserved intact.

Much of the unrest that attended India in the next two decades has to be attributed to the policy of the Indian establishment as is indicated by the creation of National Professors. Sirdar Kapur Singh was one answer to such attempts. Baba Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale was another. One must hasten to add that neither of the two was in any way less rational or less purely motivated than those who claimed to act in the national interest. They both felt the same measure of responsibility towards the land of their birth and worked for a genuine understanding between the principal communities living in the country. Their views on Sikh-Hindu unity were equally profound and saner than those held by the pseudo patriots, their political rivals and their base tormentors. Both these great men endorsed and complemented each other. So when they actually met in 1983, it was like the confident Ganges meeting its own source, the serene snow clad abode of pure thought. Without doubt it was a meeting of two of the greatest Sikhs of this century. A photograph taken on the occasion is presented here. In several discussions with me on the activities of the Sant, Sirdar Kapur Singh would harp on the theme that the 'young man, the Sant' was right in doing what he was doing. Offering martyrdom to shake some sense into the body politic of India as well as that of the Sikh Panth, was the only alternative left to an honourable man concerned with the public good and welfare of the Khalsa Panth and the country. It is well known that the great Yogi Sirdar slowly wished himself to death after the army attack on Sri Darbar Sahib and the martyrdom of Sant Baba Jarnail Singh Khalsa Bhinderanwale. Most of his time after those events, was spent in

the village cremation ground. He would sit there for hours at end persuading his life to ebb out of him slowly.

This document gives a rare view of his magnificent soul, resplendent with high and pure persuasions. The genuine humility of a true Sikh reigned supreme in his nature and was visible in his countenance when he spoke of the Guru or his Panth. It is seen penned here in the most pleasing words. His statement on the significance of the Akal Takhat, contained in this writing, is pithy and valuable. So are his views on the ultimate political aim of the Khalsa Panth. He has also commented on the deep-rooted injustice prevailing in Indian society and pointed to its far-reaching consequences. In about the mid sixties, I heard him talk on the dilemma presented by the unjust Indian state to Sikhs, brought up in the teachings of the Gurus on freedom, human dignity, self-respect and justice, which was according to them the spiritual right of all human beings under God. Similarly, he would talk significantly on the assimilation process being attempted by the Indian establishment under the influence of Hindu chauvinism. The Sikh, he would say, will not consent to become a shorn slave of those in power today. The attempted suppression of his natural and legitimate tendencies in the name of national integration, would lead him to frustration and eventually turn him into a gun-totting, lawless person. He lived to see what he had predicted, come to pass. The insurgency in the Punjab had been predicted by him a decade earlier and was, as he said it would be, the direct result of attempts to reduce the Sikhs to political ineffectiveness.

The Sirdar's speech also brings to the fore and questions the real motivations and the competence of the Sikh leadership, political as well as intellectual. It is considered a vital document on the subject and is being presented here as such. For further elucidation of this issue, several documents relating to Akali leadership of all hues have been reproduced in this volume. I am conscious that in presenting this document I am discharging only one part of the obligation. A *sirapa*, a sword and a silver plaque were also bestowed upon him on that occasion. The plaque was willed to his son and I hope he preserves it. He gave the sword, along with this document to me. I am trying to develop a museum at Gurdwara Sri Guru Singh Sabha Kanthala, Chandigarh. There I hope to place the great Sirdar's sword along with certain other personal items used by him, a few documents and a small album of photographs. One object awaiting proper display at such a museum is the Persian couplet of the famous poet and philosopher Muhammad Iqbal, written in his own hand and presented to the Sirdar. He preserved it as a sacred relic. He cherished it as he did the memory of several wonderful conversations he had with the poet in London and in Lahore. It may interest many that the poet loved to hear *Funhe* and *Gatha* of the Fifth Guru and would ask the Sirdar to recite it every time he met him. He would go into a trance listening to it and regarded it as 'the best expression of a lovelorn soul: without a parallel in Asia'. Many of the Sirdar's 'tribe' have heard such stories from his own lips and will, I know, come to write them some day. Another reason for preserving it is that in the second last paragraph of this document, he himself calls it the quintessence of his study of a lifetime. What was so important to him is certainly of great importance for the people who accepted his guidance and continue to do so.

***English rendering of this is attempted below:***

Addressing the 'respected President Shiromani Committee and the gentlemen present' there, he said, 'Only crass ignorance can impel me to believe that the honour and the office being conferred upon me by Sri Akal Takhat after the congregational supplication, is in confirmation of my accomplishments. Being what I am, a person devoid of intellectual prowess, power or patronage, I aspired only to serve the Gurupanth as a shoe bearer. On such a person the sovereign and divine power, the Akal Takhat, has conferred the highest title of National Professor of Sikhism;

and has granted a priceless robe of honour. All this can be attributed to the benign generosity of the Gurupanth and is no indication of my ability or entitlement. "There is no other protector of the deprived like You who elevates a straw like me into a mountain of great dimensions."

'If I pluck the courage to speak a few respectful words, it is because I am aware that in this great Panth, a doctrinal tradition of fearlessly standing by the truth is acceptable as the original and firm belief. In accordance with the Guru's intent, this privilege extends even to the humblest of the humble servant of the Panth. With this belief and from this destination of (Sikh striving) and the focus of sovereignty of both worlds, Sri Akal Takhat, I address the organisers, the standard bearers and those entrusted with substantiating the claims of the Sikhs to a sovereign status in both worlds: namely, the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee which claims a representative status in the Panth and its military wing, the Shiromani Akali Dal. 'If the managers of the Gurdwaras deviate one step from the intention of the Guru or the doctrines of Sikhism, either due to ignorance or being influenced by the majorities or self-will, then this step will be considered as harming the interests of the Panth and of Dharma. Even if this step has powerful support of any faction or that of any individual. In the consideration of the wise of this world or in the consideration of the Guru in the other, such a step can never be taken to be according to Gurmat, in the interest of the Panth or praiseworthy. We have already harmed ourselves much by disregarding this truth. We can never earn any lasting good if we persist walking on this path, but will only be disgraced in both worlds. 'If the activators of the military power of the Panth turn their back upon the free Panth's ultimate aim of securing an autonomous and honourable constitutional status which ensures the Panth's right to be heard with respect and instead persist in destroying the limitless power of the Panth and in sabotaging the achievement of the legitimate destination of the Panth for the sake of garnering despicable personal material gains, then they will only be degraded here and hereafter and will be able to achieve nothing of permanence.

'The world famous English poet W. H. Auden, who died recently, observed:

Those who will not reason,  
Perish in the act.  
Those who will not act,  
Perish for that reason.

'(Those who do not walk in the light of reason are destroyed on the way and those who abandon action perish for this reason). It is therefore that the Tenth King's order to the Khalsa is: "Let your body be the abode of patience and let intellect enlighten you like a lamp". 'The (Indian) polity is founded in base discrimination, perfidy and a system of justice drawing upon these. Such law should and does operate against Kapur Singh and in favour of Raghupati Kapur, even when administered by the highest judicial forum. Such a polity can never become permanent; its decline is predetermined. This is the true preaching of the Gurus, without doubt or suspicion and is for the guidance of all mankind. (That in whom does not inhere fear of the True One or essence of mercy must be considered beyond killing as already pronounced dead by God). 'Except for walking in the light of the sun that the Guru is and conforming to the traditions set by our ancestors who were complete humanbeings, there is no other road leading to the welfare of the Sikh Panth or our country, Bharatvarsh. 'What I have deduced after having delved deep into several religious texts, consulted knowledge of all kinds, read the Gurbani, and after serious contemplation, I have plucked the courage to briefly delineate here. 'I beg pardon for my deficiencies from all the eminent, honourable people present here'.

13 October 1973 AD.

Sd. Kapur Singh  
National Professor of Sikhism  
Sri Amritsar

## CHAPTER 9

### THE SHIELD FASHIONED AT ANANDPUR SAHIB

This document is the original Anandpur Sahib Resolution of the Shiromani Akali Dal. It is in the hand of Sirdar Kapur Singh, a member of the drafting committee, which drafted it, in October 1973. It was adopted by the Working Committee of the Dal in its October 16-17, 1973 meeting at Anandpur Sahib. An account of how the parent body adopting the resolution strived hard to dilute, distort and finally to render it a dead letter, may be read in *kichh suniyai kichh kahai*. I have already published the original in this and the *Tandar of the Centaur*. Many may still legitimately expect to find it here because of the nature of this book. It is being, therefore, repeated here. A person consulting this volume will not now be put to the inconvenience of having to look for it elsewhere.

#### ***Anandpur Sahib Resolution.***

Whereas, the Sikhs of India are a historically recognised political nation ever since the inauguration of the Order of the Khalsa in the concluding years of the 17<sup>th</sup>. Century, and

Whereas, this status of the Sikh nation has been internationally recognised and accepted by major Powers of Europe and Asia, to wit, France, England, Italy, Russia, China, Tibet, Persia, Afghanistan, Nepal and the Company Bahadur, Fort William, Calcutta, till the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup>. Century, and again, by the outgoing British and the Hindu Congress and the Muslim League of India in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, and

Whereas, the brute majority in India, in 1950, have imposed a Constitutional arrangement in India which denudes the Sikhs of their political identity and cultural particularity, thus liquidating the Sikhs politically and exposing them to spiritual death and cultural decay leading inevitably to submergence and dissolution into the saltish sea-waters of inchoate Hinduism, and

Whereas, the Sikhs have been thus shackled and imprisoned in cynical repudiation of solemn commitments and public promises earlier made to the Sikhs, while the Sikh representatives in the Constituent Assembly, in 1950, refused to become a consenting party to these Constitutional arrangements and declined to affix their signatures to the official copy of this Constitution Act, the Shiromani, Akali Dal in the name and on behalf of the Sikhs,

Proclaims that the Sikhs are determined, by all legitimate means, to extricate and free themselves from this degrading and death-dealing situation so as to ensure firmly their honourable survival and salvage their inherent dignity in India, and their birthright to influence the mainstream of World history. The Sikhs, therefore,

Demand, Firstly, that an autonomous region in the North of India should be set up forthwith wherein the Sikh interests are constitutionally recognised as of primary and special importance, as the fundamental state policy,

Secondly, that this autonomous region, should include the present Punjab, Karnal, and Ambala districts of Haryana inclusive of Kangra District Of Himachal Pradesh, Chandigarh, Pinjore,

Kalka, Dalhousie, Nalagarh Desh, Sirsa, Guhla and Rattia areas and the Ganganagar District of Rajasthan, thus bringing main contiguous Sikh populations and traditional Sikh habitats within this autonomous Sikh Region as an integral part of the Union of India and

Thirdly, this Sikh Autonomous Region may be declared as entitled to frame its own internal Constitution on the basis of having all powers to and for itself except, Foreign Relations, Defence, Currency and General Communications to remain as subjects within the jurisdiction of the Federal Indian Government.

*May the rider of the blue Horse help us*

## CHAPTER 10

### RAHU KETU AND THE TARA

In the early years of re-colonisation, attempts were made, first to intimidate Master Tara Singh and then to discredit him. These did not succeed. Eventually, his replacement by Fateh Singh was planned as he understood the re-colonisation process and was protesting against it, as best he could. Several governments executed this great joint. The documents relating to the last incarceration of Master Tara Singh clearly give an inkling of the state policy delineated above.

The last incarceration of Master Tara Singh was in connection with the Shiromani Akali Dal agitation for the formation of Punjabi Suba or the reorganisation of the Punjab to demarcate a Punjabi speaking area. As an experienced political leader and as the most frequently jailed Akali after 1947, the Master knew that he was up against a big conspiracy by all those who mattered. In his correspondence of the period, there is an uncharacteristic degree of eagerness to be at liberty. He appeared to be aware that a conspiracy had been hatched between Jawaharlal Nehru, Partap Singh Kairon and Mohan Lal Sukhadia Chief Minister of Rajasthan to oust him. The conspirators favoured a more pliable person - Fateh Singh, known as Sant Fateh Singh of Budha Jauhar in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan, as leader of the Sikhs. The Master's imprisonment and the character assassination undertaken by the authorities were very much a part of the conspiracy. History knows that these tactics were eminently successful. The kind of Sikh leadership nearest to the hearts of Congressmen, who inherited political power in India after the British decolonisation, consisted of apostates and those who would freely compromise on Sikh issues.

In a letter dated November 28, 1960, written to G. D. Khosla, Tara Singh outlined all the matters that agitated him regarding the treatment being meted out to him. This letter was numbered 2865 by the jail authorities at Dharamsala. He had sent a copy of it to his advocate Hardens Singh Jugular. It is his copy that is being reproduced here.

To,

Shri G. D. Khosla,  
Chief Justice High Court,  
Chandigarh.

Your Lordship,

I approach you as the chief custodian of justice and the rights of citizenship of the State. I am suffering on account of a lawless law, which practically gives right to the Government to interpret freedom of speech and peaceful action, as no freedom at all. The Government can shut up citizen in jail on a charge of which there is no proof and of which no details need be given. Armed with such lawless law, this Government, under the influence of or at the instance of some unscrupulous influential person has concocted a false and baseless story against me the purport of which is that I had given directions to the Bir Khalsa Dal (which has practically ceased to exist years ago) to resort to armed revolt at a right moment. I am not given an opportunity even to disprove this charge. No name of any person to whom, and no particular of any place, date or time at which, I gave such directions are mentioned in the charge sheet supplied to me. What a wonderful law! If these details



were supplied to me, I may be even able to expose the conspiracy behind this concoction. Hatched at the instance of some expert influential and powerful person. But you may not be in a position to do anything in the face of this lawless law as it exists at present. But I believe you have a right to see that rights guaranteed to every citizen in law are reasonably protected and no Government Minister or official puts unfair obstacles in the way of citizens to get legal advice and assistance for removal of this grievance or for meeting of his demand.

So many cases have been started against me in various courts which are pending in the various courts and the Government does not give fair facilities to my lawyers to see me for consultation. There is an Election petition against me, 2 cases in Gurdwara Judicial Commission against me and one in the court of Senior Sub Judge, Jullundur. Besides these four cases I am to lodge a libel suit against Shri N. V. Gadgil the Governor of Punjab for a false and defamatory statement which he made in his speech delivered in the meeting of the Governors held at Delhi on 9th November saying that I was approached for going on fast to death and that on my refusal to do so, Sant Fateh Singh Ji has to go on fast to death, and another suit against Shri Darbara Singh President, P.P. C. C. for another baseless and mischievous statement against me. But the delaying tactics of the Government in the past and unauthorised restrictions put upon my lawyers interviews, gives rise to strong suspicions that the Government may play all conceivable tactics in order to pit obstacles in my way in the contemplated proceedings against the Governor.

I do not know how far you can press the Government to give me full facilities in proceeding to retrieve my honour attacked by the Governor. But as the Chief guardian of justice in the State, you can certainly advise the Government to give me and my lawyers full facilities in conducting all these cases and especially in my case against the Governor, which from my point of view is the most important of all.

I am writing all this without help or advice of a lawyer, so I hope you will excuse me, if there is anything wrong in my approach to you.

I am Your most obedient servant,

Sd/- Tara Singh  
(Tara Singh).  
No. 2865 Dt. 28-11-60

Copy forwarded to S. Harbans Singh Ji Gujral,  
Advocate High Court, Chandigarh.

Master Tara Singh appears to have been particularly disturbed about the remarks made by the Punjab Governor in the Governors' conference and the campaign of being an agent of Pakistan launched against him by an official of the Congress Party, Darbara Singh. It is significant that this Darbara Singh was the Chief Minister of the Punjab when matters took a turn for the worst in 1983. He was still conducting the campaign of dubbing the genuine Sikh leader of the times, Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale, as an agent of Pakistan. Tara Singh intended to file defamation suits against them both, as is also indicated in his letter of November 28, 1960 written perhaps to Gurnam Singh with a copy to Harbans Singh Gujral. Tara Singh wrote a letter to the then Prime Minister about the Governor's calumny and sent a copy to N. V. Gadgil the Governor. In his letter of October 5, 1959, the Governor acknowledges its receipt. On November 11, 1960, he wrote to Master Tara

Singh's lawyer indicating his defence in the proposed defamation case. He took shelter behind confidentiality of the proceedings of the Conference. The newspaper reports, he would dismiss as unauthorised and no court would compel the correspondent to reveal his source of information. It was a perfect defence of the modern day Chanakya if one turns a blind eye to propriety, misuse of public office to defame a person and the morality of the issue. Letters written to the Prime Minister and the prime mover of the campaign, by several officials of the Akali Dal including Fateh Singh went unanswered and even unacknowledged. The deed had been done with clinical perfection. Henceforth, the very birth of the honest Sikh leader would be aborted by the use of similar methods and violence. All those who understand only by example can recall the events of June 1984. Those Sikh leaders who were inconvenient to the establishment were eliminated with a sledgehammer; the same tanks and personnel carriers escorted those who were 'our men' to safety. This was done by the same army units, which destroyed the Akal Takhat and put the Sikh Reference Library stocked with thousands of priceless manuscripts to the torch.

A little more about Darbara Singh will be relevant here. He is the perfect example of a pliable leader propped up for carrying out the nefarious designs of the political powers at Delhi. Persons of his type do not care about the misery their actions bring to the people they ostensibly represent. The role in Punjab fits well with their propensity to betray those who trust them. It may also be recalled that he parted with Punjab's riparian rights worth thousands of million rupees without consideration, at the instance of Indira Gandhi. It was he who, guided by his masters in Delhi, lit the first flames of fire that consumed the Punjab for the next one and half decades. This information is taken from the proceedings of the meeting of the Congress Legislative Party. It took place on March 6, 1983 at Chandigarh. Twenty typed page proceedings of the meeting were issued by the Party Press Secretary. Two persons who had attended the meeting gave me a copy each of the proceedings. The extract being quoted below is reproduced from pages three and four of the proceedings.

*"Darbara Singh's Conspiracy to start the process of sacrileges of Hindu Temples and Sikh Gurdwaras"*

"Shri Surinder Kapoor MLA made a sensational of unsecular and communal act of the Chief Minister that in order to detract the attention of the people from the failures to arrest the guilty and protect the lives of the people from the extremists who were at large, the Chief Minister himself got managed the first act of sacrilege of Hindu Temple at Amritsar. He gave out the details that it was in pursuance to conspiracy hatched at Mohali at the instance of the Chief Minister that Ch. Darshan Singh Sardar Dalbir Singh of Chief Khalsa Dewan and Sardar Bharpur Singh, Chairman Punjab School Education Board arranged to send heads of two calves from Mohali (where the beheaded bodies of these calves were found) in a trunk by bus and got the same thrown stealthily in or near the Hindu Temple at Amritsar.

"Thus the first communal fire was lit at the instance of the Chief Minister later resulted in a number of similar acts of sacrileges of Hindu temples and Sikh Gurdwaras at Patiala, Ludhiana, Moga, Sangrur etc. this created a rift between the Hindus and the Sikhs. Both the communities were pitched against each other for confrontation. ...

"Both the communities were then allowed to took out their respective communal processions in the cities where the bad elements in both communities raised malicious derogatory slogans against each other... The police instead of of pacifying or controlling the situation rather added fuel to the fire".

This is the kind of activity in exchange for which Darbara Singh and other Congress pawns had been allowed to don the trappings of leadership in the Punjab. Here in Punjab he was the authentic voice of his masters at Delhi. How these activities were utilised by Indira Gandhi and her successors for shedding Sikh blood on an unprecedented scale, is written all over the bloody fifteen years.

## CHAPTER 11

### HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY'S SLAVE DRIVER

To complete the story of Master Tara Singh's overthrow and to expose the government design behind it, an important document may be quoted. It is a letter written by Partap Singh Kairon to Sant Chanan Singh. Ravail Singh was of the opinion that it was written to Sant Chanan Singh though when it was first revealed, it was deemed to have been written to Sant Fateh Singh. That would make no material difference. Difference between one Sant and the other was no more than the difference between tweedledee and tweedledum. It is assumed, by those who watch events closely in the Punjab that one who controls the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee (SGPC) also controls the Akali Dal and Akali politics in the Punjab. This was truer in the pre-reorganised Punjab than it is today. In keeping with this maxim, the first attempt of Fateh Singh was to capture control of the SGPC. It was obvious that this was being done with the help of the Punjab government. According to the constitutional arrangement prevalent in India, the administration is non-political and has to maintain strict neutrality between the political parties. The State is also supposed to adhere to secularism, one postulate of which is non-interference in the religious affairs of any group of citizens. Defying these provisions of basic law, Partap Singh Kairon, the then Chief Minister, had instructed the administration to influence the members of the SGPC in favour of Sant Chanan Singh. These facts were known to all at that time. Kairon, knowing that excessive secrecy would be destructive to the achievement of the ultimate aim, was quite open about his manoeuvres.

It was apparent that the exercise was being undertaken in behalf of the government at Delhi, which at that time meant only the Prime Minister. Perhaps it would be more correct to say that he had been assigned the task of dislodging Master Tara Singh from the position of the president of SGPC. This was meant to be a prelude to his political isolation. So it turned out to be. He wrote a letter to the Sant after returning from Delhi, and confirmed the conspiracy they had earlier hatched. This letter fell into the hands of Sardar Ravail Singh who was a personal friend of both Partap Singh as well as Sant Channan Singh. I was once given a copy emanating from the former Chief Minister Gurnam Singh's office. I preserved it for almost three decades. Just recently, along with a few other documents, it was entrusted to an editor of a reputed magazine. He lost it. This was most relevant to the theme suggested in this book. I tried to locate another copy in the private archives of persons known to me. Eventually the effort paid off. Sardar Ravel Singh, still maintained the original. He very kindly allowed me to use it in this book. Ravel Singh was a Revenue Minister in the Punjab Cabinet from 1969 to 1971.

Even a casual reading of it will suffice to clarify the government policy on the issue being discussed here. It must be understood that Kairon, backed to the hilt by the Prime Minister of India, was in a position to dislodge Master Tara Singh through the instrumentality of the administration. Due to a variety of reasons, one of which is that the Punjab continues to be a colony, the administration is as powerful as it was when the Punjab was a British colony. The administration has willingly become a tool in the hands of politicians and happily performs to their commands whether legal or illegal. It was quick to grasp that the all-powerful Prime Minister and the Chief Minister wanted the victory of Sant Fateh Singh under all circumstances. It may be borne in mind that a statutory provision in the relevant Act empowers the Deputy Commissioner Amritsar

to preside over a meeting of the SGPC convened to express lack of confidence in the president of the body. Master Tara Singh was as good as removed when a decision was taken to write this letter.

The policy of the new government in India after 1947 was to decrease Sikh representation in all spheres of public life including the administration. The idea was to bring home to them that the Hindus were now the new masters. Partap Singh Kairon was installed as the Chief Minister of the Punjab on the understanding that he would execute that policy. In the normal course it would be impossible to come across documentary evidence for such manoeuvres. Fortunately we have two documents which clearly expose malafide intentions of Kairon and others.

One case that came up before him as Chief Minister, was that of selection of Dr. Karnail Singh for studies abroad. This would eventually enormously enhance his career prospects in government service. He was, however, considered to be a good Sikh. The excuse put up for cancelling his selection for training abroad was that he was not recommended by Mr. Cray who was an important member of the selection committee. The first document presented here is a letter of Raymond E. Cray on the subject. The other is an extract from Dr. Karnail Singh's representation to the then Governor Mr. Dharam Vira. "Kbaddi with Kairon" as he chose to describe it, shows how seriously Kairon took his hidden agenda and to what unbecoming extent he went in implementing it. Both the documents are self-explanatory and need no further comments.

Portion of the memorandum in question is captioned, KABADDI WITH KAIRON. It reads:

"I saw Mr. Kairon on 23.7.62 about these scandalous selections. He called the Under Secretary Mr. P. C. Sharma to explain the case.

"Mr. P. C. Sharma gave the following reasons to the CM about my non-selection.

4. That therefore, the sole cause of my non-selection was these adverse remarks of Prof. Cray.

"I had a letter dated 22-9-59 from Prof. Cray. He had forwarded copies of this to the Punjab Govt.: Director Animal Husbandry, Principal Veterinary College etc. to refute this, (copy attached) (Appendix A). I read a few lines from this letter...

"The original letter was handed over to Sh. Kairon to see for himself. As soon as the letter reached his hands he ran away with it. I ran after him and caught hold of the letter. He lifted his hand up, so did I. He raised his heels up and so did I. He pleaded that the letter should be entrusted to him. I told him repeatedly that a copy of the same was in the file lying on his table.

It was after a great strife that I could snatch this letter from Kairon."

Sirdar Kapur Singh was dismissed from the Indian Civil Service in pursuance of the same policy. Though Kairon did not initiate the dismissal, he nevertheless took prominent part in the proceedings. An account of the sordid episode would be relevant here but a complete account can be found in the Sirdar's *Sachi Sakhi*. Interested persons are referred to that work.

## CHAPTER 12

### LAST RETREAT OF THE LION

I used to regularly visit Master Tara Singh during his last illness. Several observations of the period are worth mentioning. Two may be relevant here. During the last week before the operation, I once heard a serious family discussion about arranging two bottles of blood for the operation. No relatives in the relevant age group were immediately available. It was being debated whether it would be proper to use the purchased blood. Price charged by blood bank of the hospital was considered to be on the higher side. The feasibility of asking professional donors who normally accepted twenty rupees per bottle was considered. Fortunately, resorting to that was not necessary, because two students from the University donated the required amount on time. Once I took along my camera and took several photographs. The first of these was taken when he was tying his turban sitting on the hospital bed. The others were taken at the vast expanse of land, which Chandigarh now knows as Rajindra Park. That is where he liked to go for an evening walk. His son Mohan Singh was always his constant companion for the walk. He would also say his evening prayers there. A photograph of him at prayer was also taken. Some times his exceptionally quiet wife would also accompany him, but on this last outing she was not there.

The photographs presented here were taken on November 13, 1967, just about a week before his death and are the very last ones. It must distress some sensitive people that the great Master Tara Singh had no vehicle in attendance at the Post Graduate Institute of Medical Sciences and was dependent upon a casual visitor to go out for a change. At the same time it speaks volumes for his honesty in public life and his utterly undemanding nature. Later I observed the same traits in abundance in Sardars Jagjit Singh and Daljeet Singh. I had taken a photograph of Master Tara Singh sitting on a simple string cot and answering his mail in the early sixties in the office of the Akali Dal at Amritsar. He walked into the office with a small cheap tin box containing letters to be answered and was soon busy doing so. The conversation I had with him on that occasion would be relevant elsewhere and so also the photograph.

## CHAPTER 13

### MAHAKALI FORGES THE BOTTOMLESS BOWL

I subscribe to the views that there is no such thing as the ‘Sikh problem’ in India. The Sikhs, for instance, would have had no difficulty in going along with everybody in the country, had the promises of autonomous status freely made to them before de-colonisation been honestly fulfilled. After all, these were the prospects, which had made them wage the only genuine war for the independence of India. The constituent assembly for India was convened on the basis of united India, autonomy to federating units, communal representation in all spheres and protection of minorities. Had these come through, the Sikhs would have had no complaints. One can go to the extent of saying that the Sikhs would have had much less to complain about, had the distorted constitution which finally emerged out of the ‘Hindu Consenbly’, been fully and fairly implemented. The consistent violation of this, in all manner possible, suggests that perhaps the problem in the Punjab is a Hindu problem. I have always held that at the root of each and every contentious issue in the Punjab is the gross violation of the written constitution in relation to the Punjab. I also belong to the school of thought which believes, on facts which clearly suggest, that these violations have everything to do with the Punjab being a Sikh majority area. The problems are often conjured up to make the Hindus feel that they are the imperial race, notwithstanding the written constitution or the professed nature of the Indian polity. To illustrate the point we may consider the question of the boundary dispute between the Punjab and Haryana. This is clearly deliberately raised out of the witches’ cauldron in full view of the whole world. Had the Punjabi Region, demarcated by an act of the parliament a decade earlier, been converted into the new Punjabi speaking state, no territorial dispute would have taken place. That was not to be. Later, after having sufficiently inflamed passions all around, the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi, would suggest that Haryana and the Punjab should sit together and resolve the territorial dispute amicably. She slyly indicated that she would unhesitatingly accept the joint solution.

This opportunity had arisen much before the dispute took an ugly turn but she spurned it with contempt. Punjabi and Haryanvi leaders had guessed that she was merely sowing the seeds of discord by raising the territorial dispute and had put their heads together to find a solution. The letter I am presenting here is from the personal papers of Sardar Gurnam Singh. His son Gurbir Singh (Baku) was kind enough to let me photocopy it some two decades earlier. I showed it to Sardar Narinder Singh Brar and he remembered having written it some fourteen years earlier. At one time consensus had been arranged between the important leaders of the Punjab and Haryana and they had concurred on the list of villages in the disputed area, which should go to the two states. This decision was conveyed to Indira Gandhi through a letter jointly signed by Chaudhri Devi Lal and Prof. Sher Singh in behalf of Haryana and by Harcharan Singh Hudiara and Narinder Singh Brar, Member Parliament, in behalf of the Punjab. The letter needs no further commentary. The lists attached to it have become irrelevant and are not being presented here. “Respected Behanji” ignored it and that single fact contributed to keeping the cauldron on the boil upto today. Thousands upon thousands of lives have been consumed and the Hindus are no nearer to being universally acclaimed the imperial race. The forces of violence and hatred let loose in consequence of such machinations have since engulfed the whole country and are now threatening to consume it.

27-B/7 Rohtak Road,  
New Delhi-5.

August 10, 1966.

Respected Behanji,

We sincerely felt that the problem of transferring Hindi- speaking areas in Punjabi Suba to Haryana and Punjabi speaking villages in Haryana to Punjabi Suba should be solved by mutual consent before the inauguration of the two States. Shri S. N. Sinha assured us that if some agreed solution to this problem is found out by the protagonists of Punjabi Suba and Haryana, Government will have no objection to implement it. He must brought the matter to your kind notice.

We took up this matter very seriously and requested Sant Fateh Singh to write a letter to Shri S. N. Sinha before leaving Delhi For Britain and other countries, which he did (copy attached). Considering village as a unit (subject to contiguity) we did a lot of spade work and prepared a list of villages to be transferred from one State to the other. The work would be finalised in a couple of days but before that we wanted to be sure whether the Government was in mood to accept the proposal.

We do not want the history of Belgaum to be repeated in our States and are anxious to solve the knotty problem which touches the Sentiment of a lakh of people. Some responsible gentlemen in the Congress Organisation and in the Government are opposed to such a proposal And their negative attitude discouraged us. We, therefore, decided to postpone our work and evolved a very simple formula which we gave to Shri N. K. Sinha yesterday. We could only help the Government by creating an Atmosphere of goodwill and by finding out a formula acceptable to all Interests concerned, but the initiative lies in the hands of the Govt.

With these things in view we met you this morning at your Residence and explained the matter briefly. We are glad that you are equally keen to solve this problem and would like to consult your Cabinet colleagues before taking a decision.

-2-

As you are extremely busy these days, we consider it Necessary to remind you and hence this letter. We hope that you will be kind enough to communicate Your decision as and when taken.

With highest regards,  
Yours sincerely,

- 1) Devi Lal M. L. A.
- 2) Prof. Sher Singh M. L. C.
- 3) Harcharan Singh Hudiara,  
Sr. Vice-President , S. G. P. C.
- 4) Narinder Singh Brar M. P.  
Encl.



## CHAPTER 14

### BHAI NAND SINGH: A *PARAMHANS* OF THE GODAWARI

Bhai Nand Singh was truly a forerunner of Darshan Singh Pheruman. No reference to Darshan Singh Pheruman, one of the greatest martyrs of the Sikh faith, will be complete, unless his contemporary Bhai Nand Singh who had become a martyr for the same cause, is also noticed. The issues before him were the same and he had addressed them equally gloriously. A narration of what is known about him must, therefore, be included in the same volume. Pheruman's story must follow his as it did in time.

It is certain that there is no hierarchy in spiritual realms. Martyrs are instruments of God's Will and particularly in their last moments, they share a vision of Reality with prophets, it is believed. Just as prophets of God cannot be graded, martyrs cannot be ranked. The description of the last moments of the Sufi saint Sarmad and of the Sikh mystic Bhai Mani Singh is spectacularly similar. So it has to be since there is only One God. This takes care of my first impulse to say that in many ways, the martyrdom of Bhai Nand Singh was a bigger event than that of Pheruman and that he was perhaps a greater martyr. The necessity to deal with his story separately is obvious.

The other justification came forcefully to my consciousness during the time of writing. I realised that just as the spiritual discipline of Sikhism is so prolific in producing martyrs, the memory of the Sikhs concerning them is so short. I tried to get more information about Bhai Nand Singh from the 'usually well informed sources' and found that they had all forgotten even his name. I was constantly confronted with 'Nand Singh! Who?' Surprise was all the more as Master Tara Singh, the tallest Akali of the time was awe-struck with his martyrdom and had hailed it as one of the greatest event in Sikh history. This has become an additional reason for me to document the event. I am conscious that, even at best, it is an inadequate account. It is intended to be just a beginning. Someday, some great poet will weave it into an epic and somewhere in the South of India a splendid white shrine will arise to commemorate Nand Singh and his great deed.

Master Tara Singh wrote three ecstatic pieces on Bhai Nand Singh. These appeared in the Daily *Jathedar* and are being reproduced here. The first one appeared on April 25, 1967, the second on May 1, 1967 and the third on May 2, 1967. These are translated as under:

I. 'Selfless Martyr Bhai Nand Singh ji.' Is preceded by a couplet from the Sikh scripture to the effect that 'though the whole world inevitably dies, few selected ones die a death, which extinguishes the possibility of ever dying again'.

Although the Khalsa is in hopeless minority, it has still produced martyrs who have projected the glory of Sikhism and the limitless faith of a Sikh. The Guru's Sikhs have been rising to the demand of the times and have been adding to the glory of the *panth* by courting martyrdom. There have been the kinds whose heads were struck off, those who were cut up limb by limb, those who were skinned alive and those who were cut up into small pieces. Still, we have had only one Bota Singh of Noor-di-Saran who directly offered martyrdom to preserve the fair name of the Sikhs. He alone could not bear the reputation that the Sikhs are afraid of dying or have been completely eliminated. On hearing the Sikhs being accused of it, he took up the rough staff and defied the Mughal army to prove that the Sikhs had neither been eliminated nor were they afraid of dying.

Today, Bhai Nand Singh has immolated himself only because he could not bear it being said of the Sikhs that they are afraid of dying even after making sacred commitments. Such pseudo Sikhs (who do not live up to their commitments) help only to bring Guru Gobind Singh's followers in disrepute.

In the modern times, Sant Fateh Singh took a solemn vow of self-immolate and abandoned it once on the pretext of war with Pakistan. Again he declared his intention to commit self-immolation, if Chandigarh and the Punjabi speaking areas were not merged in the Punjab. This time he backed out by accepting Shrimati Indira ji as arbitrator. Chandigarh and other areas still remain outside the Punjab and the common links are retained. The accusation of cowardice, which was levelled against the Sikhs, had to be removed with the martyrdom of Bhai Nand Singh who proceeded on the example of saints of old. He expected no good word no praise or honour and for the sake of his faith proceeded to bring glory to Sikhism.

## ***II New lighthouse of Martyrdom***

Bhai Nand Singh Granthi of village Bahadarpur has attained martyrdom after dousing himself with petrol only for wiping off the blemish inflicted upon the forehead of the *panth* by the act of Sant Fateh Singh who twice dishonoured the vow to immolate himself. This martyrdom has raised the heads (increased the self-esteem) of the Sikhs and has greatly encouraged the spirit of martyrdom. Nations become great by eulogising martyrs. The behaviour of those impostors who are inventing perverted untruths to protect their fake good reputation is surprising. This unique martyrdom exposes those who would rather use the good name and glory of the *panth* as a cover for their own faked glory. Now they are refusing to come to terms with reality and are trying to confound the truth. I am writing these few words about their ir-religious and base cunning behaviour.

1. It is being said that Master Tara Singh supported Gurnam Singh when he was with him and now that he has turned against him, he is being dubbed a traitor. That is right. If someone stands by me on shared respect for certain principles, I do trust him. But when he abandons those principles for selfish reasons, he becomes a traitor. Remember this that traitor is one who was at one time with you. An opponent is an opponent; he can't be a traitor. It is also true that in adversity a rare person stands by you (remains true to commitment) and many turn traitors.

One who is greatly trusted turns out to be the biggest traitor and one who is less trusted becomes a lesser traitor. This is how it has always been. It has happened to our greatest men (this is borne out by the lives of our greatest men). The domestic cook of Guru Gobind Singh turned a traitor and betrayed the younger princes. One of the thirteen (twelve) followers of Hazrat Jesus (reference is to Judas) betrayed him into crucifixion for twenty coins. One of the murderers of Julius Caesar was Brutus whom he (the former) treated like a son. Several examples can be given. Traitorous conduct devastates cowards and elevates the brave (who shun treachery).

However, there is no connection between any weakness of Master Tara Singh and the unique martyrdom of Bhai Nand Singh. Neither is it connected to the vow taken by Sant Fateh Singh. The real issues must not be confused by such considerations.

Hypocrisy and untruth has often prevailed and can prevail but not for ever. 'Untruth exhausts itself and eventually the truth prevails says Nanak'. (Those that are doing it must consider),

how long can you fool the people by narrating false tales of your miraculous powers? The recluse of Khadur Sahib had so incited the people that they had expelled even Guru Angad from the village. Eventually his claim to miraculous powers was exposed and people dragged him to death. The hypocrisy of the new recluse also stands now exposed. Do not evade the true path by pitiful wrangling. (Sant should) abide by what is right voluntarily, or the people will force him to do so. Destroy the cremation structures, the monuments to hypocrisy at once. These commemorate only abandoned solemn vows. For how long do you hope to prevail with the help of this Hindu government? You can't defy the panth for very long. Aided by the government, the pujaris had persisted in their un-Sikh like practices. Eventually a hero supported by brave men arose and flushed out the pujaris and along with them the government, which patronised them. The English government was a strong government and it lasted a while. But this government of slaves is already unstable and is tottering.

2. It is being said that the letter of Nand Singh the martyr addressed to Master Tara Singh is a fake. How do you know that it is forged? Has a voice from heaven told you so? You are thoughtlessly blurting out what comes to you. You can say that you have not received any letter. How can it be said that the letter that you have not seen or read is a forged one? Are you just not in the habit of speaking the truth? Now that a photograph of the letter has been published. Will you now say that it is the image of a fake letter?

Suppose the letter is accepted to be a fake one, even then, it relates to a true fact. Bhai Nand Singh has surely become a martyr after immolating himself. Can it be said that no Nand Singh has ever existed and that he has not become a martyr? The entire episode is faked. (Can you) wish it all away by pronouncing the entire episode as fake, without going to Bahadarpur and without making any investigation but depending solely on your power of divination and prophecy.

Accept the truth and do not try to earn goodwill by subordinating the panth to the administration. If you are not prepared to strive for maintaining the autonomous status of the panth at least do not become instruments of letting the Hindu administration stomp it. If you do not abandon this approach, you will suffer the fate your predecessors have met before you. Just to earn ephemeral praise by the Hindu, do not cast away your religion and your sense of propriety.

### ***3. Object is to elevate the panth and not to destroy the false recluse. (Alluding to a wicked contemporary of Guru Angad).***

I have been holding that at the time of great difficulty, some follower of the 'exceptional man' always comes forward to fire a new spirit in the panth and to set it on the path of ever increasing felicity. Today Bhai Nand Singh the martyr, has become the lighthouse of the panth's ascendant path. (Addressing Sant Fateh Singh and his Dal he writes further:)

1. If you are not capable of courting martyrdom, then at least do not become responsible for wasting martyrdom.
2. Hypocrisy cannot replace truth even after executing a hundred manoeuvres.
3. Test by fire has removed the fake sheen.
4. To misrepresent the fact of martyrdom of a martyr is downright degradation.
5. Vices and virtues inhere in every man. But martyrdom burns away all sins. If baseless accusations are to be levelled, these can be inflicted upon even those who accepted to be cut up limb by limb and even those who were greatly persistent in remembering God.
6. Slandering a martyr is like spitting at the moon. The spittle will land on the face of the slanderer.

7. Praised be Guru Gobind Singh! Praised be his Sikhs! Praised be Bhai Nand Singh.

Bhai Nand Singh appears to have been a pure minded seeker after Truth. He heard of Sikhism and came up north to investigate. He fully admired the path of the Gurus and joined the Sikhs who he thought walked firmly on it in the face of all odds. He got himself formally admitted to the Order of the Khalsa and settled down at Bahadurpur, which was perhaps the nearest convenient place to Amritsar. There are indications that to begin with, he was quite impressed with Fateh Singh's saintly exterior. It was later discovered that he had been one of his sincere admirers. Regular visits to Amritsar also kept him in touch with the latest political developments.

He came to Sri Akal Takhat on December 27, 1966, to witness the self-immolation of the Sant and his companions. The scene he saw there greatly distressed him. Later on he described it with great anguish to his friend Narinder Singh, an advocate.

His feelings were similar to those of his great contemporary Pheruman. His resolve too was the same. It disturbed him greatly that the 'ardas' (the religious commitment) had been violated. He felt that the Guru would abandon the Sikh people if amends were not made. He wrote a letter to Sant Fateh Singh chiding him for cowardice and offered to carry out to culmination the vow taken by the Sant. The Sant did not acknowledge the letter and later denied that it had been received at all. It was however recovered from his office and was published. Since Nand Singh was officiating as a scripture reader in a Gurdwara and was a member of the Order of the Khalsa, he felt it was his responsibility to project the true glory of the Guru's *panth*. In our own times even the Jathedar of the Akal Takhat had to be persuaded to intervene to stem the rot in the Akali politics of the day. He took it up half-heartedly and wriggled out of it at the earliest without accomplishing anything. Nand Singh chose *baisakhi*, the day of inauguration of the Khalsa, as the day suitable for his great act. On April 13, 1967 he performed the same ardas as had been abandoned midway by the Sant and immolated himself to show to the people that Sikhs still held fast to their commitment to the Guru and that the Sikh religious vow was nothing to be taken lightly. When and if the Sikhs emerge from the current numbness of sensitivities, they will perhaps elevate this humble and simple Sikh of the Guru to his real status of a great and selfless hero, the type of which are rare in the history of any people. They are the ones from whom all men of truth and religion ought to draw inspiration. It was for providing such pure guidance to the people of all religions that Guru Gobind Singh had created the Khalsa.

I had then written a somewhat detailed account of the martyrdom of this great man. It was seen and, in a measure, improved upon by the great Sirdar Kapur Singh. That profound scholar and one of the most beloved of the Guru, vetted it, adding several words and phrases here and there. Though that transforms it into a document of historical interest, it is not thought worthwhile to draw the reader's attention to the original. Of the portion containing the two short letters written by Bhai Nand Singh, a part is however reproduced. These form a powerful and intense expression of human emotions and give an inkling of spiritual elevation achieved by the ordinary people under the influence of Sikh doctrines. The other letter written by Bhai Nand Singh is reproduced in original. These provide a rare opportunity of coming to know what transpires in the mind of a great martyr during his last days. Death had no sting, no fear for him. Hand in hand with death, he appears to glide to the pyre as joyously as a newly wed leading his consort to their nuptial bed. It will be remembered that Baba Gurbax Singh, who faced the countless hordes of Ahmed Shah Abdali, dressed up as a bridegroom eager to embrace death. Rattan Singh Bhangu writes, 'All his seventeen

companions also dressed up as a wedding party wearing perfumes and flowers of various scents, colours and shades’.

As has been noticed, the story of Bhai Nand Singh also serves to give important clues to the Sikh theory of martyrdom. It, for instance, brings out clearly that martyrdom must be absolutely voluntary and a person performing the supreme act must have a choice to live if he desires to.

Photograph of Bhai Nand Singh appearing here, is copied from a daily paper from which it was then culled.

## TRANSLATION

### *A Rare Green Bush Survives*

An account of the background and the shape of the newly formed Punjabi Suba have come elsewhere. The only result of the making the census of 1961, which was conducted under the influence of false and communal propaganda, the basis of division of territory could have been the transfer of Punjabi speaking areas to the neighbouring states. Fateh Singh, being devoid of political wisdom or even common sense could not get wind of this apparent danger or the conspiracy. He especially went to thank the Prime Minister and the Home Minister and had himself photographed in embrace with the Congress President. Because of having firm faith in the good intentions of the Congressmen, he could not take definitive steps for giving a proper shape to the Punjabi Suba formed as a result of the sacrifices of countless number of Sikhs. On the contrary, at the crucial time, when the commission was engaged in delineating the boundaries of the Punjabi Suba, he went away on a tour of England. There he continued to propagate the still to be born Punjabi Suba as his ‘own child’. On return to Punjab he made a declaration from Manji Sahib (Darbar Sahib) ‘accepting’ the Punjabi Suba and hoping to get ‘minor rectification’ done by parleys with the government. Knowledgeable people understood that this course would yield nothing.

The states of Punjab, Himachal and Haryana came into existence on the first of November 1966. As had been feared, several Punjabi speaking areas were handed over to the neighbouring states out of spite for the Sikhs. Forty-one common links were retained to stress the weakness and the inferior status of the Sikh homeland, the Punjab. This decision led to a great disappointment among the Sikhs. The Minister of State for Home said in reply to a question in the Lok Sabha on that day that ‘now there is no scope for discussion on the delimitation’. No retreat was afforded to Fateh Singh and he was forced to declare on behalf of his Akali Dal that it would resort to agitation with effect from November 20. Soon after that, on December 17, the Sant Baba performed the ardas (took a holy vow). He commenced his fast and pledged to immolate himself on December 27, if the injustice done to the Punjab (considered policy prevented him from terming it injustice to the Sikh *Panth*) was not vacated by then. Six of his associates (or followers) also performed ardas at Sri Akal Takhat and likewise pledged to immolate themselves on December 26, that is a day before, the Sant Baba entered the pyre. Skipping gurus have jumping acolytes, goes the Punjabi proverb.

Many political manoeuvres failed to move the government. As the day of immolation drew near, Sant Baba Fateh Singh was forced to manage something with Sardar Hukam Singh through his contractor friends. Just as Media persons were poised with their cameras to record the event to be projected all over the world, a chartered special aeroplane brought Hukam Singh to Amritsar. Kerosene oilcans filled with water were placed near the havan kunds to hoodwink the Sikhs. Glasses filled with honey and fruit juice were also readied (in preparation for breaking the fast unto death). People assembled at the Akal Takhat saw the stretchers for carrying the dead bodies being

moved towards the structures scheduled to be used for immolation. One onlooker was Bhai Nand Singh, a sincere acolyte of Fateh Singh. He had been born and brought up in the south of India. He had been impressed with the glorious deeds of the Sikh people and had joined the Panth after proper initiation. Considering Fateh Singh to be an elevated soul, he had cultivated his company. For a long time he had been officiating as a scripture reader at Bahadurpur village of Amritsar. He was still looking on when the entire scene changed. On Hukam Singh's being "personally satisfied", that the decision in favour of the Punjab will be taken, Working Committee of the Fateh Singh Dal (which was in readiness) accepted the second respondent, the Prime Minister of India as an arbitrator and decided to call off the hunger strike. When the proposal was put to the congregation for ratification, the unanimous response was, 'not acceptable, not at all acceptable'. Immediately the charlatan who called himself a 'Sikh Pope', pronounced the assembly to be 'partisans of Master Tara Singh and not the congregation of the saintly representing the Guru', which in fact it was. His acolytes took the hint and in an act expressing enmity to the glory of Sikhism, started raining bamboo stick blows on the congregation. A regiment of lathi wielding temple servants had been assembled in readiness for the event. This took place at the entrance of the Harmandir Sahib. The Sant's arrogance matched the rage of his malcontents.

Bhai Nand Singh was standing next to enthusiastic young college boys, of whom the Guru would have been so fond, and saw them receiving lathi blows to curb their zeal. This enraged him and he retreated with these boys to the office of the (other) Akali Dal near Baba Atal Sahib. He described the Sant's doings as a drama enacted under the influence of cowardice at the Akal Takhat the glory of which has been enhanced by countless martyrs. He felt it constituted a blemish inflicted on the fair face of the *panth* and requested the secretary Shiromani Akali Dal to permit him to attempt removing it. On coming out of Sri Darbar Sahib complex, he met and expressed the same sentiments to an advocate friend. On departing he greeted him indicating that it was the last greeting that they would exchange.

Bhai Nand Singh felt deeply for the *Panth* and had suffered imprisonment as a volunteer during the Punjabi Suba Morcha of 1960, believing that the Punjabi Suba meant the *panth's* claim to be respectfully heard. Now he had become attuned to the ideals of the spirited Bhai Bota Singh. To lift the *Panth* out of the morass of degradation, to prevent its becoming the butt of jokes, to let it be known that the Khalsa *Panth* was ever the *panth* of those who were ever true to their word, he decided to join the endless procession of martyrs. He designated the day of his martyrdom and wrote letters conveying the decision to the Secretary Shiromani Akali Dal (Master) and the cowardly Fateh Singh. He especially got his long robe dyed lemon yellow and his waistcloth in blue. At last he even arranged large logs to make his own pyre.

On the day of martyrdom, April 13, 1967, which was the Baisakhi day or the anniversary of creation of Khalsa, he woke up at three in the morning, with great fervour. After the daily ablutions, he attended to the routine installation of Guru Granth Sahib, performed the usual prayers and read the customary random psalm. He mounted the pyre and sat facing the Guru (Granth Sahib). He recited the Japuji with great concentration. On its completion, he calmly and solemnly bathed himself in petrol and after the customary shout of victory to God, set himself on fire.

In describing this martyrdom to uphold the glory of the *Panth*, Fateh Singh's newspaper *Kaumi Darad* crossed all limits of decency, and termed it 'an incidental death'. The alternate explanation was that it was the result of an accidental fall into fire kindled for preparing metal oxides and for conducting witchcraft'. Fateh Singh and his supporters spread lies, either unknowing or

knowingly ignoring that he who denigrates a martyr is a sinner and a low down person. Fateh Singh even denied the letter he had received and committed another sin by destroying it. Guru is ever forgiving, but Fateh Singh had too much to ask forgiveness for.

The other two letters written by him before the martyrdom are as follows :

‘Remembering One and Only God, by the Guru’s Grace’;

‘I, Nand Singh, the servant, greet Sardar Ajmer Singh and all the Sangat - Victory be to the Wondrous One. On hearing of the great glory of the Khalsa while in the Deccan, I had decorated myself a Singh and had taken *amrit*. I understood from the tales of chivalry of the Sikhs that a Sikh always considers his word to be inviolable. For a long time now the Sikh leaders have rescinded solemn vows of self-immolation on one pretext or the other. I cannot bear this insult to the Panth. A Sikh can become a martyr; he can die (for a cause). I have got a martyr’s dress stitched. For the purpose of bringing sense to leadership and of making the Sikh traditions well known, I will offer martyrdom. You will hear of this. Khalsa *Panth* of the Guru will be transported to ascendant mood. Please forgive your servant. I am also writing one letter to Sant Baba Fateh Singh. I greet the entire Sangat of the saintly (Sikhs). Servant of the Sangat, Nand Singh Granthi at Bahadurpur’.

The second letter (addressed to the village headman) ran like this: ‘Sir Sarpanch and other honourable people of the village, I am departing from you forever. Please forgive me for any lapses committed by me while I was living amongst you. Do not hand over my body to the police, please cremate it in the village. Please ask Darbara Singh of Kalaipur to attend my funeral. Organise uninterrupted reading of the scripture and let the expenses of the ceremony be realised from the sale of my bicycle’.

This martyrdom was much discussed everywhere and the world became acquainted with the grace of Sikh chivalry and traditions, but the ‘wearer of the aigrette’ (Guru Gobind Singh) did not turn his face towards his Panth, was the assessment of Pheruman. Many wise men felt that this was the result of Sikh leaders’ many failures to fulfil the solemn vows made after due religious ceremony. According to the old tradition, an inspired substitute would have to atone for the sin by martyrdom and then perhaps the Guru would overlook the desertion in deference to his supplication. Like the ancient Bhai Mahan Singh, now an old lion-hearted general of Pheruman village took up the challenge of bridging this gap between the Guru and his Sikhs.

## CHAPTER 15

### WILL OF DARSHAN SINGH PHERUMAN

If the Sikhs ever decide to carefully record their history and if it ever comes to be written objectively, Sardar Darshan Singh Pheruman will find a chapter devoted to him alone, even in a volume presenting five eventful centuries. His biography illustrates many ideals nearest to the Sikh heart. Strong impulse to identify with the oppressed and an elevated concept of self-respect were the poles around which his life revolved. Honesty in public life was his forte. His faith in the Guru was steadfast. In the fashion of a true *gurmukh*, he perceived it to be his only duty in life to act the Divine Will as revealed in the *gurbani*. He felt responsible for the destiny of the people among whom he was born and cared for their fair name. His last act of voluntarily attaining martyrdom for a public cause while remaining firm in the face of extreme physical discomfort, is alone sufficient to place him amongst the greatest martyrs. It was his supreme sacrifice, which for the first time made the Sikh people aware of their plight in free India. They realised for the first time that they were face to face with neo-colonialism. He also brought into focus the shameless exploitation of the Sikh emotions by their own political leaders. His fate demonstrated to history the diabolical interdependence of both these facts. The leadership of the Shiromani Akali Dal had abandoned Sikh concerns for leftover political power. A pattern was emerging which provided for a show of pandering to Sikh sentiment for garnering Sikh votes. This pattern has by now become the established rule of political behaviour. Had we learnt our lessons then, perhaps it would not have been necessary for us to live through the bloody decade and a half (1982 to 1999). His story can still show us the path we should take.

Sardar Darshan Singh was born in Pheruman village of Amritsar district on August 1, 1886. After a short stint of about a year in the army, he started working as a contractor, which was a lucrative profession then as it still is in this country. His spirited mother wanted him to serve his country instead of pursuing professions. She believed that the Guru's pleasure could be earned only by devoting oneself to higher moral and ethical causes. A *gurmukh* lives his life in God and must ensure freedom and justice for all, as is His Will. She persuaded him to join what she perceived to be the ongoing struggle for freedom. He became an Akali volunteer as at that stage Shiromani Akali Dal was foremost among the organisations sincerely resisting the British rule. He entered the arena with a strong conviction of a dedicated soul. He went to Malaya to lie low for a while, and there he was arrested in 1928 for his political activity in the Punjab. It was there that he undertook his first hunger strike when he found that according to the jail rules he could not use the short breeches which is a mandatory symbol of the Sikh faith. It lasted twenty-one days and forced the authorities to amend the jail manual to yield to his request.

He returned to India and of the next seventeen years of his life, he spent fifteen in jail, agitating for the independence of India. After de-colonisation he remained a member of the *Rajya Sabha* for ten years until 1964. He was not satisfied with the kind of freedom that had come about. His joining the *Swatantrata Party* in 1959 as one of the founder members shows that he was still dreaming dreams and was searching for real freedom behind the cleverly erected facade, the great '*mayajal*' (the snare of illusion).

In order to meet a long-standing demand of the Sikh people, a Punjabi speaking state was carved out on November 1, 1966. Prior to it a great effort was made to persuade the Akali Dal to



de-link the legitimate Sikh political aspirations from the linguistic considerations. Eventually its formation was not in accordance with the linguistic principles universally applied to reorganisation of states in the rest of India. In particular, several Punjabi speaking areas were excluded from it and were included in the neighbouring Hindi speaking states of Himachal and Haryana. It was deprived of its electricity and river waters against the provisions of the prevailing riparian law enshrined in the constitution. From these and several other acts of the kind, the Sikhs concluded that this was being done on communal considerations since in each case, the Sikh majority state was being deprived and the Hindu majority states were being benefited. It made them feel very sore. Akali agitation for rectification for boundaries and correction of other aberrations started simultaneously with the declaration heralding the new state.

The irrepressible Master Tara Singh led a protest march on a cold rainy day. I remember the procession passing through sector 22 of Chandigarh. The small but enthusiastic crowd was fully drenched. Our hands were cold and feet were numb, but all were fired with hope and faith in the future of the Sikh people. The legendary Tara Singh was the main inspiration of this agitation.

Having effectively replaced the Master, Sant Fateh Singh was the president of the Akali Dal. It was apparent at that time that he had made several unbecoming compromises, which the Master never would have made. During the period of Sant's domination the issue of '*majha* versus *malwa*' Sikhs was raked up to become an ugly controversy. To fan the fire of '*malwa*' superiority, he even went to the extent of recognising Damdama Sahib Talwandi Sabo as the fifth Takhat of the Sikhs. The absurdity of the controversy becomes clear when viewed against the global worldview of Sikhism. Needless to say, the proposition had no support in Sikh religious tradition or history. In a very unsavoury fashion, bordering on crudity, he harnessed his '*jat-bhapa*' theory just in order to get rid of Master Tara Singh whom it was possible to dub as a leader of the urban Sikhs. The dirty trick paid off even in the face of the Sikh caste-less concepts and earned him the leadership of the more numerous rural jats who were basically looking only for a change in leadership. The Master had stayed on for too long; and was, in addition, a non-achiever. In his attempt to contaminate *amrit* with venom Fateh Singh, went to the extent of unnecessarily harnessing caste notions. This occasioned the writing of the powerful political pamphlet *Bikh mabi Amrit* by Sirdar Kapur Singh. Fateh Singh's ready acceptance of the mutilated boundaries of the new State, graphically described again by the same Sirdar as 'Sikh Quarantine' in his eloquent speech in the Indian parliament, shows that the Sant had personally connived at the manoeuvre. It is hard to believe that he had evolved a self-denying policy of any kind. It is more reasonable to assume that this was the precondition of his being projected as the real leader of the Sikhs. He was politician enough to seek the goodwill of the powers that had raised him to eminence. Pleased they were and readily accepted him as an incarnation of Shiva. Some opposed to him referred to him as the *Vahan* of *Yama* the Lord of Death. This title proved to be more appropriate retrospectively, for his negligence at the time is the root cause of all agitations in the Punjab since then, and has consumed countless lives of the most motivated and the most public spirited Sikh people.

Politically awake people interpreted it to mean that Sant Fateh Singh and his Akali Dal had abandoned the long standing Sikh demand in exchange for personal political adjustment. His actions and pronouncements betrayed that he did not much care for the claim of the '*panth*' to be regarded as a political entity entitled to pursue its own destiny in accordance with the requirements of the Sikh religion and the Khalsa ethos. He could not appreciate that such pursuit was fully conducive to real national interest. Political goals of the Khalsa have been so formulated as to be completely compatible with the best interests and the noblest aspirations of mankind. His

ignorance, buttressed by the prejudice of his opponents, rendered him incapable of appreciating the Sikh polity in its depth and true grandeur. It therefore became easy for him to turn his back upon Sikh political goals which were basically grounded in the profound concept of '*miri-piri*'.

Darshan Singh Pheruman's was the most eloquent protest against the 'secularisation' of the Akali Dal. He essentially gave his life to thwart the possibility of pandering to unreasonable demands of permanent cultural majority; thus expressing the most appropriate response required by the grave situation. Sikhs will ever rejoice that at the right time a right man of such great stature existed amongst them who sacrificed his life to reverse the trend, albeit unsuccessfully.

The show goes on. A mighty effort is on today to abandon the concept of '*miri-piri*' and Sikh concerns. The surroundings are equally hostile and the demands of the Caesar of today are the same. A good part of the Sikhs have again become victims of the loudly expressed rhetoric delivered to captive audiences from closely monitored Sikh stages. It is as "full of sound and fury signifying nothing". The anguish is that there is no one like Pheruman today. (*kitthon liaiye labh ke aj Warisshah ik bor*).

The game being played by the Sant slowly revealed itself to the people. In consequence, he found the reigns of leadership slipping from his hands. In order to retain them, he announced his plan of fasting unto death ostensibly in a bid to persuade the government in favour of a just solution. He took a religious vow from the holy Akal Takhat to start the fast on December 17, 1966 which, he announced, would culminate in his self-immolation on December 27, 1966 if justice were not done. He had once earlier used this mode of agitation in 1965 and had wriggled out of the ordeal. In his second intended self-immolation in the fashion of the Buddhist monks of Burma, he was to be preceded by several of his political companions. For this purpose, he got some '*havan kunds*' constructed atop the Akal Takhat. Nobody took him seriously. The well known jibe of Sirdar Kapur Singh was that the Sant will never immolate himself to death but will be cremated after death in the natural course (*eh sadh sarb ke nahi marega, mar ke sarhega*), became a popular perception. The fast was abandoned on a false pretext and the self-immolation did not take place again.

This angered the entire Sikh people who felt humiliated by the gimmicks of their leaders and resented the violation of solemn religious vows taken at the Akal Takhat. This was the situation Pheruman desired to ameliorate. To him a violation of a solemn vow entailed divine wrath and heaped public ridicule collectively on the Sikh people, thus making their existence amongst a hostile majority, untenable. He was aware that in any country, much more so in the Indian subcontinent, a minority is always under an obligation to substantiate its claim to continued existence. Similar were the feelings of another great contemporary of Pheruman. His name was Nand Singh and he was a South Indian, a Telugu speaking Sikh officiating as a scripture reader at a Gurdwara in village Bahadurpur of Amritsar. His story also is a part of this book.

"The *Panth* cannot exist meaningfully by turning its back on the Guru", Darshan Singh wrote to Sant Fateh Singh. He reminded him that the task of completing the Punjabi Suba was still unfinished. To it, the task of restoring Sikh self-esteem and dignity had been added by the Sant's folly. He invited him to redeem his voluntary vow to court martyrdom or to demolish the '*havan kunds*'. Darshan Singh offered to substitute for him if the Sant would not fulfil his vow. He also wrote an open letter to him. It was published on August 12, in the Daily Jathedar and is being quoted here in full. In his reply, later, the renegade would describe the potential martyr as 'a stooge in the hands of political jugglers'.

On July 6, 1969, Pheruman called upon the Sant to redeem his solemn vow. He also made it known that, if the Sant failed the people, he would undertake a fast unto death beginning with August 15, 1969 for the cause of completing the Punjabi Suba and for restoring Sikh pride. Pheruman announced his detailed programme on August 1, 1969 at Rayya. He said he would perform the 'ardas' on August 14, 1969, earlier offered by the Sant and his followers several times, at Sri Harmandar Sahib and would thereafter commence his fast which would end on either realising his objective or in his death. By his own example he wanted to show the Sikh people that they would have to make great sacrifices if they wanted to live with dignity in free India. He was confident that his example, in the context of his predicament, would inspire them to aspire for an autonomous region to be called 'Sikh Homeland'. He meant to atone for the sins of the insensitive Akali leadership, which, according to him, had abandoned the Sikh political stance so vital to the interests of the Punjab as well as those of India.

He also wrote an "open letter addressed to Shriman Sant Fateh Singh, President Shiromani Akali Dal" in Punjabi. The daily Jathedar published it on August 12, 1969. Rendered into English, it reads as follows, "You know that on the last month, 6th of July, I had requested you through the Press to announce your definitive programme for securing Chandigarh, Bhakhra and Punjabi speaking villages of Haryana within a month. It was because in December 1966 you had taken a vow of self-immolation at the Akal Takhat regarding Bhakhra and Chandigarh and Chandigarh but had abandoned your programme mid-way. I had also written in my letter that if you do not announce a definite programme, then I would sacrifice myself for achieving the object.

Instead of announcing an appropriate programme you met Srimati Indira Gandhi, the Prime Minister and Sri Chauhan on July 17, last month without an invitation and on your own request.

The Panth has been greatly disappointed with your wrong policy of holding a meeting in the presence of a steno and of returning without deciding anything.

In my opinion, you along with your companions Sant Channan Singh, Jiwan Singh Umranangal and others, have violated the oath you had taken at the Akal Takhat on 17 December 1966. This constitutes a serious sacrilege of the Akal Takhat and a great setback for the prestige of the Sikh Panth.

When you presented yourself along with your friends at the Akal Takhat to take the vow of self-immolation, you had let it be known that the central government has done you injustice. To remove this you would be dying.

But on 27 December 1966, after accepting the mediation of Sardar Hukam Singh, on the occasion of your descent from the Akal Takhat, you accepted the Prime Minister as an arbitrator. Tell me, who accepts the defending party in any case, as an arbitrator? If Shrimati Indira, on the precedent of the Shah Commission, gives a decision in favour of Haryana, what do you propose to do?

While at the Akal Takhat you uttered the big lie that the Prime Minister has sent you a written letter assuring you about Chandigarh. The Prime Minister, Sardar Hukam Singh and Sri Chauhan contradicted this in the Lok Sabha on 14 June 1967. Talking to Press reporters you again lied when you said you had lost that letter.

Santji! You have twice abandoned the vow you had taken at the Akal Takhat. The first time in September 1965, taking advantage of the Indo-Pak War; and for the second time in December 1966, after inviting Hukam Singh (to bail you out). Construction of cremation structures at the Akal Takhat of the Guru and martyred Sikhs to remind of a person, who does not perform according to vow, is improper. To maintain such structures is an outrageous sacrilege of the Akal Takhat. Along with abnegation of the vow, by lying twice about the Prime Minister's letter you have proved that you are capable of perjury and blasphemy at the Akal Takhat itself where people go to repent for unethical conduct.

In order to wipe out the ignominy inflicted on the *Panth* by you and your friends by violating the pledged word, I have decided to fast unto death at the Akal Takhat on August 15, 1969. Join me in securing Chandigarh and in dismantling the structures for cremation. A Sikh is never afraid of death; "the death of which the whole world is afraid, inspires happiness in me for only by dying does one attain to The Source of Complete Happiness (God)", is the Guru's injunction.

I am surprised at one of your Ministers of State threatening to arrest me before reaching Amritsar. It will make me happy to die in the jail administered by the Akali government for the purpose of destroying the cremation structures and for seeking the merger of Chandigarh with the Punjab.

Santji! I point out the right path for achieving the object you have failed to achieve. This is the path of sacrifice. After reaching the Akal Takhat on August 15, I will commence my fast unto death for securing Chandigarh, Bhakhra and for the removal of cremation structures, which constitute an insult to the Akal Takhat.

I invite you to help me, do not become a hurdle in my way, do not oppose me.

[Addressing the Sikh people in general, he further wrote:]

Do not construct any mausoleum commemorative structure at the place of my last rites ! I am certain that the Guru *Panth* will carry my programme to completion.

To the *Akal Purakh* I pray for the strength to make the sacrifice, to bless you (the Sant) with right-mindedness; to grant success to my endeavour and to facilitate ever-ascendant felicity to the Guru Panth.

Darshan Singh Pheruman  
Slave of the Guru Panth

On the night of the 12th and the 13th of August, the Punjab police entered his house just outside the village Pheruman, arrested him under section 9 of The Punjab Security Act and consigned him to Amritsar jail. This was the result of a false First Information Report lodged by one Gurdit Singh son of Santa Singh of village Bal at the Beas police station. It was obviously a procured report and accused Pheruman of preaching a violent overthrow of the government. It now forms a part of the record of the *Punjab Vidhan Sabha Debates*.

In accordance with the declaration made earlier, he performed the '*ardas*' on August 15, 1969 and began his great ordeal at about 4 PM. He made known his desire that in the event of his death, his body should be cremated in the 'havan kunds' constructed by the Sant. Later, on the third of October, he changed his will to this extent and expressed a revised wish to be cremated in his village. This change was made on the request of Gurnam Singh, the then Chief Minister of the Punjab, who apprehended that cremation at the Akal Takhat, would result in clashes and bloodshed. The Chief Minister abstained from force feeding him and at the crucial moment, transferred him to the government hospital at Amritsar after technically releasing him from the jail. The police continued to maintain a tight cordon around him to the last.

His condition was the cause of anxiety for all and made Media headlines until the last fateful day. He was an old man and was not expected to last seventy-four days, which he did. During this long period he never wavered from his vow. He was in enemy custody and even a small weakness would have been played up. He never gave them an opportunity to do so. On August 31, Giani Gurmukh Singh Mussafir met him at Amritsar. He delivered the Prime Minister's letter to him in which she had requested him to give up the fast because 'it will improve the situation' and help her 'in settling the matter of Chandigarh which was uppermost' in her mind. Pheruman received the letter 'from the daughter of my friend who is also the Prime Minister' with due courtesy but considered it to be a hindrance in the way of fulfilling his vow and firmly rejected the appeal it contained. The matter remained 'uppermost' in her mind for the rest of her life: she died in October 1984 without solving it.

Sirdar Kapur Singh was among the prominent people who were with him in his great ordeal. Others were Sardar Basant Singh of the Swatantrata Party, Sardar Mohinder Singh Khanna and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chauhan. They, along with Sardar Harchand Singh Jaijee, were members of the newly launched 'Punj Kaunsali Akali Dal'. In a very humble way and to a very small extent, I was also associated. I had taken the photograph of the profusely garlanded Sirdar Kapur Singh being presented the guard of honour on the occasion of inauguration of the Punj Kaunsali Akali Dal at Patiala. It is being presented here.

It was an event of the century and it was not possible for anybody to be left out. To those who were young in that age, Darshan Singh was a moral colossus; a true, selfless Sikh and they all admired him. (About half a dozen of my colleagues at the Khalsa College, Jalandhar joined me in publicly expressing these sentiments about him). My further involvement was occasioned by Kapur Singh's 'secretly' entrusting the will of Pheruman to me for publication at the time of martyrdom. Before the will ever reached me, the secret was out. And eventually the wily schemers over-strained themselves to prevent its publication in the full knowledge that all the Punjab papers, such as they were, had been forbidden to print it. In fact they never published it then or ever afterwards. *Hindustan Times* of Delhi, which published it, some four or five days after Pheruman's death, was the only exception. The Sirdar had come to the Khalsa College to deliver it to me but I was not immediately available, so he left it with one Avtar Singh known as 'kolewala' – an epithet suitable to his black deed. He was to deliver it to me immediately.

Pheruman's will was much sought after both by the Akali Dal ruling in the Punjab as well as the Congress party ruling at the Centre. During the prolonged fast, the Congress party being in the opposition in the Punjab, was expected to exploit it against the Akalis. This meant free publicity, which the supporters of Pheruman hoped to reap in full measure. They also knew that since the eventual solution to the Sikh political problem suggested by Pheruman was the carving out of a Sikh

Homeland, the Congress would team up with the Shiromani Akali Dal to turn the great martyrdom into a non-event if the will became prematurely known. So it was decided to keep it a secret for the time being. Its copies were entrusted only to a few persons. Kolewala was delighted on receiving it by accident. He perceived a veritable gold mine or shall we say, a coalmine in it. He lost no time in informing the Chief Minister who in turn flew with him to the Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. The will was read carefully and the accompanying tape was played. What the Kolewala got out of it is not precisely known. His gains were estimated at a mere cup of tea with the Prime Minister or at least with the Chief Minister to anything between twenty thousand to one hundred thousands of rupees in cash. That was a tidy sum in those days.

Giani Zail Singh was the president of the Punjab Pradesh Congress Committee and was very keen to know the contents of the will. He favoured me with many visits during the period and once he treated both Dr. Jagjit Singh and me to a sumptuous tea at a local restaurant. I like to believe that he could have got nothing out of us, but must admit that his interest also suddenly waned, after the '*kolewala*' episode, for reasons we did not then know. Sardar Umrao Singh, another official of the Pradesh Congress, also met me several times during the period, but fortunately was never serious about knowing the will.

The deed having been done by Avtar Singh, my copy was transmitted to me in due course. I noticed that the Press suddenly started taking less interest in the ordeal of Pheruman. To remedy the situation, I sent a friend to his village to collect some old photographs from his house. The popular photograph that we had been hitherto publicising had been taken at Jalandhar just around the time of signing the will. It had one great drawback that it depicted him in dark glasses wiping out the serene look of his expressive eyes. We were able to get his photograph in chains and shackles taken at the time of imprisonment in Malaya. It was a great photograph and could have sufficed to set the Beas on fire. The other one was taken at the time of organising a certain military formation (Akal Regiment) by Master Tara Singh as part of the war effort. It depicted him in military uniform and was also, therefore, rich in emotional content. Both were copied by me and distributed to the Press. It was so cold at that time that nothing sufficed to de-freeze it. One of those photographs is being reproduced here.

I was to appear for my Indian Police Service examinations. Taking the written copy of the will with me, I went away to Patiala, leaving the tape-recorded version with my very dear friend and colleague Sardar Amrik Singh. He was requested to play it to the Press at Jalandhar after the demise of Pheruman. I knew him as an honest man and a good Sikh but he had one single weakness, which came, in the way of his doing his duty on that day. He was lured into accompanying some others to a nearby village for a drink. The session got prolonged. Those who tempted him are alive and are doing very well for themselves. Now it can be said authoritatively that they have thrived both under Congress as well as Akali dispensations. Even today one of them, Bharpur Singh, continues to make headlines as an advisor to several key figures in Akali politics. The storm currently razing in Akali politics, in part, owes its origin to him. Such is our lot, and I suppose, we have to learn to put up with it.

The will of the great man was written by the equally great Sirdar Kapur Singh and was signed in his presence. Mohinder Singh Khanna signed it as a witness. Its photographic copy was later entrusted to me by the witness and also separately by the scribe along with a hand-written one. It is being reproduced here in original for preservation and with the hope that it will continue to inspire the coming generations of those who place value on firm commitment to moral causes. Its

translation is given in the moving speech made by Sirdar Kapur Singh on the floor of the Punjab Vidhan Sabha. The eloquent speech is also being reproduced for the delight of those who love to hear eternal values eulogised. Even a casual reader will notice the underlying ring of a Roman funeral oration.

Shamsher Singh Saroj obtained a copy of the will from me at Patiala. He was the owner of the English weekly *Punjab Mail*. He published an inadequate translation of it the next day. The Punjabi Press was content to present extracts retranslated from the bad translation without bothering to refer to the original which was freely available. Sikhs in particular and the Punjabis in general still have to answer why they treated that extraordinary man so shabbily. The martyrdom, which so effectively moved heaven, failed to move earth.

They will have a plausible explanation. The people who can explain the killings of one million neighbours and descendants of common ancestors in 1947, can explain away anything. But will they ever wake up from their deep slumber and realise what sins they are accumulating in the eyes of man and God?

Darshan Singh Pheruman passed away on October 27 at about 3:30 PM. The police, on the pretext of according a 'state funeral', disrespectfully handled his dead body. A great crowd of about sixty thousand people was denied the satisfaction of paying last respects in a befitting and traditional manner. Since the final act of martyrdom is so well summed up in Kapur Singh's speech, it needs no further elaboration.

I need only add that on a certain evening the whole of Patiala turned up to pay homage to his mortal remains. I was among the crowd. I was lucky enough to sit in the vehicle carrying his ashes and had the awesome privilege of actually handling the urn, for the procession halted at Patiala that night.

Maharaja Yadavendra Singh of Patiala had met Pheruman in Amritsar on August 31 and had issued a statement to the Press supporting his cause and pleading for the demolition of the 'agni kunds' constructed by Sant Fateh Singh. He was so moved by the martyrdom that he decided to construct a museum in Pheruman's memory. In which he also thought of placing his family relics of public interest. At one time he came up with the original plan of preparing such memorabilia as facsimiles of currency notes with Pheruman's portrait. These were to be used as receipts for raising funds for the museum. He meant thereby to associate every Punjabi with the establishment of the institution. I know that for a long while, he even toyed with the idea of converting his new Moti Bagh palace into a Pheruman Memorial. Then he thought of building it in the extensive parking lot inside the palace. It took him almost one whole year to get over that emotional fit of generosity. To this day, Pheruman remains uncommemorated except for a college at Rayya bearing his name.

## CHAPTER 16

### TESTIMONY OF THE RELUCTANT WITNESS

When the Shiromani Akali Dal commenced its Dharamyudh Morcha, the government and the Media under its influence, decided to drown its din in the campaign of loud disinformation. This lasted as long as the Morcha and even afterwards. Some of us decided to counter this campaign on our own as the Akali Dal did not seem aware of its magnitude. One part of the official propaganda was that the Akalis are in the habit of raising ever-new demands when they are not in power. We were obliged to say that the Akalis are legitimately and rationally agitated because their problems have been ignored for long time. To say this in relation to the Akali quest for autonomy, one of the actions taken was to request Bupinder Singh Mann who was a surviving Akali member of the Indian Constituent Assembly to express views on the subject. Another part was to persuade Kapoor Singh (of Nasruli), who had been a speaker of the Punjab Assembly at the time it debated the draft constitution of India, to share what he knew on the issue. He was approached through his relative and my neighbour General Mohinder Singh. His passion for maintaining records was well known. He fished out a document relating to the subject of autonomy, presented to the Constituent Assembly by the Akali Dal, and gave us a copy. But, 'being a loyal Congressman', as he put it, he would not sign it. We got around it by requesting him to write the subject at the head of the communication he had given to us. Since he was the president of Sri Guru Gobind Singh Khalsa College management committee, he used its letterhead. Besides the subject, it also throws light on the attitude of the Media. This is considered a document well worth presenting here. Many influential newspapers refused to print it though Press Trust Of India (PTI) circulated it. 'The Punjab Mail' was the only one that printed it in toto.

#### 1948 - S. A. Dal Views on Constitution Draft

It has been the declared policy of the congress from the very out set that India is to be the Union of Autonomous states, and each Unit is to develop in its own way, linguistically, culturally and socially. Of course, Defence, Communications and Foreign Affairs must and should remain the Central subjects. To change this basic policy now is to act contrary to the oft repeated creed of the Congress. The present draft of the constitution vests the Residuary power in the Centre, which, in the considered opinion of the S. A. D. should be otherwise. The proper plan should be to define the powers of the Centre or the Union Parliament in the first instance, then deal with the concurrent powers, and lastly deal with the states or Provincial Units, while at the same time making as comprehensive list of the Powers of the Provincial Units or states as possible, it being understood, that Powers not given to the Centre vest in the Units. The list distributing Legislative power should be based on the principle that the Centre or the Union Parliament should limit itself to Defence, Communications and Foreign Affairs. Hence Articles 217 and 223(1) necessarily call for amendment on the above lines with consequential changes in the relevant articles.

Of course, S. A. D. is not averse to the Principle underlying Article 226 that if any subject in the provincial list assumes national importance, it may be dealt with or taken over by the Centre, but only if concurred by the Provincial Legislative by Two Third Majority.



## CHAPTER 17

### ANOTHER SOUL SELLING SANT AND THE DAL OF CONSCIENCE TRADERS

There is also the story of those that not only willingly succumbed to pressures of antagonistic powers but also paraded the ignominious fall as a great manoeuvre born of political sagacity. Among these are some of our most important political leaders. This story can be woven around the next five documents presented here. Sardar Balwant Singh who had been a prominent leader of the Akali Dal for several decades wrote one of these five letters. Like many fellow travellers in the Akali Dal, his rise to power was spectacular. He started his journey as a low paid, minor government functionary. At the beginning of his career he found it worthwhile to accept such a job which could have barely sufficed to keep his body and soul together. But he graduated to politics because an educated person of his caste was urgently needed by the Indian National Congress to counter Sardar Atma Singh of the Shiromani Akali Dal. After fulfilling that role he joined the Akali Dal and that provided him several opportunities of becoming the Finance Minister in the Punjab Cabinet. That proved extremely beneficial for his personal prosperity. At the time of his death, besides other assets, he owned a palatial house in Chandigarh, the cost of which at a moderate reckoning, can be computed to several crores of rupees. On many an account, he multiplied his material assets many thousand times during his public life. This financial wizardry had much to do with the exploitation of his official position as an important functionary of the Akali Dal as well as Punjab's Finance Minister. The blessing also had its dark lining. No man, who loves the material things so dearly, can afford to be on the wrong side of the people wielding real political power. Balwant Singh was one of the few English knowing persons in the Akali Dal's senior leadership. So he was one of the party's chief negotiator with the Central Government. That gave him many opportunities, which could be converted into financial assets. He did not miss any and was often accused of betraying the vital interests of the party and the Punjab. I was in a position to watch him closely on at least three occasions. My observations confirm that his reputation as a wily wheeler-dealer was well earned.

Once I had occasion to observe him during negotiations with the representatives of the Central Government. An official team comprising of Surjit Singh Barnala, Ravi Inder Singh and Balwant Singh had been appointed by the Akali Dal for the purpose. Some unattached intellectuals, who felt that the Akalis always lost at the negotiating table, sought a meeting with the leadership before these appointments were made public. The President of the Akali Dal also appointed a team of some of these people to accompany the official negotiators. This was an attempt to mollify Bhinderanwale since all of us were considered to hold views similar to him regarding the problem in the Punjab. It was meaningful in the context of Bhinderanwale's apprehension that the Dal was prone to abandoning all that it had agitated for in return for being allowed to rule for a short period in the Punjab. At the end of the very first day of the negotiations, it was clear to us that the Akalis had already made many unwarranted concessions without the government having conceded anything in return. This is the report we sent to both Sant Harchand Singh and Bhinderanwale at Amritsar through Bibi Rajinder Kaur, an Akali Member of Parliament, who was on her way to Amritsar. *The Tribune* later reported the matter as "Differences come to the fore". I have referred to the other two occasions already in my writings.

A time came when everybody was prepared to believe the worst about Balwant Singh. He had extensive business interests which, in Indian conditions, could not be pursued without being on

the right side of the government. It was conspicuous that he was one of the very few Akali leaders who were not arrested immediately after the infamous army attack on Sri Darbar Sahib. These were the days when many Sikh leaders of several political persuasions were daily paraded before the television cameras to eulogise Indira Gandhi's action. It is in this context that the letter believed to have been written by him to the Prime Minister surfaced. It was freely distributed at Sikh political gatherings and has a bearing on the policies the traditional Akali leaders were destined to follow in the next decade.

(Confidential)  
(Personal)  
1015, Sector 27-B,  
Chandigarh-160019  
June 9, 1984

To

Shrimati Indira Gandhi  
Prime Minister of India  
1, Safdarjang Road,  
New Delhi -110001.

Most Respected Madam Prime Minister,

As desired by the authorities here I am giving this undertaking to you that I will refrain from active politics of the Akali Dal and will support Government action within the limits of my resources.

As you are aware I have in the recent past concentrated my work to my business activities and to setting up of new industrial units. I have never supported any of the actions or ideas of Mr. Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale and undertaken to continue to oppose him and his men. I strongly think that Government action in raiding the Golden Temple to flush out Bhindranwale and his terrorists has been very timely and most desirable.

With most respectful regards,

Yours obediently,  
Sd. /  
(BALWANT SINGH).  
(Confidential)  
(Personal)

The other letters are equally meaningful and show that running with the hare and hunting with the hound was not an individual policy of some particularly wayward members of the Akali Dal.

Baba Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale was a many faceted personality. One prominent facet of his short but brilliant career was that he was able to completely replace the Akali leaders in popular estimation. Had he floated a political party, members of the Akali Dal would have defected en masse to join him. It was not because he was laying down a different political policy: it was because the people trusted him more to stand by the declared aims and objectives of the Akali Dal. The Akali leaders stood discredited since they had, particularly after 1967, been following the devious

policy of pleasing the Akali workers with the words they liked to hear and bargaining for power with the ruling clique at the Centre on its own terms. Once in power in the state, they forgot all about their promises to the people and the political manifesto was never even reopened, for that would have offended the ruling clique.

This policy rendered the members of the Akali Dal doubly vulnerable. The masses were seen to desert them everything some one provided a viable alternative and the ruling clique used them to its own advantage even against the people the Akalis ostensibly represented. The persistent rumour that the Akali leaders were hand in glove with Indira Gandhi on suppressing the people's movement in the Punjab has refused to die. The following four letters indicate the truth regarding the allegation. This is why these are being presented here as significant documents of contemporary history. It appears, Indira Gandhi had taken the important leaders into confidence before she launched the attack on Sri Darbar Sahib. Most of them had not only connived but had actively supported her and had formulated a plan to contain the widespread resentment that would be the natural consequence of such an action. Balwant Singh had perhaps escaped giving such commitment in writing — he was clever enough to do so. By this letter, he appears to have been brought in line, or shall we use the then prevalent cliché and say he was thus brought into 'the mainstream'.

Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, was one of the earliest ones to have joined the mainstream if the following letters addressed by him and his aide to officials of Prime Minister Indira Gandhi's secretariat are any indication. As soon as these surfaced, an attempt was made to waive these off as fake. I have reasons to believe that these are genuine. I was travelling from Chandigarh to Amritsar by car. I had a chance meeting with retired Major General Jaswant Singh Bhullar at Banga bus stand. He was on his way back to Chandigarh. He told me that he was going abroad and had been given two letters of reference by both Bhinderanwale and Sant Harchand Singh. I had come to form a poor opinion of Bhullar for certain reasons, which are known to all our colleagues. So I remonstrated with both the Sants on meeting them at Amritsar. Sant Bhinderanwale and his assistant, Rachhpal Singh forcefully denied having given any letter to him. They did say that the general had approached them but they had politely refused with the words that it was not customary for the Sant to issue such letters. But Sant Longowal put up the lamest of lame excuses. He said that Bhullar had brought to him a letter typed in English, which he could not read and told him that Sardar Bhan Singh, General Secretary of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee had sent it for signatures, and he had thus signed it. When I asked Bhan Singh, who was a personal friend, what letter he had sent to the Sant for signing. He said he did not know. Bhullar and his friend had conveyed to him that the Sant wanted a certain letter typed in English. As Bhan Singh's office did not have an English typewriter or a trained typist, he had referred them to Devinder Singh Duggal who was at that time in-charge of the Sikh Reference Library.

Devinder Singh had left for Jalandhar where he lived; I could not talk to him that day. The events then happened in quick succession and I did not get a chance to meet him until it was much after the barbaric attack on Sri Darbar Sahib. By then these letters had been doing the rounds abroad and were the subject of discussion amongst Sikhs all over the world. The Akali defence was that these were forged. I asked Duggal whether these could be forgeries. He said they were not and that he had typed them at the instance of Sant Harchand Singh Longowal. He also said that he had kept the carbon copies and also that he had many more such incriminating letters by the topmost leaders of the Akali Dal. He conveyed the gist of the material available with him when he said cryptically, 'these letters are just a tip of the iceberg'. He apparently had much to say but before I

could meet him another time, he had died of a heart attack. Very recently, Gurmit Singh Aulakh has circulated these letters once again. On meeting me by chance as stated earlier, General Bhullar was perhaps referring to a letter dated May 15, 1984, reproduced by Sher Singh Kanwal in his *Raj Karega Khalsa* at page 156. It is on the personal letterhead of Sant Longowal and reads as follows:

Dear Sardar Sahib,

*Wahguru Ji Ka Khalsa, Wahguru Ji Ki Fateh*

Major General Jaswant Singh Bhullar and Professor Manjit Singh Sidhu are visiting your country to review the present set up and explain Akali Dal's stand on various issues facing the panth. You are requested to provide them all the facilities and help during the stay in your country.

With regards,

Yours sincerely,

Sd. /

(Sant Harchand Singh Longowal)

This letter was meant for generally introducing the Sant's emissaries to Sikhs abroad and was shown to many Sikhs in America and England. It is being reproduced here since it obviously corroborates the contents of the three other letters, which are also being given here. It pains me to write that these letters put the entire top Akali leadership at par with the universally derided Dogras and Brahmin leaders of the Sikhs on the scene in the middle of the nineteenth century. It pains me all the more that Sant Harchand Singh Longowal, with whom I had long association and who I particularly thought was above treachery, was also one of them. These letters are copied from photocopies prepared by one Tarsem Singh in March 1986 in the United States. Several spelling and grammatical mistakes have been left intact in order to conform to the original. These letters were given to me by my friend Jagdev Singh Khudian who later represented Faridkot as an Akali Member of Parliament. In the letter of Sant Harchand Singh dated April 25, 1984, I immediately recognised his signatures. Jagdev Singh Khudian died in mysterious circumstances soon after being elected. It was initially thought he had committed suicide. His apparel had been so arranged, on the bank of the Rajasthan Canal in which his body was found, as to give the impression that he had come with the intention of committing suicide. His family continued to believe and propagate that his political rivals from the same district had killed him, with the help of the police. Much investigation into the incident yielded nothing tangible.

Mr. R. N. Kao

30 January 1984

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Cabinet Secretariat (Security)  
Bikaner House, Shahjahan Road,  
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

Mr. Mehtani met me yesterday and gave me your message. He has told me that you are working on the sikhs living abroad. I am very happy to know that Dr. Jagjit Singh ji chohan has agreed to work with you. He has told me that you have already made him the payment.

Dr. Chohan rang me last night and has agreed to work with us he has told me to go ahead with our plan and he will do what we tell him to do. He has already fixed deal with one canadian punjabi news paper man and will take care of the payments. He is working on making a similar deal with a news paper man in england. One of ex-bhinderawale man, is now working with him in

england. He is giving all the information to Dr. Chohan about the activities of sant Bhindrawale men. There are some very strong followers of Sant Bhindrawale in england and in America so we have to do some thing about that. Mr. Mehtani will let know the dates of our plan.

February 22, 1984

Yours Faithfully,  
Sd. /  
Gurcharan Singh.

~~~

Mr. R. K. Dhawan  
1 Safdarjang Road  
New Delhi

Respected Sir,

Mr. Parbhu Dayal Singh met me today and has told me that with your help he has made a deal with Sardar Ganga Singh Dhillon of America. As, I told you when we met that Ganga Singh Dhillon will go for a good price and you are right that money can do any thing. He can keep the Sikhs in America disorganised for a while as he is a good actor. He can also provide us the names of Bhinderawale supporters in America. The matter we discussed about one person, he will be taken care of very soon all arrangements are done. Payments will be done on completion of job. I am sure our plan will work. Mr. Parbhu Dayal Singh will let you know the details of that.

April 25 1984

Yours very Faithfully,  
Sd. /  
Gurcharan Singh

~~~

Mr. R. K. Dhawan  
1, Safdarjang Road  
New Delhi

Respected Mr. Dhawan Sahib,

As you know that Sardar Gurcharan Singh,s life is in great danger so I am writing you this letter. Sant. Jarnail Singh is not going to give up and now I strongly feel that we have to do what we planned earlier and Sardar Parkash Singh Badal has already explained it to you in details. Most Bhindrawala's men will run away when they see the army and most probably he will too.

Major General Jaswant Singh Bhullar and Professor Manjit Singh Sidhu have agreed to go to America. Full instructions have been given to them and they will meet you before the leave for America. Financial arrangements have been made. Sardar Didar Singh Bains of America and Dr. Jagjit Singh Chohan will work with them. They have been told to stop Sikhs living abroad before they get organise and start supporting Sant. Jarnail Singh. Please let your people know to support these men with ll assistance in every form.

We will soon provide you the names of those sikhs who live abroad and supporting Sant. Jarnail Singh. I am sure that our plan will work and this ordeal will be over in no time.

Yours Very Sincerely,  
Sd. /  
Sant Harchand Singh Longowal

## CHAPTER 18

### EVER DITHERING, CONSISTENTLY CONFUSED, ALWAYS MISLEADING MAN(N)

The next document is perhaps more interesting. In many ways it is a testimony of the dilemma of the Sikh leadership. It is attributable to their inadequate understanding of the basic currents of Sikh history as well as their lack of understanding of Sikh theory of polity. In the absence of these inputs they turn politics into slogan mongering. Though having no clear idea of what needs to be done politically they continue to claim and assert leadership of the Sikhs. This leads to many complications; some come to have disastrous long-term effects on the body politic of the country as well as that of the Sikhs. But unmindful of all these they continue with competitive pseudo militant expressions in order to retain a false image of being the bold well wishers of the Sikh people. Many honest and good people are wasted in consequence. Those who accept their lead and jump into the fire cause much hardship to their own families and the people at large. Those who consider themselves enemies of the Sikhs much enjoy the situation and look on gleefully.

I had all this in mind when, on the eve of the first meeting of the victorious Shiromani Akali Dal, I requested the president Simranjit Singh Mann to define the political aim of the Akali Dal. After a short discussion, he categorically stated that the organisation must stand by Sirdar Kapur Singh's formulation of the Sikh Homeland. When formulated in 1973, it was an earth shaking proposition but in the post 1984 scenario it appeared to be a tame affair to those used to high sounding rhetoric of the 'do nothing say all for effect' political leaders. It nevertheless remained, the only practical course open to the Sikhs. So I was very happy to know Mann's views and asked him to sign on the already typed copy I had taken with me. Mann readily obliged. The next day I distributed its copies to the Press at a press conference I held at Amritsar. It was henceforth to be called; 'Political Resolution dated December 10, 1989, of The Shiromani Akali Dal'. Thereafter I made it a point to refer to it on every conceivable occasion and found the Press extremely reluctant to carry it or to comment on the proposition of the Sikh Homeland. This made me aware that it was not welcome to the chauvinistic India still seething with rage against the Sikhs. The Sikhs were expected to strike a more radical posture so that their decimation may be repeated with a justification of sorts. It wanted to spill more Sikh blood and as everybody knows, this element had a strong constituency in the Press. This made me doubly sure that striving for a Sikh Homeland was the best political aim. Unfortunately, that was not what Mann was really convinced of. He wanted to pay lip service to the Sikh political aim defined in the Gurmatta of the *Sarbat Khalsa* of 1986 when addressing the underground Punjab and would have liked to harp on the 'everything desirable is there in the constitution of 1950' theory when addressing New Delhi. Very soon, for insisting on more clarity and for other similar reasons, I became a *persona non grata* with Mann and consequently with the party, for it was synonymous with him. Mann had read a few textbooks of European history at the undergraduate level and based on such elementary study, had formed a perverted image of public good. In relation to the party, for instance, he was guided by the maxim of Louis XIV, 'I am the state'. He did not pause to consider the disastrous consequences, which had befallen the successors of that king and his state as a direct result of belief in the arrogant concept.

Addressed to the Chief Justice of India is another document connected with Simranjit Singh Mann, which is being given here. The typed version is the original and the changes made in his sister's hand were made to make it presentable to the people of the Punjab. The second document

which could be cited in this connection is the one, which Mann was obliged to distribute to the Press after his meeting with Ram Jethmalani. Both these documents were meant for public distribution. The only significance of both is that many times, Sikh leaders are incarcerated in order to make them politically pliable. This policy started with V. B. Patel, the first Home Minister of independent India, though it was a spectacular failure with respect to Master Tara Singh who eventually held even faster to his views. Some other documents relevant to the subject are being presented elsewhere in this work. As times advanced, even the lawyers started demanding their pound of flesh in the form of ideological adjustments. Ram Jethmalani's extraction is available to us in the form of a document and B. L. Wadhera's I heard with my own ears. There will perhaps be a tell all day. The Sikhs leaders will have to learn how to avoid such pressures. The Sikhs will have to devise ways and means of immunising their leaders against such bullying. In addition they may have to resort to measures for vesting leadership in incorruptible collectively ultimately deriving its authority from the *Sarbat Khalsa*. This requires absolute trust in the institutions of Guru Khalsa Panth, Panj Piaras and of '*hanne hanne mir*' or complete internal democracy in a Sikh political party. The Sikhs will have to find refuge in the concept of open diplomacy, which was preached as the pillar of Sikh polity by the Tenth King. No half measures will suffice.

I had good mind to also include Mann's letter of resignation from the Indian Police Service. It is fairly representative of Sikh views on armed forces attack on Sri Darbar Sahib, but I found that Gurmit Singh in his *History Of Sikh Struggle* has already preserved it.

## CHAPTER 19

### HATRED BURSTING OUT IN FLAMES

The photograph of the young man on fire with several police officials standing around is, in a way, an important document summarising a very sordid chapter of Punjab's recent history. A container, in which the petroleum product was brought to set him on fire, is lying near about. The story goes like this: A bomb blast took place in a crowded street, Katra Ahluwalian, of Amritsar on November 18, 1989. It had been planted by an unknown person (in all probability an *agent de provocateur*). Immediately a loud cry for revenge went up. People belonging to, as the often-used phrase by the Media goes, 'a particular community' demanded revenge. These people of the area would only be satisfied with blood. It had to be Sikh blood even if it was that of an innocent neighbour. Quick consensus was arranged and the lot fell on Paramjit Singh, a young man well known to all. He belonged to a poor family and had been working as a salesman at a nearby shop for the last thirteen years. He was dragged out, beaten mercilessly by the crowd of neighbours and 'our brave police, fighting the nation's battle for unity and integrity' conducted the rest of the operation. On the conclusion of the gruesome proceedings, it was announced that the terrorist who was responsible for the bomb blast was apprehended by the crowd and done to death in the heat of the moment. Assumption was that the matter was over before the police reached the spot. A news item as it appeared in *The Tribune* dated November 20, 1989 is of greater interest. It quietly revised the earlier perception without asking any inconvenient questions. The relevant portion of it reads : "The SSP, Mr. Sanjeev Gupta, maintained that the person who was allegedly killed by the mob after the blast was not a terrorist".

Someone took a photograph of the 'great burning by our dedicated policemen' and sent copies to many people. One eventually landed up on my desk. I took it to the then Governor Mr. N. K. Mukerjee. He was greatly moved and promised that he would let no such thing happen in future. I was sceptical, not because I doubted his sincerity, but because I knew that he did not control the police even when the province was formally under the Governor's rule. He became very keen to know who ruled the state for it squarely rendered him into a figurehead. We agreed that both his quest and resolve were as legitimate as was my concern for preservation of the human rights of the Sikhs people. Soon we were able to arrive at a consensus about the procedure to be adopted for satisfying all three propositions. After a short discussion he decided to move Sardar Jarnail Singh Chahal IPS to the police vigilance cell to investigate such matters. To him this photograph along with a letter signed by Sardar Sukhinder Singh, a public-spirited personal friend and myself was entrusted and the investigation began. Copy of our letter is presented along with the photograph. He was quick to identify the culprits who were all present in the picture and sent up the file to the notorious Director General of Police, Punjab, K. P. S. Gill for permission to register the cases. He sent it along with several other files in which also such murders and extortions, perpetrated by the police personnel, had been detected. Inquiry into some of which had been initiated at my request.

The Director General of Police was furious. He called Jarnail Singh to his office and asked him what equation did he have with the Governor who had specifically asked for his appointment to the post. He thundered eloquently on the necessity of preserving the morale of the police force. For a coward, who willingly accepted to preside over the liquidation of his own people by the police under him, he spoke with feigned ferocity. After retirement, this person would write a book



assuming high moral stance. That is the last we heard of the files on this subject. It appears to have been the general practice of this 'brave leader of the brave police fighting the nation's battle' to wipe out all evidence of cold blooded murders by the forces under him.

The picture of the helpless Sikh being thus burnt alive throws up a host of questions. A portion of the contemporary Sikh leadership comprising of certain perverted intellectuals as well as a handful of self-seeking political leaders, which to a degree share some material ideas with K. P. S. Gill, may be in no mood to pose such inconvenient questions just yet. Ordinary Sikhs, are by no means obliged to keep quiet for all times to come. And besides, the questions are relevant for all. Much of what happened in the Punjab in that period was a sin against humanity. Human beings, who are neither Sikhs nor Hindus, are interested in knowing answers to a thousand questions in this context. Some of which are: who authorised such blood revenge in the last decades of the twentieth century? Who condoned such criminality against a 'particular community' in a professedly secular and democratic state? How was the written constitution effectively rendered into a dead letter? What made the judiciary connive at such violations of law? Was this the non-violent State, Gandhi and the Congress had been struggling to establish in India? Were the Sikh militants not justified in defending themselves against a State with such terrorist leanings? A million-dollar question still remains. It is, 'who caused this and the similar types of bomb blasts? Who pulled persons of 'a particular community' out of public buses and mowed them down mercilessly during that period? Why was no attempt made to nab the real culprits? Finally, we may ask, has not the ruling permanent cultural majority, red in tooth and claw, lost the right to rule many times over? Why is there such strong hatred of the Sikhs though no opportunity is lost to proclaim them a part of Hindudom? The Sikh political leadership must ponder over the above questions. The power they wield is just a chimera, the material prosperity they are so enamoured of, may be of no avail in the eventual reckoning. They must realise that some crumbs of power are thrown to them only because they consent to be 'slave drivers from amongst the slaves'. The material prosperity allowed to them is not worth the price they are paying for it. There is perhaps a need to change the political priorities of the Sikh people for the better health of mankind and in the interest of sanity prevailing in India. A picture is, as the journalistic cliché goes, worth a million words. These photographs are regarded as two of the most relevant documents being presented.

Another telltale document is given here to complete the story. There are many more to suggest the down right criminality prevailing in the police at all levels under K. P. S. Gill.

This one relates to an incident, which took place in the last week of April in 1989. Two innocent young girls of Butala village falling within the jurisdiction of the Beas Police Station were tortured by the police and retained in illegal custody. For once the administration woke up to its duties. The then District Magistrate Sardar Sarabjit Singh was genuinely appalled at this blatant "instance of police terrorism" and had the matter inquired into. The then Home Secretary was informed of the facts. It was decided to dismiss the guilty officers from service. This order was conveyed by the Home Secretary to the then Director General of Police. In line with the policy of enforced human disappearances, this file "containing Adviser's orders was not traceable after it was sent from my office on 2.6.1989", wrote the Home Secretary. The file had to be reconstructed though the guilty were never punished. Criminal acts appeared to have come naturally to K. P. S. Gill, the criminal heading the criminal police force.

## CHAPTER 20

### TORTURE TO MAKE MEDIEVAL MUGHALS LOOK HUMANE

The other two photographs being appended here are those of the dead body of Avtar Singh son of Jathedar Kehar Singh of village Shatrana. He was an Akali candidate for the Punjab Legislative Assembly constituency Lehra Gaga, during the aborted elections of 1990. How brutally he was tortured in police custody is apparent from the photographs. The police under K. P. S. Gill was practising all modes of torture known to the medieval Mughals. There was hardly a bone in the body of Shatrana, which was not broken to pieces. Such was the expertise available in the police torture dens. On seeing this photograph many sensitive people told me that they felt like joining his young son standing near the head of the body, and weeping bitterly with him. The photograph showing the injury to soles of feet, legs and thighs is borrowed from Sardar Inderjit Singh Jaijee. From Shatrana village alone nearly a dozen people were lifted by the police and (similarly?) made to disappear.

The story of Avtar Singh may be briefly told. He was the brother of Jarnail Singh Shatrana, who in 1989 had joined the militant organisation Khalistan Commando Force headed by Gurjant Singh Rajasthani. Ever since then, his family members were repeatedly picked up and 'interrogated' to know his whereabouts. The Patiala police picked up Avtar Singh on July 25, 1991, for 'interrogation' at 10 AM. Eyewitnesses informed the parents and relatives immediately. They approached whosoever they could to secure his release. Maharaja Amarinder Singh of Patiala, who was an important leader of the Akali Party, was one person they requested for help. The police admitted to his secretary that Avtar Singh was in their custody and promised to release him soon.

On the 6th of August, an Inspector of police went to the village and informed his father that his son had been killed in an "encounter with the extremists". The story put up by the police was that on the morning of 5th he was apprehended at a routine police check-post and he offered to lead them to his brother whom he was scheduled to meet in the evening. While the police were digging up the ground to recover the weapons at the place of meeting, his brother and three others showed up and started firing at the police. In that encounter Avtar Singh, along with three militants, was killed and two police constables sustained slight injuries. The policeman told his father that they were going to cremate the bodies of the slain at Patran cremation ground. About a thousand angry villagers gathered at the police station and at the cremation ground. They recovered the dead body of Shatrana from the police vehicle. It was stark naked. The other three gunny-bags, ostensibly containing the bodies of slain militants, were ripped open to reveal wood and other combustible material.

The injuries on the body were described in the report in *The Telegraph* as follows: "On his hands and feet were marks, seemingly of iron nails driven to hang him. There was a burn on the umbilicus and a triangular burn-rupture on the abdomen, which seemed to have been caused with a washer-man's hot iron. The soles of his feet were burnt black. His ankles and knees were swollen and his thighs were cut open at many places. Flesh was hanging out from different parts of his body". These injuries are clearly visible from the photograph. Strangely but quite in keeping with the spirit of times, the doctors conducting the post-mortem examination of the body did not notice any of these. Neither did the District and Sessions judge (now a Judge of the High Court) R. L. Anand, who later conducted the probe on orders of the Punjab and Haryana High Court, see them.

But the doctors did see and described graphically the bullet wounds that were not there on the body. Anand completely forgot that this was not a formal case before him. All that was required to get evidence of the other side was an assurance that the police would not intimidate those who testified. A thousand villagers, who had prevented secret cremation of the body, were waiting to give evidence, had he just stepped out of his courtroom to approach them.

The most illustrative part of the evidence produced by the police was the sworn affidavit of the Senior Superintendent of Police Sanjeev Gupta (of Katra Ahluwalian fame) “on behalf of Pb. State and others”. He shamelessly repeats the entire concocted story on oath. The words he adds for effect and to reflect his perception of the philosophy of the conflict are significant. Such thought was not only an integral part of police propaganda but also constituted justification for the barbaric State action. It is the stuff on which butchers like Gill thrived. He puts the following words into the mouths of the retreating militants, after the imaginary encounter: “They also said that we will hoist flag the yellow colour flag up in Delhi and your dress will be changed to yellow colour and Brahmin Govt. could not be allowed to rule in Punjab and they asked the police party for joining the struggle for Khalistan”. Like all opportunists, he was acting the part of a consummate psychologist. This was the worst dialogue he could think of since he was presenting an affidavit to the system representative of the “Brahmin Govt. ” He knew that these were the magic words that would make the courts forget the law, the constitution, humanity, conscience, justice, righteousness and God. The shrewd pillar of the establishment calculated correctly, those words had a paralysing effect on the judiciary which was so completely on the side of the ‘brave policemen fighting the nation’s battle’ against its own helpless and maligned citizens.

Brutality of the lower ranks of the police force was as well rewarded as the perjury of the lying senior officers. Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP), Surjit Singh Grewal received successive promotions for the treatment he meted out to one who would have been a law maker had the elections been allowed to take place in 1991. An eyewitness described his part to the wife of the deceased. “They related to Avtar Singh’s wife”, reads a human rights report, “DSP Surjit Singh Grewal had gone on torturing him, banging his head against the wall, even after Avtar had started vomiting blood”. The other man, Inspector Gurnam Singh was already a Deputy Superintendent of Police by the time the enquiry took place.

Those who have studied human rights violations in the Punjab of the period have discovered gross negligence of the dictum, ‘justice delayed is justice denied’. What happened to the case at the Honourable High Court, will perhaps never be fully known. My advocate friend, who tried to find out its fate, was told that the record had been destroyed in an accidental fire. Shatrana’s body escaped clandestine cremation; the file pertaining to his case could not. The Supreme Court showed or rather was pleased to show its supreme disdain for the entire episode and scoffed at the petitioner who was unduly worried about the life of a mere Sikh. It had no ear for his noble sentiments expressed thus: “The conscience of society is ravaged through such state barbarism and democracy receives shock-waves. Such police atrocities are corrupting the nation and desecrating the constitution”. Once it had dumped his petition into the dustbin of the lower court, it never turned back to enquire what happened to it.

A report of this event appeared in *The Telegraph* of October 24, 1991. One public spirited person Chandan Kumar Banik of Calcutta saw it and filed a writ petition under Article 32 of the Constitution of India in the Supreme Court of India. This, in due course, was transferred to the High Court of Punjab and Haryana. This court admitted the Criminal Writ Petition as Number 107

of 1992 and was pleased to appoint the Sessions Judge at Patiala to conduct the inquiry into the matter. The judge submitted an exhaustive twenty-five-page report on November 3, 1992, 'for further action'. It was common knowledge that in such cases the police never let the victim be represented. In the report, the judge examined the police version only and found it absolutely correct. When posted at Ludhiana, the same judge had issued warrants of arrest for Jathedar Kirpal Singh of the Akal Takhat to compel him to give evidence regarding an assault on his person.

## CHAPTER 21

### TANKS OF HATRED AT THE POOL OF NECTAR

The following is one of the reports lodged after the attack on Darbar Sahib by one of the army units, which had taken part in the attack. It was deemed proper not to comment on it until all such reports, if there are more, are secured.

Report for lodging the FIR No. 182/84 dated 10/6/84 was received from the commander 350 Infantry Brigade by the SHO PS Kotwali, Amritsar vide DDR 17 dated 10.6.84 at 4:30. It had been sent through the SSP Amritsar.

DDR NO. 34 at 8.55 PM  
miti 11.6.84

To,

The SHO,  
PS. Kotwali, ASR. PB.

Memo No. D-III - 1/84, Dtd. June 84:

Subject: - FIR

On 05/6/84 AM. Coys of 23rd Bn. CRF under command 350 Inf. Brigade were deputed for duty in aid of civil power under the armed force (PB, CHG) special Act 1983 outside the Golden temple complex. Information conveyed to us was that the members of the AISSF and Dal Khalsa banned organisations and extremists terrorists led by Sant Jarnail Singh Bhindranwala; Bhai Amrik Singh, Thara Singh, Harminder Singh Sandhu, dismissed maj. Gen Subeg Singh, Kuldip Singh Kohla and other terrorists had collected men, arms, ammunition and explosives within the Golden temple complex and had also made other preparations to wage war against the Govt. of India. They had also taken measures to conceal this design to facilitate to waging of the war. According to information they intended to establish a state, independent from the Govt. of India to be known as Khalistan.

2. In view of the above we received orders to deal with this situation and accordingly 350 Inf. Brigade including coys of our brigade deployed for the purpose around the area of temple complex where curfew restrictions under CrPC. sec. 144 were enforced. A warning- 2- was given through the public address system to the terrorists as well as other persons inside the complex to come out. In response to this warning about 120 men, women and children came out and they were handed over to the civil authorities, However the terrorists instead of responding to the warning opened (opened) intensive firing with automatic weapons, Antitank weapons and grenades from outside as well as inside the Complex. They also shouted anti national slogans. As a result of this firing security forces suffered a number of casualties. Thereafter orders were given to launch an operation to deal with the situation. Our operation continued till 8th June 1984. During the operation the following were shot dead on the dates shown against each.

| Date    | time  | Nos. of extremists killed/shot<br>dead in encounter. |
|---------|-------|------------------------------------------------------|
| 06/6/84 | 09:15 | 2                                                    |
| 07/6/84 | 08:30 | 6                                                    |

|         |       |   |
|---------|-------|---|
| 07/6/84 | 19:40 | 3 |
| 07/6/84 | 23:30 | 1 |

3. Also huge Qty. of arms and amn. were recovered which were handed over to 350 Inf. Bde. on proper voucher.

4. I give this report and request that further investigation be made to deal with the culprits according to Law.

Sd. /  
(Seal) Officer Commanding

Coy. 23rd. BN. CRPF  
forwarded to  
to SO to CR. ASR, CRPF.  
to DCO. 23 CRPF. ASR.  
(Seal) Officer Commanding  
Coy. 23rd. BN. CRPF

(sh. RATIRAM, DySP)

## CHAPTER 22

### PURAN (COMPLETE) BHAGAT AND PURAN SINGH

Sikhism does not compartmentalise life. Bhai Mani Singh was both a scholar par excellence and a warrior who eventually became a celebrated martyr. The same was true of Baba Deep Singh and countless others. The greater bulk of Sikh manuscripts lying in museums in Great Britain were retrieved from the kit bags of Sikh soldiers killed in Anglo-Sikh Wars. In our own day Baba Jarnail Singh was a Sikh preacher, scholar and warrior who went on to achieve unique martyrdom in the present context. Bhagat Puran Singh was another complete man of Sikh conception. His compassion for humanity was boundless. He worked incessantly for more than half a century to relieve the suffering of the most neglected section of society. At the same time he conducted an equally stiff battle against ignorance. He and his institution, the Pingalwara reached out to the suffering and the ignorant without reservation in the true spirit of Bhai Kanhaiya who had been commissioned by Guru Gobind Singh to relieve the suffering of the wounded on the battlefield. He complemented the Gurdwaras also in this that he channelled the common kitchen to where it was most needed, that is, to feed the destitute. He gave meaning to Sikh charity and raised funds for the poor from myriad of common Sikhs. He afforded an opportunity to Sikhs to express compassion, which is the spiritual duty of every Sikh. For all this he earned the gratitude of Sikhs in particular and also of other right thinking people.

He printed hundreds of thousands of pamphlets on moral and spiritual issues, on health, hygiene, on history, philosophy, on good government, good social habits, duties of citizens and allied topics and distributed them free of cost to the people at large.

All this is, however, well known.

It is with his last great act that we are concerned here. He was stationed at Amritsar and was in living contact with many of the people who used to visit Amritsar as pilgrims. A substantial number of them would also go to his Pingalwara to donate their mite, since to support the destitute is a part of the religious discipline of Sikhism. He was not known to have any political leanings and had never been even remotely connected with the militant cause. Such a person was greatly distressed by the attack of the Indian armed forces on Sri Darbar Sahib. It appears that he had been initially taken in by government propaganda to conceal the diabolical plan of genocide. The government Media was dinning into the people's ears that the army-men had gone to Sri Darbar Sahib 'with a heavy heart and prayer on their lips.' On hearing things to the contrary, he started investigating and found out the truth.

He was so deeply disturbed that he decided to repudiate the honour of Padam Shree conferred upon him for social work by the government of India. The letter he wrote on that occasion was recently, in December 1999, sent to me by Dr. Inderjit Kaur his successor in the Pingalwara. It is being presented here with its English rendering.

No comments are deemed necessary as it is more expressive than comments can ever make it. It pours out the anguish of a genuine soul full of love for humanity and constitutes one of the rare treasures of humankind. As such it is presented.

Renouncing the Honour of Padam Shree.

To

The President of India,  
Rashtrpati Bhavan,  
Delhi.

Subject: Return of the award of Padam Shree against the in-human army action at Sri Darbar Sahib  
Sri Amritsar.

Shriman ji,

Sending the armed forces into Sri Darbar Sahib for military action has already produced countless painful results. As a result of this army action the Sikh world has been deeply hurt. You have seen how painful has been the effect of this army action on the Darshani Deodhi and the building of Sri Akal Takhat. Army has perpetrated acts, which you could not have known. Up to September 9, 1984, I have been investigating what I have heard from the people. I have exercised much restraint and have not rushed to conclusions. I will relate some of the happenings (that I have investigated).

1. Army-men arrested a scripture reader of Sri Darbar Sahib along with his family. The entire family was not given either food or water for the whole day. Rifle butts were administered on the scripture reader's hands the whole day. Another scripture reader of the shrine was given the same treatment until his hands were swollen.

2. The sangat in Darbar Sahib complex consisting of women, men and children has been fired upon (and killed) as the mosquitoes are wiped out with poisonous spray.

3. The pilgrims who had been arrested in Sri Darbar Sahib and Teja Singh Samundari Hall around 12 noon on Tuesday were given water by the Sikh army-men after thirty hours on Wednesday. The children's eyes were popping out with thirst and their mothers tried to moist their lips with sweat. When some women asked for water for the children the army-men told them that the children would grow up and kill the army-men so why should they be given water? On Tuesday the small quantity of water that was given to the children had cigarettes thrown into it. They were told that this is the *prasad* of their Guru. Army-men smoked cigarettes in Teja Singh Samundari Hall and kept on blowing the smoke at the Sikhs. The treatment meted out to the Sikhs in the name of army action has deeply hurt the feelings of the Sikh world. Hands of the young pilgrims, arrested from Darbar Sahib, were tied with their turbans, their hair were untied and used to cover their eyes with. They were forced to kneel down on the hot marble floor and to walk around on their knees. Hands of the boys were tied behind them and they were shot through their foreheads.

On the first of June 1984 the CRPF had commenced firing on Sri Darbar Sahib Amritsar. On the first of June before the arrival of the army, the CRPF had killed a scripture reader in attendance upon Guru Granth Sahib and the volume itself was shot at. After it was all over, the Sikh Reference Library and the Sikh Museum were set on fire out of enmity and in pursuance of predetermined action. On June 3, 1984, two Sikhs wearing yellow turbans and *kirpans* got off at Batala bus stand. They were asked by the army-men to take off their turbans. On their refusal to do so they were both shot dead. Another Nihang was shot at and killed near Gumtala jail because he had refused to surrender his *kirpan*. One Sikh in proper Sikh dress was standing on the roof of his



house in an area of Amritsar called Kittas. Army-men killed him because he was wearing a yellow turban.

On the third of July a black turbaned and *kirpan*-wearing young Sikh of about 25 years of age was walking past the Kitchlew traffic island. The army arrived, handcuffed and arrested him although nothing incriminating was found on his person. When army-men went to arrest the President of the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee Sardar Gurcharan Singh Tohra from Teja Singh Samundari Hall, one of them was smoking a cigarette. When Sardar Tohra asked him not to smoke (in the holy precincts), his reply was, "shut up old-man or I will shoot you dead. Tohra said 'I am the President of this place' upon which the army-men became quiet.

Temple servants of Sri Darbar Sahib Mukatsar, were made to lie face downwards in the circumambulatory path around the sacred tank and beaten mercilessly. As a result of this one of them died. All those boys who had taken *amrit* were pulled out of their homes in the villages and were beaten severely.

I am compelled to observe that the army has displayed bankruptcy of character and has acted with hearts full of enmity and in a manner indicating that it wanted to wipe out the Sikhs. Young-men from villages have been troubled much after the army action. Apart from the truth depicted above, I have received information about such shameful incidents, to mention which is to violate the cultural norms.

After hearing of and seeing such happenings, I reject and return to you the award of Padam Shree conferred upon me.

Puran Singh Bhagat

## CHAPTER 23

### THE SUICIDE ALTERNATIVE

The situation created by the Punjab policy of the Central authorities is such that the Sikh people, all over the world, are effectively trapped in a death bind. They can either be killed, if they harp on rights of citizenship, or can be driven to suicide. That this is no empty rhetoric or an exaggerated statement will be generally borne out by the contents of this monograph. Specifically, a recent report of the *Committee for Co-ordination on Disappearances in Punjab* observes, after investigating 838 cases of young persons killed by the police, that in more than 222 cases, one or more members of the victims' families died under trauma. One such case is being quoted here. It also finds mention in the interim report of the Committee referred to above. This one is one of most widely reported cases of recent times.

In keeping with the scheme of this monograph, the dying declaration of Ajaib Singh, father of Kulwinder Singh who was abducted, tortured, killed and secretly cremated by the police is being reproduced. His only crime was that he had given ride to a hitchhiker who perhaps was a militant. The original document is in Punjabi. Writers of the report for the Committee have translated it as follows:

7.7.1997 Monday: I apologise to those whom I may have ever hurt in any way. I, in the house of Guru Ram Das, repent if I ever misbehaved with anyone.

*Ek Onkar Satgur Prasad Jeeo.* (God is one. By the grace of *Satguruji*).

Suicide is committed by those who have exhausted all alternatives or by tyrants like SSP Ajit Singh Sandhu who eliminated thousands of innocent Sikh youths and extorted millions of rupees. Sardar Jaswant Singh Khalra was not a criminal. This fact is known to all.

Ajaib Singh SHO, Police Station Sadar, Amritsar picked up my son Kulwinder Singh, Secretary Panchayat, on 20 December 1991. He was neither absconding nor had he committed any crime. Then why did the SHO kill him? I understand that the time and place of everyone's death is predetermined and cannot be postponed even for a second.

Ajaib Singh who has been promoted to DSP rank only for butchering the Sikh youth, has extorted money to the tune of millions of rupees. Even he himself does not know how much money he has.

My other grudge is that I was not told even about the death of my son nor were his ashes handed over to me. Otherwise, I would not have gone to the court. I knocked at the door of the High Court but justice was denied to me. I approached Parkash Singh Badal, who the people rightly consider to be unfit to be the Chief Minister of the Punjab. But, he ordered the Deputy Commissioner to enquire. Mr. Badal should ask the DC whether he conducted a fair enquiry? I believe the DSP gave him a handsome amount of money. Mr. Badal who promised to give an administration like that of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but the people think that there is no difference between Beant Singh and Badal.

I do not want to die but pray to Guru Ram Das to send me where my son has gone. I hope my prayer would be accepted.

Once again I apologise to the residents of my colony and village Othian and Gumtala if I have inadvertently hurt them in any way. I am not in debt. Still I authorise Sardar Davinder Singh DSP to sell my landed plot situated on the by pass to repay, should it be discovered that I owe anything to anyone.

My last will  
I pray to Guru Ram Das ji  
I apologise to  
My father Sardar Darshan Singh  
Sarpanch Sardar Manjit Singh ji Raja Sansi  
DSP Sardar Davinder Singh ji,

My sister Paramjit Kaur, wife of Sardar Jaswant Singh Khalra, younger brother Paramjit Singh Sarpanch Rokhe, SHO Ajaib Singh and others who are sympathetic to me, I apologise to them all.

*My last requests*

1. Cremate me near Gurdwara Shahidan
  2. The funeral pyre may be lit by my father. (There should be no weeping!)
  3. No rituals should be observed after my death except for Saptahak Path instead of *Akhandpath*.
  4. If my family wants to offer any money it should be offered to Pingalwara.
  5. I repent for having violated Rehat.
- Now the ink in my pen and my time, both have finished.

*Waheguru ji ka Khalsa; Waheguru ji ki Fateh.*

(I am grateful to my relative Sardar Jatinderpal Singh Pannu).

## CHAPTER 24

### EPILOGUE

The endeavour to understand recent history through some documents selected somewhat at random has been very rewarding at least to me. The nature of economic exploitation of the Punjab has always been popularly understood to be on the colonial pattern. The effective camouflage of a written constitution, free Media, functioning democracy, impartial judiciary, politically neutral bureaucracy, active human rights organisations and so on, has been deflecting casual observers from judging the ground realities. The myth of a written constitution has been easy to explode when it has been officially suspended from operating in the Punjab for decades together. Those working on human rights abuses in the Punjab are in a position to expose the total hollowness of claims of the present set up to pass off as a functioning democracy. The Sikhs have been in conflict with four other empires in the five hundred years of their existence. Employing all objective criteria of making a historical judgement, it is possible to assert that the present set up is the cruellest, the most violent and the most dehumanising of them all.

Potentially, it is several times more dangerous since it takes refuge behind a democratic smoke screen, which not all eyes can pierce. Several empires and political leaders have sought the destruction of politically motivated Sikhs in history. But it is for the first time, if Lakhpat's misadventure is disregarded, that we have a political power intensely interested in destroying Sikhism along with the Sikhs. The euphemisms used are 'to bring the Sikhs in the national mainstream' and 'Sikhism is just a sect of Hinduism'. It is also dangerous because, by its very nature, it is sure to keep on expanding its area of operation steadily. New Fascist ideologies and new and more ideologically motivated political parties are coming into power to carry on the destruction work more efficiently. For those who know the operational logic of such ideologies and the large sweep of their reach, know that nothing and nobody is safe in such a situation. Everybody's turn will come. Fascist ideologies spare none. Christians are now being targeted in a big way. Raping, disrobing nuns has become a routine matter and priest killing only attracts attention if the method used is particularly inhuman, even by Indian standards.

I have tried to tell more than half the tale through the suggestive imagery employed in Hindu epics. Anyone who regards Hindu scriptures as of no consequence to the functioning of the Hindu State, will be making a grave mistake. The Sikhs who fail to realise that Mahakali's bowl is bottomless and has developed a ritualistic liking for Sikh blood, will be doomed to continue sacrificing themselves to her as long as they exist. Ravana has to face annual ritualistic burning although hundreds of thousands of his descendants and followers were physically liquidated many millennia ago. If Mahabharat is any guide to the functioning of the Hindu mind, as I believe it is, it is simple to predict that in future, the first atom bomb will be exploded by Hindu India. It will also be used in panic and for the wrong reason and will be justified in terms of the most respected texts of its hoary past

Sikhism promotes a culture that has the potential of playing a major and wholesome role in human history - particularly in the context of the impending conflicts of civilisations. 'This is why the Gurus themselves became martyrs to preserve it intact. 'Under no circumstances can the world do without it', says the Guru in the Seal Verse to *Guru Granth Sahib*. (*eh vast taji nahi jai nit nit rakh urdharo*).

No matter how one looks at it, the truth that emerges is that it is the duty of the Khalsa to take up the challenge of eliminating totalitarian tendencies. There is no doubt that a section of modern Sikhs has travelled far away from the original aim of Sikhism to preserve pluralism in human affairs, and a lot of effort will be required to get it to pick up the gauntlet. But it is an effort worth making. If so much of misery is perpetrated on such a large number of people in the sub-continent, in spite of the existence of the Khalsa, then the Khalsa will have existed in vain. The Tenth King did not strike the ever-reverberating Ranjit Nagara to no purpose. Its sound must continue always to instil the fear of God in the evil doers. They must never sleep peacefully as long as the Khalsa lives to respond to its sonorous sound. (*sukh savan na dendi dujjana noo naubat Gobind Singh saché patshah di*). The Sikh people must also understand, that the present Sikh leadership is never going to be of any help in the impending war on evil. In fact it has itself become an inseparable part of the evil and is likely to grow to menacing proportions in its defence. It is also fairly certain that the evil it represents and collaborates with will not go away on its own. Dalits have been persecuted for more than fifty centuries and the operation is still on. Evil will have to be effectively confronted.

The Khalsa also has the duty to answer the distress call of the persecuted. Not only because it is the spiritual successor of the Tenth Guru, but because it is also his very embodiment. The ever-living Guru partly lives in the Order of the Khalsa. To assume his role is the surest and the shortest way to earning merit in God's eyes. This is the only meaning of its war cry *jo bole so nibal, sat siri akal* (He who answers the call of a person in distress, becomes one with the Deathless). It was a great moment for Sikhs and Sikhism when, in March 2000, two Sikh neighbours answered the distress call of five nuns in a convent near Karnal (Haryana) at the dead of night. They challenged ten dacoits armed with iron rods and firearms and compelled them to flee, capturing one of them. The nuns say they will always remember them in their prayers, Sikhs know that God will remember them at the time of eventual reckoning. That the event went unmentioned except in one or two newspapers like the *Deccan Chronicle*, tells its own story.

The dehumanising extent of the Indian establishment can be gauged from the incident, which recently happened at Chhapra. A nun belonging to St. Joseph's Convent was abducted, stripped naked and made to drink the urine of her assailants. This has happened very near Patna Sahib in Bihar, the birthplace of the Tenth Guru. Can there be a bigger shame for the Sikhs? Can this country live if its womanhood continues to be so degraded? The Sikhs must realise that under the present dispensation if the tendency is not resisted, this macabre destiny is reserved for all the women of the sub-continent. There was a time when the Khalsa had reacted to the Mughal practise of using the Hindus as living walking vessels for spitting. Khalsa armies taught Ahmed Shah Abdali a lesson for abducting Maratha women. Can the Sikhs now remain silent after witnessing such barbarities? The Sikh people have an additional duty towards the country of their birth. Those, whose communalism vivisected it into three parts in 1947, are again on the prowl to destroy it completely, by wrecking it morally. The things cannot be allowed to deteriorate further.

Though, perhaps, it is no time to use the conventional weapons and the means of usual war, yet striving in the fashion of a true knight, is in tune with the spiritual discipline of Sikhism and so also with the spirit of the age. Sikhs must make it their business to resist this despicable neo-colonial trait to permanently control the destinies of a large number of people perceived to be aliens. It is the same frame of mind, which had inspired the medieval potentate Aurangzeb, and his modern counterpart Hitler. New methods and weapons, in consonance with modern sensibilities will have

to be forged. Fortunately immense possibilities on that front exist. Khalsa must immediately muster the spiritual and political will to do that. De-colonisation of the Punjab can either be made a part of the overall scheme or can even wait. Everything will however be lost if the Khalsa continues to hold the *kirpan* and Avtar Singhs continued to be pilloried by the agents of the imperial forces, innocent Sikh villagers continue to be massacred by them as at Chatti Singhpora in Kashmir in March 2000, or miseries continue to be heaped on hapless young women. The nun of Chhapra is none other than the Sarabjit Kaur of Beas. In the brutal murder of Reverend Steins and his children the Sikhs must see the equally brutal elimination of Kulwant Singh, his wife and their three-year-old son.

On the afternoon of January 11, 2000, twenty-seven year old Mandeep Pal Singh Sodhi committed self-immolation in front of the Uttar Pradesh Legislative Assembly because he could no longer bear the police harassment. Sikhs are being forced to resort to what in this book we have referred to as the 'suicide alternative'. This is something that has never happened in all Sikh history. The situation is desperate. Order of the Khalsa must rise to the occasion and remedy matters within and without the community. Of late there is much talk of reviving the *Sarbat Khalsa* to deliberate and act in connection with these and allied matters.

Order of the Khalsa must take all the oppressed Sikhs and non-Sikhs under its wings and wage a relentless war until oppression is eliminated altogether. Hundreds of thousands of human beings cannot be allowed to be wiped out of existence just because they are Sikhs. Temples sacred to all mankind such as the Sri Darbar Sahib cannot be allowed to be attacked with impunity. Pigeons around the Pool of Nectar must not be disturbed ever again. Akal Takhat is never again available for felling by anyone including a tyrant with dynastic ambitions. All brutality in every form must be ended. Imperial visions of permanent cultural majority are not in keeping with the official stance of a 'socialist democratic republic' adopted by the 'world's largest democracy'. It is alien to the spirit of the new millennium. Such designs must be challenged and curbed by all legitimate means. This is the tribute the Khalsa must pay to itself in the ter-centenary year of its birth. It must rise to its own height. No other motive is necessary and none must be sought. The Sikhs and Sikhism must once again effectively demonstrate the history making potential imparted to them by the infinite grace of the benevolent Guru *Akal Purakh*.