

Papers

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Other Texts**

I	Netaji and Freedom Struggle	(1996)	1
II	Election of Mavalankar as Speaker	(1998)	9
III	Martyrdom and the Sikhs : Concept and Tradition	(2007)	12
IV	Distorting Sikh History and Religion	(2008)	19

Other Texts

V	India's First War of Independence		27
VI	The Great Escape		30
VII	Natural and Naturalized Citizen		35
VIII	On Reviewing a Text		38
IX	Attributes of Creative Expression		41
X	Swami Ram Tirath		48
XI	Importance of Youth Festivals		51
XII	Poems by Dr Mohammed Iqbal		53
XIII	Poems by Prof. Mohan Singh		55
XIV	Corruption (a poem)		56

I

Netaji and Freedom Struggle

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

The celebration of birth centenary of Netaji Subhas Chandar Bose overlaps that of golden jubilee of independence and thus provides an occasion for assessing the role of that crusader against imperialism not only in the freedom struggle but also in the eradication of colonialism in the Far East.

Maulana Abul Kalam Azad had been the President of Indian National Congress during the crucial years of 1939-46. His posthumous book *India Wins Freedom* (The complete version) refers to the conflicting attitudes of top national leaders towards freedom struggle.

'It was a very critical time in the history of the Congress. We were affected by the world shaking events outside. Even more disturbing was the difference among ourselves. I was the Congress President and sought to take India into the camp of democracies if only she was free. The cause of democracy was one for which India felt strongly. The only obstacle in our way was India's bondage. For Gandhiji, however, it was not so. For him the issue was one of pacifism and not of India's freedom. I declared openly that the Indian National Congress was not a pacifist organisation but an instrument for achieving India's freedom. To my mind therefore the issue raised by Gandhiji was irrelevant.' (1:31)

Gandhiji stressed his commitment to pacifism to the extent that he disapproved India's participation in the Second World War along with the Allies even if it led to independence. (1:39) Though he had stated in 1919 that imperialism was the worst crime against humanity, yet Gandhiji, caught as he was in the whirlpool of his faith in non-violence, observed :

'We do not seek our independence out of Britain's ruin'. (2:8)

Maulana Azad corroborates this inclination of Gandhiji :

'... He had held that India should stand for non-violence and not deviate from it for any reason. That is why in spite of my efforts he would not consent to any mass movement for he felt such a movement might lead to violence. In fact it was with great difficulty that I could persuade him to agree to the individual Satyagraha or Civil Disobedience Movement. Even then he laid down so many conditions, that the movement could be nothing more than a moral gesture.' (1:73)

In spite of his utopian attitude Gandhiji held a great sway over the Congress Working Committee. In July 1940 all of its members except Jawaharlal Nehru and C. Rajagopalachari wrote to the Congress President that the communication be considered as their resignation, if he took any policy decision not finding favour with Gandhiji. (1:33-34) The situation was similar to the one created in 1938 after the re-election of Subhas Chandar Bose as Congress President, when twelve members of Working Committee including Maulana Azad sent an identical ultimatum to Bose, which compelled him to resign and form a new political party, Forward Bloc, for carrying on his revolutionary programme.

The Mahatma had been so tenacious in his commitment to pacifism that he even sought audience with Viceroy Linlithgow and suggested to latter's bewilderment that the British should face the onslaught of Nazis with spiritual force. (1:35) Thus, Gandhiji preached a precept which the western intelligentsia accepted academically but hesitated to practise; whereas the Indian masses believed that he would bring freedom for India by some magic or superhuman method. (1:83)

Maulana Azad records about Nehru that he looked at various affairs from international point of view rather than what was in national interest. (1:66) Jawaharlal held the view that the Congress should side with democracies in their war against fascism without insisting on a firm assurance from the British about the date of independence. He felt inclined to give a talk from All India Radio in that context. Maulana Azad observes that if he had not prevailed

upon Nehru in time, the latter's action would have made the position of Indian National Congress quite ridiculous. (1:65)

According to Maulana Azad the other members of Working Committee viz. Sardar Patel, Dr Rajendra Prasad and Acharya Kriplani seldom tried to judge things on their own and were accustomed to subordinate their judgement to that of Gandhiji. They would reiterate that they had faith in Gandhiji who invariably found a way out of each and every situation. (1:76)

Maulana Azad deplores the role of Rajagopalachari who, of his own after the failure of Cripps Mission, persuaded the Madras Provincial Congress Legislature Party to pass two resolutions, viz.

- i) supporting the demand of All India Muslim League for the creation of Pakistan; and
- ii) seeking approval of Congress High Command for forming again the government in Madras. (1:67)

The first resolution was stunning because it offered support by a predominantly Hindu province for the creation of Pakistan to which the Muslim majority provinces like Punjab, N.W.F.P., Sindh and Bengal were still indifferent. The second resolution seeking permission for forming again the Congress Government in Madras questioned the very wisdom of having launched the Individual Civil Disobedience Movement which appealed to Indian people not to support the war efforts.

As for himself, Maulana Azad stresses that he favoured accepting any offer by the British Government for co-operation during war if it contained a firm time-bound assurance regarding the independence of India. (1:58) This inclination of Maulana Azad was sheerly wishful as Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of U.K., contradicted, not once but thrice, the statement of F.D. Roosevelt, President of U.S.A., that the Atlantic Charter guaranteed, that after the war, all nations would be given the opportunity to decide their future according to the principle of self-determination. Churchill stated emphatically in the House of Commons that the so-called Charter would never be applied to India. Thereafter Roosevelt admitted that his statement had no political validity and did not bind Churchill. (1: 108-109)

It is important to note that Gandhiji had not been a member of Congress Working Committee ever since he took to Constructive Programme during twenties, but still controlled its reins. On July 5, 1942 he wrote to Maulana Azad that as they differed sharply in their views regarding achievement of independence, therefore, the latter should not only resign from Congress Presidentship but along with Nehru keep away from Working Committee also. (1:77) Though Gandhiji withdrew that letter within hours, yet it had its taming effect both on Nehru and Azad. The latter confesses that he felt unhappy about the whole situation and did not oppose the resolution passed by the Working Committee on July 14, 1942 urging direct action (non-violent open rebellion), because he was not hopeful about its outcome. (1:83-84) If Sardar Patel and others subordinated their judgement to that of Gandhiji, Maulana Azad succumbed thereto in spite of his tall claims.

All these incidents reflect the confusion which had been pestering the top Congress leaders. Maulana Azad refers casually to Subhas Chandar Bose in this book, but that observation is meaningful.

'..... I also saw that Subhas Bose's escape to Germany had made a great impression on Gandhiji. He had not formerly approved many of his actions, but now I found a change in his outlook. Many of his remarks convinced me that he admired the courage and resourcefulness Subhas Bose had displayed in making his escape from India. His admiration for Subhas Bose unconsciously coloured his view about the whole war situation.' (1:40)

Strategy of Bose

Subhas Chandar Bose was convinced that the passive policies of Congress instead of injecting any good sense in the British colonial outlook would rather harden it. He planned to escape from India to crusade for independence from abroad. His assessment was :

- i) the rightist forces within the Congress had succeeded in dislodging him from the Congress Presidentship;

- ii) the leftist forces could not be mobilised against the Gandhites on one hand and the British on the other;
- iii) the British could not be driven out without any armed uprising in India; and
- iv) the Second World War having created an opportunity for such an uprising, he should secure the armed help of a friendly country, viz. the Soviet Union. (3:59)

Accordingly, he managed his escape from India to Kabul in January 1941 with the support of Kirti Party owing affiliation to the Communist Party of India with an intention to reach Moscow. It was not known then that Russia had a secret non-aggression alliance with U.K. and would consider it harmful to incur latter's wrath by giving armed support to Bose for India's liberation. (2:14) The Russian Embassy at Kabul gave a cold shoulder to Bose. (3:90) Accordingly, he revised his plan and reached Berlin with the help of Italian Legation.

Events in the Far East

The blizzardous advance of Japanese forces in the Far East and the falling of Singapore, considered to be invincible naval fortress of the Empire, on February 15, 1942 made the British so panicky that they formulated a scorched earth policy regarding India which included blowing up of important bridges and destroying industrial installations in order to deny them to the Japanese in the event of their invading India. (1:73) The Japanese landed in Burma in early 1942.

'Many British and Australian soldiers as could be evacuated by sea were shipped off. Those who could not be sent by sea were escorted under air protection by the Burma Road, a route reserved for Europeans only, even local Europeans and Anglo-Burmese men and women were assured this safe route of escape to India.

Indian soldiers were left behind to surrender or fend their way through thick jungles and rugged mountains, without food or water. More than a million Indian citizens were made to evacuate and to seek a journey to home with their children and babies in arms, through thick unexplored jungle country.

It is estimated that 900,000 of these Indian refugees perished in the jungles and mountains.’ (2:41)

This callous action of the British manifested that in spite of their claim of being champions of democracy, they practised racialism even against their co-defenders.

Impact of Bose

The speeches of Bose from Berlin Radio influenced Mahatma Gandhi so profoundly that despite his commitment to non-violence he was all set to launch the Quit India Movement, an open non-violent rebellion, (1:78) which acquired the war cry ‘Do or die’ ; a slogan not consistent with his policy of pacifism.

The assumption of Supreme Command of re-organised Indian National Army, named thereafter as *Azad Hind Fauj* on August 25, 1943 and the establishment of Provisional Government, *Arzi Hakumat-e-Azad Hind*, by Subhas Chander Bose on October 21, 1943 rendered the British quite jittery. As many as 88 confidential orders were issued in persuasion of Denial Policies regarding removal of transport means and the large-scale lifting of paddy from the denial areas for creating famine-like conditions so that the adult male population might feel compelled either to seek recruitment to army or move away to other places in search of livelihood.

‘..... This nefarious strategy of desired scarcity of food, causing devastation in Bengal, had the sole design behind it i.e. to offer nothing in the form of human resources in case Netaji successfully appeared with his victorious army, The main bulk of the revolutionary forces would draw from the soil of Bengal, they apprehended.’ (2:62)

More than four million human lives perished in that famine. The responsibility for that inhuman action lay squarely on Winston Churchill, the then Prime Minister-cum-War Minister of Britain. While accusing the Nazis for having perpetrated a state-sponsored genocide against the Jews the world opinion should also take note of the fact that the British Government too was guilty of an equally gruesome war crime against humanity in Bengal.

Rear Admiral Mountbatten, Supreme Commander of Allied Forces in the Far East, dreaded Netaji’s charisma so much that the 3rd Indian Division positioned by him around Imphal to face the I.N.A, was Indian in name only. Its twenty four battalions in the forward areas consisted of English, Nigerian, American and Burmese soldiers, but no Indian, as it was apprehended that they would leave the British side and join the I.N.A. (2:103)

Victory in Defeat

After the surrender by Japan in August 1945, I.N.A. had to stop its operations. The British Indian Army was sent in September 1945 to re-occupy the British positions in Singapore and Malaya. *‘On learning the truth about the I.N.A. the British Indian Army also started itching for India’s independence. The effect of I.N.A. was so deep that at the time of arranging victory parade, the Allies were forced to hoist the Indian National Flag also along with the national flags of the victorious big five powers - U.S.A., U.S.S.R., Britain, France and China.’ (2:122-23)*

For meeting the exigency, the Indian National Flag was sent for from the I.N.A. Headquarters at Ipooh (Malaya). It is unprecedented in the history of wars that the victors got forced to hoist the flag of the vanquished as well in their victory parade.

The mutiny in the Royal Indian Navy at Karachi and Bombay during February 1946 was the repercussion of patriotic sentiments stirred by the heroic deeds of I.N.A. Maulana Azad states

‘Mrs Asaf Ali took up the case of naval officers and became their ardent supporter. She came to Delhi to win my support. I told her that the officers had not acted wisely and my advice to them was that they must go back to work unconditionally.’ (1:141)

It is a sad reflection on the ability of Congress leaders that they failed to give proper lead to that patriotic upheaval in the navy. The British not only crushed that mutiny but also made full use of the indifference of Congress for wrecking the I.N.A. by categorizing its captured personnel as White, Grey and Black — White were

retained with their original seniority ; Grey were discharged with permissible benefits : and Black (who did not repent their action of joining the I.N.A. but admitted boldly that they did so to fight against the British to liberate India) were dismissed. The interim Government formed under the leadership of Jawaharlal Nehru in September 1946, acquiesced to that colonial concept of discipline in the army and felt no qualm of conscience in letting the fighters for freedom being punished as deserters. A rare human resource, exceptionally patriotic and dedicated, who could have been easily absorbed in other para-military forces, was suffered to be wasted.

Clement Attlee, post-war Prime Minister of Britain, stated on March 15, 46 that imperialism was dead as dodo. Commander-in-Chief Auckinleck got convinced that the British Indian Army, Navy and Air Force could no longer be kept as tamed to the Crown and counselled the Raj to pack up and quit.

Clement Attlee during his visit to India in 1956 admitted :

'It was Netaji Subhas Chandar Bose and the I.N.A. — the immediate cause of independence but for which the transfer of power might not have been as quick and unequivocal as it was.' (2:144)

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II

Election of Mavalankar as Speaker

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

The last elections to the Central Assembly under the Government of India Act, 1935, were held on the basis of restricted communal electorate during November 1945. It consisted of 150 members, 102 elected and 48 nominated by the Governor-General of India.

The Central Assembly, thus constituted, had four Sikh Members, namely, S. Mangal Singh Gill and S. Sampuran Singh, elected on the Akali ticket, from the Punjab East and the Punjab West constituencies respectively; S. Surjit Singh Majithia, returned from a special constituency; and Major Harinder Singh Rajasansi nominated by the Governor General.

Two candidates contested for the office of Speaker. Shri Ganesh Vasudeo Mavalankar was put up by the Congress and Sir Cawasji Jahangir, a nominated member, was the nominee of Muslim League supported by the official members. Mr Mohammed Ali Jinnah, President of the All India Muslim League had been branding the Indian National Congress as a Hindu communal organisation and was keen to project himself as the champion of minorities. That was the consideration which prompted him to put up Sir Cawasji Jahangir, a Parsee, as his candidate, for Speakership. The choice of candidate by Mr Jinnah had a historical background. Mr Khurshid Fremji Nariman also a Parsee, had been a very popular Congress leader of Bombay and was often referred to as Veer Nariman. He expected to be elected as leader of Bombay Provincial Congress Assembly Party after the 1937 general election. Sardar Patel, incharge of the province on behalf of Congress High Command, preferred Bal Gangadhar Kher to Veer Nariman. The latter accused S. Patel of communal considerations. That led to a bitter public controversy and Mahatma Gandhi had to intervene to set it at rest. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad has also referred to this

incident in his book *India Wins Freedom* and deplors it as an aberration where the Congress failed in its test of nationalism (pp.16-17).

The contest for Speakership seemed to be very close. Both the Akali members chose to vote for the Congress candidate in spite of the fact that they had been opposed by the Congress through its own nominees, viz, S. Kapur Singh from Punjab East and S. Sant Singh from the Punjab West constituencies. Sir Cawasji Jahangir, still appeared to have an upper hand.

S. Surjit Singh Majithia, while reminiscing that election, stated that he had decided of his own to side with the Indian National Congress long before Mr Macharquhar I.C.S., Deputy Commissioner, Amritsar, approached him with the offer that the Government of India would get the title of 'Sir' conferred on him in the New Year Honours, if he voted with the official members for the election of Speaker. S. Majithia observed humorously that the Government in its generosity would be reducing by half his courtesy title of 'Sardar' to 'Sir'. Mr Macharquhar did not pursue the proposal.

Sardar Vinchurkar had also been returned to the Central Assembly from a special constituency in Bombay. His son, Flight Lieutenant Vinchurkar had been an adjutant with S. Surjit Singh Majithia, while the latter was serving as a Squadron Leader in the Royal Indian Air Force. It was at the persuasion of S. Majithia that Sardar Vinchurkar too agreed to vote for the Congress nominee. Major Harinder Singh, who was closely related with the Majithia family, also consented readily to follow the suit.

Mr Jinnah was overconfident about the success of his candidate. While the result of polling was going to be declared, he timed his entry into the Central Hall, expecting that his candidate would win and he would be greeted with a thunderous applause. To his dismay Mavalankar was announced to be elected with a margin of two votes only i.e. the votes arranged by S. Majithia. If either of the members, persuaded by him to side with the Congress, had changed his mind later, the result would have been a tie and Sir

Cawasji Jahangir was likely to be declared elected with the casting vote of the protem Speaker.

Had S. Majithia and the other Sikh members of Central Assembly not voted for the Congress nominee, the shape and pace of political events to come could have been different. Sh. Sarat Chander Bose, Leader of Congress Party in the Central Assembly while paying tribute to the statesmanship and sagacity of Sikh members observed that they saved the struggle for Indian Independence from being sabotaged.

Another corollary of Mr Jinnah's manipulation, if he had succeeded, could be that Field Marshal Sir Archibald Wavel, Governor-General of India, might have invited Mr Jinnah and not Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru to head the interim Government formed later in September, 1946.

Text prepared on the basis of an interview which the author had with S. Surjit Singh Majithia in early 1987.

III

Martyrdom and the Sikhs : Concept and Tradition

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

Martyrdom stands for supreme sacrifice against tyranny, discrimination and exploitation perpetrated by the state or any oppressive system. It excludes the ventures for self-glorification and focuses mainly on a valiant tryst with death for a cause leading to the greatest good of the largest number.

Literally Sikh means *sish* i.e. a disciple, keen to learn. A Sikh is not superstitious or orthodox but an innovator. Being dynamic in approach through the combination of head, heart and hands, he is not bound by divisive taboos and inhibitions.

Concepts are corollaries of the basic philosophy which led to the evolution of a particular faith. Traditions get laid when the followers of that way of life display courage to stand by those precepts through enlightened conviction. Often a remedy for a contemporary malady has to be explored, when either no clue to the effect is available in the parent source or a suggestive precedent has not been left by the founder. Traditions in Sikhism disfavour ritualism.

Concept and Tradition

Sikhism is a realistic philosophy which does not consider the life on earth as an illusory dream. It impresses that living should not be wasted in abstract expectations after death, but be devoted to self-improvement and the selfless service of mankind for transforming the mortals into His Image (*gurmukhs*).

Sri Guru Granth Sahib, the scripture of Sikhs, includes sermons of such preceptors as believed in the oneness of God, regarded all human beings as equal and emphasized that worldly activities can be sanctified by leading a purposeful life.

A Sikh neither fears death nor shuns anyone due to imaginary prejudices. Being a believer in the Divine Will, he strives for defending virtue from being debased by evil even risking his life therefor.

Immortality i.e. overcoming death, the theme of many an epic, is an unnatural wish and a biological impossibility. It is not to be invoked from any deity but can be sought through virtuous deeds by leaving footprints on the sands of time. Accordingly baptism in Sikhism is called *amrit chhakna* i.e. partaking of nectar. God in His Benevolence, reprieves worldly lapses if they are sincerely regretted and firmly pledged to be redressed. Desperados get transformed as saints and the deserters earn esteem as heroes after they switch on to virtuous and duteous way of life. Paying tribute to martyrs and complimenting the selfless devotees form a conspicuous part of Sikh invocation (*ardas*).

To sum these all, recitation (*simran*), service and sacrifice constitute the warp and woof of Sikh faith, Their co-ordination as a way of life, in due course, led also to other broad concepts like nationalism, humanism and the martyrdom for a cause in the caste-ridden, fatalist and inert Indian society.

Historical Evolution

The divine revelation as epitomized by Guru Nanak (1469-1539), founder of Sikhism, in *mool mantra*, preamble to Sri Guru Granth Sahib, conveys that :

common parenthood of God implies that all human beings notwithstanding their birth, gender, creed, colour and race form a universal fraternity;

the Divine Image as Eternal Truth, free from fright and rancour, means that ignorance amounts to profanity and the prejudices created thereby are baseless;

as God does not have any form, it is not right to worship Him as an idol; and

the belief in His common parenthood as well as in His existence as unimpeachable truth keeps enthusing the human beings in their march towards excellence.

These precepts when put into practice illustrate :

‘Truth is great but greater still is truthful way of living’.

The philosophy of Sikhism passed through four testing stages from the pronouncement of its gospel to its adoption as a way of life.

First, when its founder revealed Eternal Truth as explained afore.

Second, when Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606) laid his life for upholding that truth. He blended an element of sacrifice with the persuasive approach of the founder.

Third, when Guru Hargobind (1595-1644) complemented the rosary with sword by adopting the concept of Miri-Piri (Saint soldier).

These three landmarks prepared the ground for the Sikh faith to enter its fourth and final stage; to practise truth as a way of life through the foundation of the Khalsa in 1699.

Weeding out of superstitions, observance of purposeful secular activities, practice of religious tolerance, love for mankind, respect for women and the recognition of worth instead of the stress on birth have been the salient precepts propounded by Guru Nanak all over the subcontinent when modern means of transport and communication were not still available. As he rose from the grass-roots, his knowledge about the plight of people was firsthand. His observations, as such, made a direct appeal to their emotions, notions and actions, stirring social awakening and moral transformation. The native priestly classes got alarmed as their grip on masses started loosening.

The contemporary rulers branded further the already caste-ridden society as believers and atheists (idol-breakers and idol-worshippers). They too began to feel occasionally perturbed when they found the common people, both Hindus and Muslims, getting

favourably inclined towards the liberal order pursued by the spiritual successors of Guru Nanak. This is corroborated by the memoirs of Emperor Jehangir*. The Fifth Nanak, Guru Arjan Dev, on his declining to be converted to Islam, was persecuted through callous scorching.

Impact of Martyrdom

The martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev marked the beginning of a new epoch in the history of East. Till then the cult of non-violence preached by Lord Buddha (563-483 B.C.) had remained an academic creed. Guru Arjan Dev was the first to practise it as a resisting measure. It had a double purpose. It tended to awaken the inhuman conscience of wicked rulers through brave and patient suffering. It also impressed on the oppressed that non-co-operation with evil and the urge to uphold virtue are essential modes of conduct for maintaining self-respect.

Passive resistance was effectively practised by the Fifth Nanak more than two centuries before the American polemicist, Henry David Thoreau, who is regarded as the preceptor of both Leo Tolstoy and Mahatma Gandhi, wrote about it in his treatise, *Walden*.

Miri -Piri

Gautam Buddha denounced the caste system and preached social equality about two thousand years prior to the Sikh Gurus. But his stress on non-violence which offered no effective alternative in the event of threat to territorial integrity and political stability of the country, could not stand the test of time. Guru Har Gobind

* The Caliphs, as religious supremo of Muslim world, allowed bricking alive of children, dragging of women over rough ground with their hair tied tightly to the tail of a trotting horse and the torturing of men of faith to death either through skinning or by making them sit on hot iron sheet or by drowning them after bundling them in a bag containing lime, for breaking their will, if they desisted conversion to Islam. As per Jehangir's memoirs his order regarding the execution of Guru Arjan Dev had the sanction of precedents dealing with atheists i.e. *kafirs*.

through the concept of Miri-Piri put forth that the hand that holds rosary for praying, along with earning and sharing it with the needy, is under an equal obligation to defend itself as well as the weak against oppression. It conveyed that just as dependence on offerings is a sin, likewise it is sacriligious to be cowed down by tyrants.

The preceptors in India had been given to tying a thread around the wrist of local chieftain for seeking his protection. The concept of Miri-Piri implied that the intelligentsia unable to defend themselves cannot be independent in their thinking.

Guru Har Gobind was also particular about the construction of temple for Hindus and mosque for Muslims wherever a gurdwara was built because he valued the right of people to profess and practise the religious faith of their choice. This was an effective way of demonstrating disagreement with the insular theocratic approach of the rulers. Thus, the ground got prepared for the Sikh faith to enter its final stage.

Foundation of the Khalsa

Meditation in seclusion had not proved useful to society . Its blending with the service of fellow beings imparted a positive approach to life. The adoption of sacrifice as an element of faith gave a purposeful meaning to worldly pursuits by popularizing death for a cause rather than impairing or ending oneself in a vain hope of salvation from the cycle of birth and death. The perusal of Indian epics reveals that many preceptors and warriors threw away their weapons abandoning the cause for which they had taken up the cudgels on hearing correctly or incorrectly about the death of their sons. Bravery, lacking the sense of sacrificing personal affinities for a public cause, is an unsteady force. Guru Gobind Singh, tenth and the last In the chain of gurudom, lent a new concept to sacrifice when he got his near and dear ones martyred for upholding a noble cause. He was just nine when he heard his father, Guru Teg Bahadur, observing that the coerced could be saved from forcible conversion, if a virtuous person would be prepared to offer his sacrifice. He exhorted him to face the ordeal himself as none was holier than

him. Imagine the lofty thinking and rare pluck of a lad depriving himself of paternal protection for welfare of the oppressed.

Guru Teg Bahadur is adored as *Hind di Chadar* (protective cover of India) for he faced martyrdom to uphold that all human beings are equally entitled to the freedom of conscience. After his father had laid his life but not given up his faith, Guru Gobind Singh resolved that not only the souls of people were to be purified but their muscles also required to be strengthened . He decided to evolve a new order which as last resort would not hesitate to wield sword against tyranny. On the Baisakhi day in 1699 he founded the contemplated order giving it the name of *Khalsa*, the pure. He declared:

‘The Khalsa shall not only be warlike but also sweeten the lives of those whom he is chosen to serve’.

Social and political situation in India started undergoing a revolutionary change after the inception of *Khalsa*.

Guru Gobind Singh raised the concept of martyrdom to new heights when his two sons in their teens died fighting. He solemnly submitted:

‘Oh ! Lord I have surrendered to the Thee what belonged to Thee’.

Impact of the Khalsa

Two factors helped the growth of nationalism in India; foundation of the *Khalsa* and the influence of western system of education. Both have their distinct contribution to the transformation of Indian society.

Sikhism released the soul of people from superstitions. The new order in fact marked the evolution of nationalism in India . For the first time many people overlooked their castes, felt a sense of brotherhood, realised their obligation towards fellow beings and forged themselves into a disciplined lot. Upto then who-so-ever invaded India found the victory waiting for him. But after the inception of *Khalsa*, the tide turned its course. Not only the foreign

aggression was resisted, but the Indian forces during the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh established their supremacy beyond Peshawar. The invasions from north-west ceased thereafter. The East India Company annexed Punjab in mid nineteenth century advancing from east.

Mahatma Gandhi subsequent to his return from South Africa got strengthened in his conviction about the effectiveness of passive resistance as a political tool after the successful non-violent campaign launched by the Sikhs under the banner of Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee in 1920-21 for retrieving the control of gurdwaras from the hereditary *mehants*, who enjoyed the protective care of the then government. Mahatma Gandhi lauded the achievement as

'First decisive battle of India's freedom won. Congratulations'. (2 :xxxi)

The contribution of Sikhs to the freedom struggle forms glorious chapters in its chronicles. Punjab was the last to be annexed by the British but the foremost to weaken the foreign domination as per an other observation of Mahatma Gandhi after the annual session of Indian National Congress held at Amritsar in December 1919 :

'Plassey laid the foundation of British Empire. Amritsar has weakened it'. (1:71)

Hunger strike as a political tool often resorted to by Mahatma Gandhi was first effectively pursued by the Babbar Akali prisoners in April 1926. Their ordeal lasted six weeks. (3:177)

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IV

Distorting Sikh History and Religion

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

A systematic campaign has been launched by a few Non-Sikh writers, both in Pakistan and India, for distorting Sikh religion and history. If the various foundations, sadans and chairs in the universities set up for propagating Sikhism do not take note of this campaign, the distortions are bound to become printed facts leading to conflicting views on various aspects of Sikh faith.

Attention is drawn to narrations in the following two books to begin with:

The Real Ranjit Singh by Faqir Syed Waheeduddin, Lion Art Press Karachi (Pakistan), 1965;

and

India : The Seige Within by an Indian, M.J. Akbar, Penguin Books Ltd, Middlesex (UK), 1985.

Neither of the two authors is a historian by profession. Faqir Syed Waheeduddin, a descendant of Faqir Azizuddin, Foreign Minister of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, bases his book on family archives. Wherever he makes a statement, not relating to the archives, he does not quote the source for corroborating that. M.J. Akbar is a journalist, whose primary consideration is to influence contemporary readers and not to state historical facts objectively.

About Babar And Mughal Dynasty

Faqir Syed Waheeduddin states at page 51 of his book:

'Sikh historians give a very interesting account of a meeting between Babar, the founder of the Mughal empire, and Guru Nanak, founder of the Sikh religion. They say that when, after two unsuccessful invasions of India, Babar was marching towards Delhi in 1525 to try his luck once again, a number of prisoners were

produced before him at Eminabad, a small town in the Punjab. At the sight of one of them, he stood up from his seat and exclaimed to his minister in Turanian, "What! here in flesh and blood is the holy man who appeared to me in a dream at Ghazni and invited me to invade India for the third time, prophesying my victory". The holy man was Guru Nanak, Babar addressed with great respect and asked him to express some wish which he could fulfil. Guru Nanak asked only for the release of the prisoners, which was carried out forthwith. He then blessed Babar and prophesied that, if he and his successors treated their subjects justly without distinction of caste or creed, his dynasty would rule over India for centuries.'

“Who, where and when” of Sikh historians, giving this account, have not been mentioned, thus reducing the statement to a mere fancy.

The account is incongruent with the description of excesses committed by the soldiers of Babar as recounted in a hymn at pages 417-18 in *Adi Granth*. Guru Nanak had been an eyewitness to that carnage and plunder. Babar himself records in his Memoirs:

'He (Babar) advanced to Sialkot, the inhabitants of which submitted and saved their possessions, but the inhabitants of Syedpur (Eminabad) who resisted were put to sword, their wives and children carried into captivity and all their property plundered.' (3:140)

Marauders are not blessed but condemned by holy men, which Guru Nanak did. The cruelties perpetrated by the hordes of Babar on the residents of Eminabad were recited through a hymn by the Guru to Bhai Lalo as follows:

*'As the word of the Lord cometh to me, so I make known, O Lalo!
Bringing a bridal procession of sin. Babar hath hasted from Kabul and demandeth wealth as his bride, O Lalo!
Modesty and religion have vanished; falsehood marcheth in the van, O Lalo !*

*The occupation of the qazis and the brahmins is gone: the devil readeth the marriage service, O Lalo !
Muslim women read the Quran, and in suffering call upon God, O Lalo !
Hindu women whether of high or low caste, meet the same fate as they, O Lalo !
They sing the paeon of murder, O Nanak, and smear themselves with saffron of blood.
Nanak singeth the praise of the Lord in the city of corpses, and utterth this.
They shall come in '78, depart in '97 and then shall rise another disciple of a hero.' (4: 109-110)*

The statement of Faqir Syed Waheeduddin is inconsistent with this hymn.

Dr Kirpal Singh, former Professor and Head, Department of Punjab Historical Studies, Punjabi University, Patiala, clarifies the last line of the hymn as that the Mughals came in '78 (1578 B.K. viz., 1521 A.D.) and departed in '97 (1597 B.K. viz., 1540 A.D.), when Sher Shah defeated Humayun and the latter fled from India. (5:105)

Guru Nanak prophesied the exit of Mughals and did not bless the rule of Babars' dynasty.

The statement of Faqir Syed Waheeduddin reminds us of a similar myth floated by the British after the 1857 uprising.

'A superstitious belief had been attributing the British rule in India to the blessing of Lord Rama given to one of the maid servants who served Sita very faithfully during her captivity in Lanka. It is said that after the death of demon king Ravana who had abducted Sita, when she was recovered, she spoke highly of Trijta to her husband, one of the maid servants, deputed by Ravana to guard her. Lord Rama got pleased and blessed her that in the kalyug, Trijta and her descendents would rule over Bharat, country of his birth.

Our people particularly those serving in the army had been given to understand that Tritja took birth during the Nineteenth Century as Queen Victoria. After the 1857 uprising the British Government ended the rule of East India Company and Queen Victoria proclaimed herself as Empress of India.

The British regarded this upheavel as a mutiny of the native sepoy, who revolted not for the independence of India, but because the sentiments of orthodox Hindu soldiers had been injured due to the rumour that the cartridges which were issued for use in their rifles, contained the fat of cow, an animal sacred to them. The outrage of a religious sentiment had led to a wide-spread sepoy revolt. An equally strong story with a religious background was needed to win back their loyalty. Hence, the orthodox Hindu soldiers were given to believe through subtle preaching by battalion priests, that Queen Victoria had become the Empress of India through the blessing of Lord Rama, and the loyalty to her and her descendants was a matter of faith enjoined by Lord Rama. The superstition worked as a miracle to win back an unwavering loyalty of the natives to the rule of Queen Victoria and her descendants over India'. (2 : article 'Significance of Seasonal Festivals')

Faqir Syed Waheeduddin's book *The Real Ranjit Singh* was published in May 1965 followed by three quick editions in July, August and September 1965. The year 1965 had been very unpleasant as far as the Indo-Pak relations were concerned. There had been skirmishes in Kutch (Gujrat) during April and a fullfledged war in Kashmir during September 1965. The operation to liberate Kashmir launched by Pakistan in September 1965 still smoulders through a proxy war. It appears that the book was tolerated to be published in Pakistan in 1965, not as an exclusive tribute to Maharaja Ranjit Singh, but as a subtle part of cultural invasion on Sikh history and religion.

Brainwaves of M.J. Akbar

M.J. Akbar at pp. 121-22 of his book *India : The Siege Within* records about Sikh Ardas as follows:

'....The Sikh that we recognise so easily today was, in fact, created precisely two hundred years after Guru Nanak began preaching his message. And from that year, a cry went up which is still heard at every time of prayer: 'Raj Karega Khalsa' (The Khalsa shall rule). The full form leaves no doubt about the intention:

*Dilli takhat par bahegi, aap Guru Ki Fauj
Chatter phirega sis par, barhi karegi mauj
Raj karega Khalsa, baaqi rahe na koe
Khwar hoye sab milenge, bache saran jo hoye.*

Simply translated, this means that the armies of the Guru will rule Delhi, and only those will survive who seek the protection of the Khalsa; the frustrated shall submit, and enemies will be vanquished. After the British conquered Punjab, they did not like the idea of anyone ruling Delhi, but themselves, and so they banned the verse. The Sikh leaders compromised by removing the first two lines from the popular recitation, and then rationalized the last two by explaining that the pure would rule only in the spiritual, not the temporal sense. It was an old trick: to preserve a dream by calling it an illusion. The British let it pass. The slogan can still be found daubed on the walls of Delhi and Amritsar, and is a part of the Sikh prayer'.

The author does not corroborate his statement about the removal of first two lines from the popular recitation by quoting his source of information. That he is guided more by his ears than by any objective reasoning is borne by the fact that the word in third lines is *aaqi* not *baaqi*. He easily skips over the fact that as Ram Raj alluded to by Gandhiji in his evening prayers did not

amount to restoration of a rule as per Ramayana traditions, likewise Raj Karega Khalsa does not mean Sikh rule.

Earlier at pp. 118-19 *ibid.*, the author observes:

....It was here that Arjun, the fifth Guru, built the sacred Harimandir, or Golden Temple. There was obviously great friendship between Sikhs and Muslims then; the foundation stone of the Golden Temple was laid by a Muslim divine invited from Lahore, Mian Mir. It was during the twenty-five years of Arjun's ministry that the compilation of the Granth Sahib was completed, and the Sikh church truly established. The number of conversions increased rapidly, much to the anger of the brahmins and the mullahs; four new towns built, and the people began to refer to Arjun as the Sacha Padshah, the 'True Emperor'.

But here the problems began, particularly since Guru Arjun could not resist the temptation of playing power politics. With his influence on the increase, Guru Arjun entered the vicious whirlpool of Mughal succession wars. He supported the revolt of Jehangir's son, Khusrau. If Khusrau had succeeded, Guru Arjun would surely have been a star in the court of Delhi, ensuring recognition, reward and even perhaps a Sikh-Mughal coalition on the Rajput-Mughal pattern. Instead, he earned the anger of Jehangir, whose fits of virulence and cruelty have been recorded by every historian. The enemies of Guru Arjun, particularly the priests, found this an excellent opportunity to destroy the 'upstart'; Sikh tradition names one of Arjun's tormentors as the banker Chndu Shah who had been rebuffed when he proposed marriage between his daughter and Guru Arjun's son. Guru Arjun was arrested and tortured, and he died in captivity on 30 May 1606. The martyrdom of Arjun, and later during the reign of Aurangzeb, the execution of the ninth Guru, Teg Bahadur (who had begun extracting tribute from the

people, along with an ally, a Muslim faqir, Hafiz Adam), and of the two young sons of the tenth Guru, Gobind Singh, have become symbols of a Sikh hatred for Muslims that has lasted more than three centuries.'

About the execution of Guru Arjun, Jehangir records in his Tuzuk or Memoirs:

'So many of the simple-minded Hindus, nay, many foolish Muslims, too had been fascinated by the Guru's way and teachings.. For many years the thought had been presenting itself to my mind that either I should put an end to this false traffic, or that he be brought into the fold of Islam..... I fully knew his heresies, and I ordered that he should be brought into my presence, that his property be confiscated, and that he should be put to death with torture.' (1:230-231)

No historical record gives even the slightest hint that *Guru Arjun could not resist the temptation of playing power politics.* Perhaps M.J. Akbar is the only scholar who used the unbecoming word 'upstart' for Guru Arjun. M.J. Akbar's reference to Guru Teg Bahadur is being commented upon after his observation that follows.

M.J. Akbar further states at p. 178 *ibid.*

'Guru Teg Bahadur returned to the Punjab and found an ally in a Muslim Sufi mendicant, Hafiz Adam, belonging to the order of Shaikh Ahmed Sirhindi. The two organised a mass uprising against the Mughal Emperor. Aurangzeb himself was in the Deccan, but his troops quelled the revolt and arrested Guru Teg Bahadur at Agra. He was sentenced to death and decapitated on 11 November 1675, in Delhi, at the place where the Gurdwara Sis Ganj now stands.'

In both his references to Guru Teg Bahadur at pages 112 and 178, M.J. Akbar has conveniently overlooked the recorded fact that the ninth Guru laid down his life for the protection of freedom of conscience and free profession, practice and propagation of religion. The tale of Kashmiri brahmins who sought the protection

of Guru against the onslaught of Mughal Governor of Kashmir and the resolve of the Guru to go to Delhi and sacrifice his life for creating among people a spirit of courage and resistance have been eclipsed by the author, as compatible with his subjective way of thinking. It is surprising that the author either forgot or did not bother to take note that the third centenary of the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur was celebrated in 1975 all over the country by paying tribute to him as *Hind di Chadar*. M.J. Akbar wrote this book in 1985 barely ten years after that historic celebration.

At p.202 *ibid.*, the author states that the Akal Takhat was built by Guru Hari Kishan. This betrays his ignorance about Sikh religion and history. The Akal Takhat was constructed in 1609 by Guru Hargobind. Guru Har Krishan (1656-1664), not Hari Krishen, was invested with guruship in 1661. Guru Hargobind, not Guru Arjun, is adored as *Sacha Patshah*.

At page 11 (Introduction) of his book, M.J. Akbar states:

‘.....To Khushwant Singh I am grateful for his critical examination of Punjab Situation..... ,’

Khushwant Singh owes to his readers to confirm or contradict this escapade of M.J. Akbar.

The Sikh insitutions are under an obligation to remove all misunderstandings and misinformation which M.J. Akbar has laboured to spread.

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V

India’s First War of Independence

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

The following celebrations were held at national level during 2007 :

150th anniversary of the 1857 - Revolt by the Bengal Sepoys of the East India Company on May 10 acclaiming it as India’s First War of Independence ;

Diamond Jubilee of Independence on August 15
and

the birth centenary of martyr Bhagat Singh on September 28.

Such celebrations need to be objectively assessed for imparting their precise impact at national level.

The terming of 1857-Revolt (regarded as mutiny by the British) as India’s First War of Independence leads to the implied recognition that the earlier invasions from north-west were not acts of foreign aggression but had been a chain of home-coming by the natives despite their being marauders. If this is accepted as a historical fact then the heroic deeds of Indian patriots and reformers prior to the advent of East India Company would appear as acts of treason. Any resentment against the demolition of religious places would not only be misplaced but amount to sheer vandalism. If the invasions from north-west had been continual aggression, then the acclaiming of 1857-Revolt by a few detachments of Bengal Sepoys as India’s First War of Independence is a misnomer.

In fact our approach to historical events had been casual if not distorted. The redemarcation of Bengal into two provinces in 1905 was resented as partition, whereas the separation of Burma from India in 1937 was accepted as a prerogative of the British. It would be worthwhile to note that Lokmanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak (1856-1920), who spearheaded a sustained campaign for *swadesi*

and *swaraj*, did not accept the 1857-Revolt as an uprising of the masses, because beyond Mogulserai in the east and Jhansi in the south-west, there were no noteworthy protests.

The Punjab Government took a corrective step by deciding to observe the 150th anniversary of Namdhari (Kuka) Movement at a state-level function at Bhaini Sahib on April 15, 2007. Ram Singh, founder of the Namdhari sect, adored as Satguru (preceptor of truth) had been a soldier of the Khalsa Army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. After the demise of Maharaja in 1839, he got fed-up by the intrigues of his survivors and the gradual departure from lofty ideals of Khalsa Raj. In disgust, he left the army service in 1845 and returned to his native place, Bhaini, near Ludhiana. But after the annexation of Punjab by the East India Company in 1849, the provocative activities of patronized missionaries and the demoralization of the disarmed Khalsa Army awakened his national pride. He resolved to restore the glorious values of sovereign secular Khalsa Rule. It was on the Baisakhi of 1857, about four weeks earlier than the revolt of Bengal Sepoys on May 10, that Satguru Ram Singh founded the Sant Khalsa. It enjoined a strict code of simple pious living attuned to *Naam* (Name of God). The new sect began to be called Namdharis accordingly.

As in their ecstasy they often indulged into loud shrieks (called *kuks* in Punjabi) the epithet *Kuka* also got added to Namdhari. Because wearing of kirpans was resented by the East India Company regime, the *Kukas* began to carry sticks (*lathis*). Mass physical drills formed a part and parcel of their congregations. The Namdharis were the first to start a parallel self-rule by introducing their own postal system for maintaining secrecy about their activities. They settled all mutual disputes through *sabhas* (panchyats) instead of petitioning to courts. Child marriage, infanticide, sati and all such practices, derogatory to dignity of women, were forbidden. Education through mother tongue was encouraged so that the taught remained acquainted with their cultural heritage. The campaign was the forerunner of the non-co-operation movements launched by Mahatma Gandhi from 1921 onwards. The

British did not take kindly to the growing activities of the Namdharis, as they were reviving the national pride and martial spirit of the ruled.

The opening of a chain of slaughterhouses by the British for providing beef to the colonial army was resented by the Namdharis. The sentiment for cow-protection was exploited by the British to incite clashes between Namdharis and the local butchers. After one such encounter sixty six *Kukas* were blown off without any trial by L. Cowan, Deputy Commissioner, Ludhiana on January 17-18, 1872. The executed included Bishen Singh, a teenager, who was hacked to pieces. Satguru Ram Singh was deported to Rangoon where he passed away in 1885. **As per its aims and goal, the foundation of *Sant Khalsa* on the Baisakhi of 1857 deserves to be acclaimed as the declaration of India's First War of Independence.**

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VI

The Great Escape

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

The Second World War broke out in Europe between the Nazis and the Allies in September 1939. The Allies, comprising then among others, two main colonial powers ; the U.K. and France, regarded it as a war between democratic regimes represented by them and the fascist forces led by Germany. This declaration of the Allies lacked conviction, because while claiming themselves to be the champions of democracy, they were reluctant to accede to the demand of their colonies for independence and equality among nations.

The Indian Scene

India at that time was the kingpin of British Empire over which it was claimed that the Sun never set. Japan was aspiring to become the Great Britain of Asia and was camouflaging its expansionist designs under the war cry “Asia for Asians”. Subhas Chandar Bose, who felt compelled to resign the Presidentship of Indian National Congress in 1939, formed a new party, Forward Bloc. He subscribed to the strategy that England’s difficulty was India’s opportunity. Mahatma Gandhi, in spite of the 1929-declaration of Indian National Congress that complete independence of India was its goal, observed ‘We do not seek independence of India out of British ruin’.

The Congress had formed ministries in about half a dozen provinces after the 1937 elections. When Lord Linlithgow, Governor General and Viceroy of India, without even consulting the Congress, declared India’s participation in the war, the latter felt slighted and directed its ministries to resign in protest. The Individual Satyagrah campaign launched by Mahatma Gandhi to impress upon Indian people not to co-operate with the British Government in its war efforts fizzled out. The latter rather patted the Indian Muslim League to pass its resolution of two-nation theory

demanding thereby the partition of India in its session held at Lahore in March 1940. Muslim League was also encouraged to share political power in the vacuum caused by the resignation of Congress ministries.

Strategy of Bose

Subhas Chandar Bose felt that the passive policies of Congress instead of injecting any good sense in the British colonial outlook would rather harden it. He thought of escaping from India to crusade for independence from abroad. Naranjan Singh Talib, editor, *Desh Darpan*, Calcutta, arranged a meeting of Achhar Singh Chheena, an underground worker of communist Party of India, then known as Kirti Party, with Bose, who impressed upon Chheena that

- i) the rightist forces within the Congress had succeeded in dislodging him from the Congress Presidentship;
- ii) the leftist forces could not be mobilised against the Gandhites on one hand and the British on the other;
- iii) the Second World War having created an opportunity for such an uprising, he had decided to secure the armed help of a friendly country, viz. the Soviet Union.

Comrade Chheena felt convinced about the soundness of that strategy. Bhagat Ram Talwar from NWFP, younger brother of martyr, Hari Kishan Talwar, an active member of Kirti Party, entrusted mainly with the task of escorting revolutionaries in their escape to Russia through Afghanistan, was assigned this epoch-making responsibility.

Bose Escapes

Subhas Chandar Bose called a meeting of the working committee of Forward Bloc. Mian Akbar Shah from Peshawar came to attend that meeting. In pursuance of the escape plan, Mian Akbar Shah purchased ready-made garments from a local shop so that Bose could travel to Peshawar in the guise of a Muslim intellectual. Bose announced in early January 1941 that he would be observing complete silence, *maunbrat*, for introspection. He cut off his social engagements to avail of that period to make the CID pickets, around

his residence, less vigilant and for growing beard.

Donned in the dress, procured through Mian Akbar Shah, Bose was driven by his nephew, Sisir Bose, on the night of January 16 to Dhanbad, where another of his nephews worked as a mining engineer. On 17th night they drove him to Gomo railway station from where he boarded Kalka Mail. Reaching Delhi the next evening he caught Frontier Mail which took him to Peshawar as per plan on 19th evening. The whole journey was performed by him under the name Ziaud-din, sporting a beard, with a fez cap on head and wearing a sherwani. He stayed in the Taj Mahal Hotel for the night and was shifted on the next day to a house exclusively rented for his sojourn.

On the morning of January 22, Bose dressed like a Pathan, wearing malaysian cloth shalwar and shirt, leather jacket, khaki kullah and lungi as headgear, peshawari chappals as footwear and carrying a kabuli blanket on shoulder, accompanied by Bhagat Ram Talwar. who had assumed the name of Rahmat Khan, was taken in a car towards Jamrod. It had been settled that Bose would retain his name of Ziaud-din, impersonating as a deaf and dumb uncle of Rahmat Khan, on their way to pilgrimage to Adda Sharif. They got off the car about a furlong short of Khajuri Maidan British Camp on border of the tribal area, also called no-man's land. There had been a Muslim shrine just across the border and the devotees were allowed to go there without any check-up. Thus under the full view of a military sentry they crossed over to the tribal belt because the former took them as genuine pilgrims.

Thereafter either walking or hiring a pony for Bose, who found walking difficult in the rough terrain and availing of tongas or trucks, where available, they reached Kabul on the morning of January 27, 1941, the day, Bose was scheduled to appear in a court at Calcutta. His disappearance, which was detected by police after ten days, became a big news.

Long Wait in Kabul

They stayed in an inn at Kabul, exploring possibilities to contact the Russian Ambassador. They chanced to meet him outside

the embassy on February 2, 1941. He listened to their plea, watched Bose attentively in his new guise, but drove away without showing any interest in them. Bose started getting apprehensive that in case they would be caught, the Afghan Government would hand him over to the British. This fear was not shared by Rahmat Khan, who knew well the Afghan traditions and held firmly that in such an eventuality he would be allowed to go to a country of his choice.

Long stay in the inn could arouse police suspicion. Hence, they had to seek the hospitality of Uttam Chand Malhotra, a distant relative of Bhagat Ram Talwar and at one time an activist of Naujawan Bharat Sabha at Peshawar, but then settled at Kabul as a crockery and radio dealer. Stay at his home helped Bose to recoup his health, which had been adversely effected by unfavourable living conditions in the inn.

After having been cold-shouldered by the Russian Ambassador, they decided to approach the German Embassy which agreed readily to help Bose, but advised that the subsequent contact with them be maintained through the Italian Legation. The joint plea by the Axis powers i.e. Germany and Italy to USSR for issuing a transit visa to Bose for his flight to Berlin via Moscow failed to get any response. Russia had a secret non-aggression pact with the U.K., a fact neither known to the Axis Powers nor to the Kirti Party of India. That was why neither the Russian Ambassador at Kabul showed any interest in Bose nor the Soviet Government responded to the plea of Axis Powers, because it did not want to offend U.K. by allowing Bose to fly to Berlin via Moscow for organising an armed uprising abroad for the liberation of India. At last the Italian Legation succeeded in sending Bose on the tampered passport of one of their couriers, under the name of Orlando Mazotta on March 18, 1941.

Impact of the Escape

This escape changed the course of world events as well as the way of thinking of leading statesmen in India.

The speeches of Bose from Berlin Radio influenced Mahatma Gandhi so profoundly that he was all set to launch the Quit India

Movement with the war cry “Do or Die”, not a passive slogan consistent with his policy of non-violence.

Mr Attlee, post-war Prime Minister of U.K. is reported to have confided that Netaji Subhas Chandar Bose and the INA had been the immediate cause which led to the independence of India but for which the transfer of power would not have been quick and unequivocal.

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VII

Natural versus Naturalized Citizen

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

A controversy got raised prior to the 1999 mid-term Lok Sabha Elections that a naturalized citizen of India be debarred from seeking election as President, Vice-President, and Prime Minister of India in the interest of national security. Of these three dignitaries the first two are elected by separate electoral colleges, whereas the Prime Minister is appointed by the President subject to his proving majority, if precarious, in the Lok Sabha within a specified time. If he is not a member of either house of Parliament, he is enjoined to acquire it within six months. Charan Singh, who had been sworn in as Prime Minister subsequent to the fall of Morarji Desai government, not sure of proving his majority within the stipulated period, resigned advising along with the dissolution of Lok Sabha in late 1979. Neither P.V. Narasimha Rao nor Dev Raj Gowda was a member of Parliament at the time of appointment as Prime Minister in 1991 and 1996 respectively.

The propounders of controversy referred to the constitution of U.S.A. in support of their plea. There is no classification of citizens as natural and naturalized in India. In U.S.A. where large-scale immigration of foreigners had been going on ever since America had been discovered, such a distinction had to be laid down, after it declared itself a federal republic in late eighteenth century. A natural citizen means ‘a citizen by birth’ whereas the naturalized one is that who acquires citizenship after going through the process of immigration. The constitution of U.S.A. prescribes:

“No person except a natural born citizen, or a citizen of United States at the time of adoption of constitution shall be eligible to the office of president; neither shall any person be eligible to that office who shall not have attained the age of thirty five years and been fourteen years a resident within the United States.”

When the constitution of U.S.A. was adopted, even naturalized citizens with fourteen years domicile were eligible to seek election as president. The founding fathers of the constitution were conscious of the fact that large-scale immigration to U.S.A. would keep going on. Such immigrants would comprise people coming from various countries with different background and mostly not attuned to a secular democratic set-up. They needed time to be acclimatized with the system of presidential democracy adopted for the first time by any country. Hence those who migrated to U.S.A. after the adoption of constitution were not eligible to seek presidential election. Such a clause of ineligibility does not apply to appointments however high or sensitive they may be. Ms. Albright, the U.S. Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs (with President Clinton), which office is designated as foreign minister in a parliamentary democracy, was a naturalized citizen of U.S.A.

The constitution of India did not lay any classification of citizens. Even if any such move gets initiated at this stage, its realization shall need constitutional amendment of the articles defining citizenship as well as of those prescribing the procedure for the election of President and the appointment of Prime Minister, which seems to be an impossible task in an era where even absolute majority for forming a government is bargained. Securing two-third majority, mandatory for any constitutional amendment is an impossible task, which even if manoeuvred, shall not have retrospective application.

Persons of foreign origin rendered valuable service to India in the pre-independence era as well as thereafter. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, born in Mecca in November 1888, was not a citizen of India by birth. If the Simla Conference (1945) convened by Lord Wavel, the then Governor General of India, had succeeded Maulana Azad would have headed the first interim government in his capacity as the then President of Indian National Congress.

Dr. Annie Besant, a British citizen, landed at Madras in November 1893. She identified herself whole-heartedly for the revival of cultural glory of India. She was distressed to find that whereas the masses slumbered in ignorance, the educated few strove

to become the imitants of western mode of life. She founded Home-Rule Movement in 1914-15 and started a weekly as well as a daily *New India* to make the natives feel and act as true Indians. Though the British rulers kept detesting her activities, yet the prejudices and hostility of reactionary groups in India started disappearing thereafter. She became the President of Indian National Congress in 1917. Persons of the eminence of Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Moti Lal Nehru, and Tej Bahadur Sapru felt proud to work with her. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya acknowledged that the untiring efforts of Dr Besant led to the inception of Banaras Hindu University.

C.F. Andrews, a British missionary, who chose India as his second home, crusaded for the emancipation of Indian indentured labourers in the Pacific islands. He campaigned for the independence of India outside her shores.

Mother Teresa, whose services for the uplift of downtrodden in India, became a legend, was not a citizen of India by birth. At the time of her death she was the most decorated person of the world.

We have already paid a heavy price for this short sighted move in Fiji, where an elected Prime Minister of Indian origin, was deposed through a coup, simply because he did not have Fijian descent. If such expedient electoral slogans are not given up for good, the Fijian misadventure may get repeated in other lands where ethnic Indians are holding top offices.

VIII

On Reviewing a Text

Prof. Hazara Singh

Critical appreciation or evaluation of a text is called its review or appraisal. Analysis of facts presented in a publication, manner of their communication, authenticity of that matter and the contribution it is likely to make to existing knowledge constitute a review. It may be objective or subjective. The former is appreciated, while the latter often gets decried.

A reviewer should possess proficiency in his branch of knowledge. He has a four-fold obligation; to the author, to the editor or publisher who seeks appraisal, to the reader and above all to himself. Gone are the days when the writers resorted to display their scholarship through verbosity or obscurity without caring whether they were communicating their ideas with clarity or not. It was left either to the imagination of reader or to be explored by critics. Such exercises taken by different persons in a subjective manner lead the reader nowhere. An editor may contrive to project his favourite author despite latter's merit and a publisher is normally led by a craze for profit. A reviewer should not fall a prey to such manoeuvres. A reader has the right to know correctly. A reviewer ought not take this obligation lightly,

Just as a judge is enjoined to be impartial, likewise a reviewer is expected to be objective. His liking or disliking for the author to be appraised and lack of sincerity towards the reader may not only create an unhappy situation but harm his credibility too.

In literature, a reviewer will be comprehensive as well as effective, if he is proficient in more than one language. Communication channels have vanquished lingual barriers and replaced narrow considerations emanating from native affinities by broad-based humanism. A writer is expected to communicate with humanity at large and a reviewer is obliged to evaluate that contribution for global audience. Many societies are getting

multilingual and like to read the texts in languages other than their mother tongue. The reviewer is expected to find out important events about writer's life and the influences on him. This helps in assessing what he seeks to state.

A reviewer in the fields of humanities and sciences should have interdisciplinary knowledge otherwise he would appear to be the proverbial frog in a well.

Before reviewing the biography of a political person, it is desirable to find out whether its writer is his admirer, detractor or an objective researcher. The villain for a section may be a hero for another.

A creative writer should not indulge into the grueling task of evaluating the works of his contemporaries. In the long run he would find his exercise unpleasant as well as erosive for his natural talent. L.S. Sisson, a well-known American poet, who got prevailed upon to become a literary critic echoed similar sentiments. He makes a few constructive suggestions in this respect.

Sisson observes that

a reviewer should not evaluate the book written by a friend
or an adversary;
he has not read thoroughly or understood well
and
that which does not belong to his field.

He may not base his review on what is printed in the jacket of a book or stated in its preliminaries i.e. preface, foreword, introduction, etc. Thus, he 'll be either assisting unconsciously selling tricks of the publisher or endorsing unwittingly the views already expressed. He should also not read any previous review of that book because he is likely to be induced either to concur or dissent with the earlier exercises, thus diverting his attention from the writer.

A reviewer should not interpret the views of a writer according to his own leanings. Such an approach deprecates constructive difference of opinion and ends often in an unproductive exercise. If a writer has already been extensively reviewed, one should not

accept to appraise that work unless something new is to be stated.

A reviewer is enjoined to give clear judgement about the substance of a book instead of indulging into verbose jargons or merely summarising its contents.

An editor should not accept a review arranged by the writer himself. He 'll be eroding the credibility of his paper by becoming a party to an underhand attempt for self-projection. Such a writer dwarfs himself too.

An enlightened reader has a reciprocal onus. He should not be influenced by rumours but form his own opinion. So often, governments play destructive role by proscribing a book to appease a bigoted populace or to suppress disagreement with their unpopular policies. Glory of mankind emanates from continual exploratory thinking. A writer, an editor, the reviewers and the avid readers have a collective obligation to preserve that human distinction.

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IX

Attributes of Creative Expression

Prof. Hazara Singh

An urge to acquire knowledge, keenness to assess its worth and the eagerness to add thereto are the elementary attributes of creative expression in literature. Books are not the sole source of knowledge. Experiences in life, bitter or pleasant; reaction to situations, inspiring or frustrating; aptitude to brave adversities in life with grit for finding a way out and, above all, the inclination to share one's aspirations for bettering the lot of fellow beings, constitute a few other factors which supplement knowledge. These observations may not appear to be scholarly, but are based on stark realities of life.

I got my early education in a rural school which did not have library and where the teachers believed in using rod rather than impressing by their teaching skill. An inquisitive pupil was snubbed and a credulous one was patted. Ignorance swayed and the indignities were ungrudgingly accepted as enjoined by the colonial regime and the timeworn beliefs.

I was about seven when my mother passed away in 1930. Within a fortnight thereafter, my father, the village headman, more loyal to the Crown than the British themselves, commanded the dispersal of a demonstration by the village youth raising slogans against foreign rule. My already agonized mind got further distressed for I felt that my father committed a grave wrong which I ought atone for on growing an adult.

I had an instinct to be adjudged as distinct in comparison with my classmates. Hence I opted to answer the question papers in History and Geography in English in preference to Urdu. Textbooks in English in those subjects were not easily available, as such, I had to spend a lot of time to translate the lessons in Urdu into English. That improved my proficiency and diction in English. Despite my brilliant success, my stepmother opposed tooth and

nail my higher education. More than two formative years got wasted. The village priest, on being consulted, foretold that the goddess of learning did not favour my higher education as per lines on my palm.

In September 1940, I chose to leave home with a resolve to discover new avenues. I was determined to prove that fate did not lie in the lines on palm but in the strength of mind. My whole asset in that venture was the belief that defeat did not lie in losing the game but in losing heart.

I reached Amritsar and assisted an earlier teacher of mine, who had shifted to that place, in tuition work. I discovered that I could thus earn to learn. I sought admission to Khalsa College during the next academic session on being assured of very possible concession in fees. There was no looking back thereafter. A musical chair race started between my educational attainments and the participation in freedom struggle. I plunged impulsively into the 'Quit India Movement' in 1942 as per pledge to atone for the unpatriotic act of my father. The scholarship won by me later in the Intermediate Examination (1943) was confiscated. I shifted to Lahore for Master's degree in English. I was arrested for leading the 'Save I.N.A. Campaign'. I got thus an opportunity to witness the cells where the patriots were persecuted and the scaffold on which they were executed. That provided unique material for writing the annals of freedom struggle against colonialism.

The indignities inflicted by the partition of India left an indelible mark on my mind of the degradation to which the human beings could fall and the glory which a few could exhibit during a holocaust. I started writing in verse as well in 1971.

'While I look back at my adulthood days
To assess the gains or lapses on my part
I regret not my humble and belated start
For hope lit those days with cheering rays
.....
.....

Fearless expression is my bliss-giving gain
With that I peel the cant layer after layer
The Divine will endowed me with that skill'.
(*Destination*, 'Lord! Bless Them Too', p. 101)

'Wail of Bangla Girl' was my first poem. Sonnets on martyrs, eulogies on pathfinders for humanity and the verses, projecting man as architect of his own fate, diagnosing the trends that pervert human mind, impressing that salvation of world lies in co-operation and striving to seek human dignity kept gushing out as fonts of knowledge, gleaned from the ups and downs of life. Rewarding reviews thereof not only cheered me but also induced me to reveal the majestic awe of sombre objects as well. This observation is illustrated by relevant quotes from the poems composed during the last four decades.

'Why was I raped, the daughter of same religion?
Why was I ravished, a chaste promising citizen?
.....
Torn of kith and kin, shorn of womanly treasure
The child I do carry is not may fault or pleasure'
(*ibid.*, 'Wail of Bangla Girl', p 54)

convey the distress of every girl; victim of rape, abduction, flesh trade or any oppressive custom.

'You declared that imperialism was a heinous crime
Against man, whatever be his colour, creed or land'
(*ibid.*, Bhagat Singh', p. 22)

'*To Delhi* was the war cry of I.N.A. you raised
When you sought funds, people gave blood as well
The Empire claiming that on it the sun never set
Crumbled thereafter for it was shaken and dazed'
(*ibid.*, 'Subhas Chander Bose : Liberator of East', p. 26)

hold that the freedom struggle of India was not a campaign for national liberation alone, but a broad-based crusade against imperialism.

'Tall man with a big heart, destined to be great
Died for an ideal which altered mankind's fate'
(ibid., 'Abraham Lincoln', p.13)

'An apostle of peace, crusader for goodwill
Though frail in frame, yet strong in mind
Clear about his goal, given to rightful deeds
Softened racial ego with moral strength'
(ibid., 'Gandhi in Africa', p.16)

'The martyr saved America from an ominous split
Not geographical which Civil War firmly nipped
But a cancerous chasm, fostered by racial venom
Posing a dark threat to its vast multi-ethnic fabric'
(ibid., 'Martin Luther King', p.19)

eulogise the selfless sacrifices offered by these pathfinders to liberate mankind from tyranny.

'I am man, master of his fate, captain of his will
Not to reach heaven, but to make heaven, is his goal
.....
I will brooke no more the pinch of race or colour
Through fairness for all 'll work for excellence'
(ibid., 'I Am Man', p.62)

'When custom and law do not suppress rather liberate
The human soul from prejudices, social and political
Then the womanly glory will reflect its latent worth'
(ibid., 'Glory of Woman', p.64)

depict the image of new world which the transformed human beings would create.

'Poverty is the common enemy of our lands
Wars, hot and cold, render us further poor
To help each other, let us extend our hands
No other pledge than this shall be truer'
(ibid., 'To Our Pakistani Brethren', p.58)

'China and India, two close natural neighbors
For mutual benefit may direct all their labours
.....
Both strive to save mankind from degradation
Remnants of imperialism or racial segregation'
(ibid., 'China and India', p.59)

contain the message :

'Tolerance paves the path to universal peace
Adieu to wars offers remedy for the maladies
Inflicted by dislocation, hunger and disease
Branded as dogs of war by votaries of peace'.
(ibid., 'World Peace', p.2)

'Masses be saved from obsolete view of clerics
Women be liberated from their degrading edicts
Centres of terrorism be located and liquidated
Its breeding sources, bigotry and narcotics
Be disbanded before they become pandemic'
(ibid., 'The Darkest Day', p.45)

'If the caution, I hold, is persistently ignored
The destruction to follow is bound to swallow
All that is fleeced with insatiable greed'
(ibid., 'Earth to Man', p.49)

warn against the calamities which fanaticism and the wreckless exploitation of natural resources harbour in their wake.

'If offered again the wildly robust youth
I shall barter it not for my ageing face
My mind is serene, the head thinks clear
Oh! old age, how eagerly I hold you dear'
(ibid., 'My Love', p.100)

compliment the serenity which adorns old age.

‘Nudity does not always deprave man
But dress rates him high or low
Even a preacher in ceremonial robes
My not be as chaste as a naked sage’
(ibid., ‘Nudity’, p.105)

‘Chilling sobs and tearing of hair
Stroking the forehead in despair
A scarf wet with dripping tears
Uphold without any further probe
That the sobbing person in innocent’
(ibid., ‘Tears’, p.111)

reveal the grandeur of self-conquest and restraint even when one is condemned for depravity or appears to be drowned in despair.

‘A pathetic event in childhood
A bolt from the blue in youth
A welcome relief in old age
.....
A festival in company with friends
Touching theme to muse for a poet’
(ibid., ‘Death’, p.119)

depict aptly the agony and glory which death holds in its lap.

‘Such parents with manifold retiral benefits
May not require regular financial support
But miss with a pinch the warm filial love
Longevity, an offshoot of the preventive care
Has deprived old age of its many aspirations
Children returned from schools to empty homes
Ageing parents learn to manage the lone nests
Empty homes and nests are altars of progress’
(ibid., ‘Empty Homes and Nests’, p.104)

depict the forlornness of ageing parents, with their children, well-settled but scattered within and abroad.

‘Dear God by Your Grace enlighten me
As to why while I was still so tender
You chose to recall my mother.
.....
As if the Creator conveyed, thus, to me:
Each clime fascinates in its own way
Drab autumn charms too as green spring
Children are like blooms of lovely hues
Gardener knows best what to sow where
I chose you to blossom at an arid place
Only self-help could teach to grow there’
(ibid., ‘An Orphan’s Outcry’, pp. 98-99)

keep me reminding that I am to remain in the track despite the dusk of evening of life.

‘If all of us resolve to endeavour thus
To improve the world as best we can
Sorrow and suffering would fade out
The world will become heaven itself’
(ibid., ‘Destination’, p.125)

sum up the gains which can be reaped through the co-ordination of creative inclinations of fellow beings.

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X

Swami Ram Tirath

Prof. Hazara Singh

Punjab has been a land of seers, sages and martyrs, who made a rich contribution to the cultural heritage of India, as well as, to its revival and re-evaluation through their lofty precepts and noble practices. One of the latest among the galaxy of these spiritualists was Gosain Tirath Ram (1873-1906), remembered out of spontaneous reverence as Swami Ram Tirath. He was born in the village Muraliwala, district Gujranwala (now in Pakistan) on October 22, 1873. At the time of renunciation he reversed his name from Tirath Ram to Ram Tirath. Faced with almost all the disadvantages which destiny could offer, viz. loss of mother in his infancy, constantly indifferent health, early marriage and economic hardships, he attained academic distinctions, in his own words through :

‘solitude, fruitful use of time, and the will to work’.

In his B.A. examination of the Panjab University, Lahore (1892) he secured the topmost marks in elective subjects but was placed in compartment in the compulsory subject of English, thus, getting deprived not only of brilliant success but also of concomitant benefit in the form of scholarship or medal. This episode puts all educationists to serious thinking. Tirath Ram was not weak in languages. He was well-versed both in Urdu and Persian. Later he developed proficiency in Sanskrit as well. To evaluate the academic progress of the Indian students through their proficiency in English had been an academically unsound approach. It resulted in a huge wastage of the otherwise intelligent youth at the college level. It also hindered the emotional integration between the educated few and the illiterate many.

This failure of Tirath Ram, too deep for tears, did not leave him dejected. Taking it in the spirit, that God willed so, he reappeared in the supplementary examination and obtained more marks than the topper of annual examination, but received no

recognition as that was permissible only for the performance in the annual examination. In 1895 he repeated his performance in M.A. (Mathematics) through a first class first. His Principal, Mr Bell of the Government College, Lahore, offered to get Tirath Ram nominated as a member of the Provincial Civil Service, then a very coveted achievement, but he declined gratefully saying that he got education to share it and not for personal gains. His preference was to become either a teacher or a preacher. He would say :

“Good company, books and prayer

make one the king of three worlds”.

He taught for some time at the Mission High School, Sialkot and later in Forman Christian College, Lahore, his alma mater for undergraduate education. Mathematics is an abstract and, for many, an uninteresting subject. But he made his teaching fascinating by quoting suitably from Punjabi poets, like Bulleh Shah as well as from Indian and Greek myths. He used to refer to the principles of Mathematics while preaching his popular spiritual observation, ‘renounce the *maya* and the world to attain bliss’.

He would define happiness i.e. bliss, as a quotient of ‘necessities of life’ as numerator and ‘desires’ as denominator. If the basic desires aiming at the comfort of body continue to outnumber the necessities of life, happiness decreases proportionately. If the desires could be reduced to the minimum the bliss would mount astronomically, because anything divided by zero leads to infinity.

Gradually he realised that his employment did not leave him sufficient time for spiritual growth and the consequent emancipation. He accepted a part-time assignment at Oriental College after giving up his job at F.C. College. By the end of 1899 he resolved to renounce the world and retired to hills to the north of Hardwar.

According to him there are three ways to be one with God :

Karma Yoga : the path of righteous and fearless action,

Bhakti Yoga : the path of universal love

and

Jnan Yoga : the path of wisdom through contemplation.

He chose the path of love for preaching his message. He toured both the East and the West therefor. A few of his sayings are stated below to illustrate his philosophy spreading love, understanding, righteousness and wisdom.

- i A helping hand is better than lips muttering prayer.
- ii A community progresses not under great men stuffed with small views, but when it is led by modest people inspired by lofty aims.
- iii Sins themselves are a punishment and not a cause for punishment.
- iv Selfishness is the root-cause of all fear.
- v Learning enables us to peep into the past, but wisdom reflects the future.
- vi No topic is as efficacious as happiness.
- vii Understanding of others comes only through loving them.
- viii A mother's life is prayer in itself. Her body is a temple of the Supreme.

Some of his observations on national reconstruction keep serving as beacon-light for us.

- i The most fruitful gift which can be given to a human being is to impart him knowledge. Charity removes his hunger for a day only, but knowledge enables him to earn his living all through his life.
- ii Patriotism does not mean to keep boasting of glories of the past.
- iii *Dharam* enjoins us to subordinate the caste distinctions to national fellow feelings.
- iv Our people need more a spirit of appreciation than the capacity of criticism. They should develop the sentiment of fraternity and love for honest toil.
- v Independent thinking should not continue to be looked upon in India as a heresy. Blind faith in a dead language is an act of sacrilege.

XI

Importance of Youth Festivals

Prof. Hazara Singh

The human personality consists of four aspects; physical, emotional, intellectual and aesthetic. The purpose of education is to develop all these talents, so that the students get physically strong, emotionally steadfast, mentally enlightened and aesthetically refined. Such an all-round development leads to a balanced personality and trains the youth to lead a noble and purposeful life.

The system of education which we inherited from the British had been bookish and ignored the balanced development of youth. The most intelligent student produced under that system was not necessarily the best one. It was realised that education should be made broad-based and the other centres of learning in an institution i.e., playgrounds and hostels should also receive due consideration.

In the playgrounds the students imbibe the valuable lessons of discipline, cooperation and cheerfulness even in the face of failure. Bookish knowledge alone fails to develop such qualities. In the hostels the students learn the art of leading a fruitful group life by dining together and by managing their own affairs. Feelings of shyness, timidity and diffidence which are the by-products of bookish education disappear.

A fourth dimension has been added to the purpose of education through youth festivals. Nature has blessed every person with some talent. If one is not very bright in studies, one may be a good player, a singer, an actor, a dancer, a speaker or the possessor of some such quality as endears one to fellow beings. How dull the human life would have been without music, dance, poetry, drama and the other fine arts.

The purpose of youth festivals is to encourage extra-curricular activities which give an opportunity to the young to show, whatever best, they have in them. Moreover when the young of both sexes mix outside the classroom in a comparatively free atmosphere, they develop better understanding and learn to become responsible citizens.

The bookworms remain deficient in human relations and often render not only their own life miserable but also create unbearable conditions for their co-workers. The youth festivals help in projecting the future leaders for various walks of life.

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XII

Two poems in Urdu by Dr Mohammed Iqbal (translated into English)

The New Temple

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

May I speak out truth, oh! *Brahmin*, if you don't frown
The idols, you worship, are no longer in tune with time
You learnt from them to look down upon fellow beings
The *Mullah* too kicks conflict, calling it a divine deed.

In disgust, I gave up going to places of worship
Relishing neither his fervid zeal nor your legends
You adore the idols as beneficent celestial beings
For me each bit of our motherland is a sort of deity.

Let us discard the veils that breed estrangement
Patch up all differences to befriend the alienated
Human hearts have been feeling listless since long
Why not strive to erect The New Temple on our land.

That sanctum be the holiest among all sacred places
The emblem on its top may flutter higher than zenith
Let us assemble each morn to chant melodious hymns
All preachers be served ale infusing constant amity.

The devotional songs make all serene and steadfast
The redemption of human race lies in mutual goodwill.

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Dr Mohammed Iqbal composed the poem *Naya Shivala* around 1905. Its translated version has a message for the Ajodhya-based masjid-mandir disputants.

XIII

Two poems in Punjabi by Prof. Mohan Singh (Panj Darya) (translated into English)

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

Nanak

The nation paid no heed to what Gautam revealed
Unwilling to appraise its pearl, rare one piece,
Unlucky, indeed, who skipped the truth he preached,
Unaware like the tree how sweet are its own fruit!

He pierced the mystry that veils mundane life
But India clung firmly to its abstract beliefs
Closed minds remained opaque to enlightenment
Though beneficence rained yet soil hardly gained.

Ah! India is a miserable land for the *Shudras*
Social order is bereft of love for fellow beings
The *Brahmin* flaunts still his pedantic conceit
The light shown by Gautam illumines far off lands.

Epochs later the abode of idols glistened indeed
With Abraham's birth Azar's* house shone bright
The call of oneness of God rose from the Punjab
An accomplished person awakened India from stupor.

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God

God is an intricate puzzle
God is an entangled labrinth
While untying the knot thereof
Even a sane being gets sceptic.
Mind not, if snubbed as an athiest
Better to explore than be credulous.

Mother

No, tree as densely shading as mother
Is found anywhere all the world over
God borrowed her shade to make heaven
Plants wither when their roots are cut
But this tree is unique indeed
It wilts when its fruits get plucked.

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* Azar, a sculptor by profession, was the paternal uncle of Hazrat Abraham, a crusader against idol-worship.

XIV

Corruption

(Prof. Hazara Singh)

I am a social cancer condemned as corruption
Just mere needling incites my abrupt eruption
No high-up ever aims to exterminate my roots
As his power and pomp are often my offshoots.

I am not an ugly monster but an alluring nymph
Even saffron saints stumble at my amorous guiles
Bureaucrats fritter as packs of crisp notes glitter
Pot-belly politicians prowl or crave to clasp me.

Speculation is my hobby, black money is my trophy
Underworld is my empire, run by the goons I hire
Reformers may protest, but their faults I detect
Put them to intriguing test till they tend to deflect.

While a leader fasts, his followers are sumptuously fed
Out of state funds, which the penance pledges to defend
Such crusades in fact abet a lot in tightening my grip
How thankful I am to them for trivial political tricks!

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