

ੴ ਸਤਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਕਰਤਾ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਨਿਰਭਉ ਨਿਰਵੈਰੁ ਅਕਾਲ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਅਜੂਨੀ ਸੈਭੰ ਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥
Ik oāṅkār saṭ nām kartā purakh nīrbhaṭo nirvair akāl mūrati ajūnī saibhaṇ gur parsādī.



THE SIKH BULLETIN GURU NANAK AND HIS BANI

May-June 2016

ਜੇਠ-ਹਾੜ ੫੪੮ ਨਾਨਕਸ਼ਾਹੀ

editor@sikhbulletin.com

Volume 18 Number 5&6

Published by: Hardev Singh Shergill, President, Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc;
3524 Rocky Ridge Way, El Dorado Hills, CA 95762, USA Fax (916) 933-5808
Khalsa Tricentennial Foundation of N.A. Inc. is a religious tax-exempt California Corporation.

In This Issue/ਤਤਕਰਾ

The Purpose of Life.....	1
The Decline of Buddhism in India, By Jasbir Singh Baath.....	6
Purpose of Life: by Parminder Singh Parmar, Toronto, Canada.....	10
E-mail to Dr. I. J. Singh.....	13
The Purpose of Life, I. J. Singh.....	13
False lure of the past: Lap Dogs, Watch Dogs & Attack Dogs, by I. J. Singh.....	16
Purpose of Life: Some Quotes.....	18

Technical Associate Amrinder Singh

This issue of the Sikh Bulletin is only in electronic format being sent to those whose email addresses we have. If you or someone you know would like to receive it please provide the email address. You may also pass it along to those on your email list.

The views expressed by the authors are their own. Please send the feedback and inputs to:
editor@sikhbulletin.com

Our Website: www.sikhbulletin.com

EDITORIAL

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE, MY LIFE

Focus of this issue is on 'Purpose of Life' in general, with or without religious connotations, and also one's personal life. I got the inspiration for this during a brief email exchange with Dr. I. J. Singh which included his article on this topic. My article is going to be without religious connotations. There will be no mention in it of words such as God, Divine, Destiny, Soul, Faith or Revealed, other than denying their validity.

Religion became an anathema for me before my teenage years. Although circumstances gave me an opportunity to rejoin Sikhism, my birth religion, but the experience of over a decade to rejoin this faith left me with a bitter taste in the operation and teachings in Gurdwaras and at the highest level of Sikh religious establishment in India but gratification about my childhood decision to reject all religions. This time I found support and comfort for this decision, once again, from the teachings of Guru Nanak.

As Gurbani says, human life is the highest form of life and only life form that possesses *bibek-budhi* (discerning mind); therefore it is the sole responsibility of this life form to protect its and other life forms' environment on this earth.

ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥

ਇਸੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

All other beings (excluding human) are at your service. You are the commander on this Earth. AGGS, M 5, p 374.

For the purpose of life as an individual, in addition to what Gurbani says, my take on **Purpose of Life is highly influenced by Hindu Granths** that I read in my 11th and 12th years while attending grades 5th and 6th.

In my formative years purpose of my life was to educate myself in whatever opportunity the life presented to me and take good care of my health.

Because I was the eldest in what eventually be a family of ten siblings, purpose of my life was also to see that all of them get the same opportunity that was available to me.

Due to circumstances beyond my control my siblings No. 2, 3&4 for reasons of being females could not go to school and I was too young to do anything and sibling No.7, a brother, attended only village primary school because family wanted someone to take care of the family farm and he was too young to think for himself.

When I finished my studies by the age of 23 and started working, Hindu Granths had prescribed married life and raising a family. I had to forego married life for myself because circumstances made my younger siblings my responsibility.

Once those who needed my full time attention got on a path of their choosing I got married and raised a family of my own. At the same time I did not lose sight of my older siblings whom I could not help earlier because of my age. Eventually all nine of them were brought to Canada where I first lived, and married one's and their families to the United States later where I now live. There are five of us settled in Canada and other five in California, within 60 miles of each other.

During my working life I tried to do something for the communities that I lived and worked in by belonging to and working with Lions Service Clubs International for whom I charted six new clubs in six different towns I lived in, in British Columbia, Canada.

After I had successful professional careers and raised and educated my children the time came to do something for the community that I was born into as the Hindu Granths prescribed.

That is when my troubles began. I could not find any institution to work with because only Sikh institution in this country is a Gurdwara that not only I had rejected before my teen age years but also not conducive to do community work.

That is when I was introduced to a Sant Baba who was operating Sikh Schools all over the world, so I was told, where Sikhs lived and taught local country's curriculum in addition to Panjabi and Gurbani. Having been raised in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan where there were no Sant Babas at that time and in Panjab never attending any Gurdwaras I was totally ignorant about these scums of society.

Rest is History already narrated in pages of the Sikh Bulletin. www.sikhbulletin.com

But that experience did convince me that Sikhi being practiced is not what Gurus preached. Hence I ended up operating a Gurdwara that I inherited through Court order in lieu of my funds swindled by the Sant Baba. I gave three years of my life to this scoundrel Sant Baba and nine years to *Sikhi Sudhar*, reformation of Sikhism.

Result was not really a failure but the realization that all the world's religions are based on falsehood and they cannot be reformed.

Kindest thing I can say about religions is that if they were not based on falsehood for the one who started them, the followers have distorted them and **Sikhism is the latest living example of that.**

After the Roseville, California, Gurdwara had to be closed due to stiff opposition of the Sikh Religious Establishment I struggled with what to do with the Sikh Bulletin.

In few years realization came that **Guru Nanak did not start a new religion. He rejected all the man made religions, Hinduism that he was born into and Islam, the religion of the rulers of**

India. What Guru Nanak taught us was how to live life and let live, as human beings, not as Hindus, Muslims, Christians, or any other faith, a universal message for all faiths and no faith.

As Dr. Devinder Singh Chahal said in one of his recent email exchanges on Yahoo groups Learning Zone:

*"My statement **"Religion teaches to believe rather than to think"** has not been taken in a good sense by some members as if free thinking goes against SIKHI. However, Tiwana Ji said that Moderators allow Dr Chahal's free thought but I don't know in what sense. I hope in encouraging sense. I am quoting just the beginning of the "Free Thought" from Wikipedia for further exploring if free thinking is good or bad."*

Free Thought

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Freethought>

Freethought — or **free thought** — is a [philosophical](#) view point which holds that positions regarding [truth](#) should be formed on the basis of logic, reason, and [empiricism](#), rather than [authority](#), tradition, revelation, or other [dogma](#). The cognitive application of free thought is known as "free thinking", and practitioners of free thought are known as "**free thinkers**". The term first came into use in the 17th century to indicate people who inquired into the basis of traditional religious beliefs.

A free thinker is defined as a person who forms his or her own opinions about important subjects (such as religion and politics) instead of accepting what others say. Freethinkers are heavily committed to the use of [scientific inquiry](#), and logic.

Guru Nanak was the greatest Free Thinker of 15th century, two centuries before this term was even coined.

I am a follower of Guru Nanak. I too am a Free Thinker. To propagate that message is the current Purpose of my life.

It is as **mundane** as that because my birth was an accident of nature as Gurbani says father's semen and mother's egg produced a combination of atoms that is me and nature nurtured me. When an affliction hits my being and there is no cure these atoms will disperse back to their original source never to assemble again. As Gurbani says:

ਦੇਹੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਬੋਲੈ ਪਉਣੁ॥
ਬੁਝੁ ਰੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮੂਆ ਹੈ ਕਉਣੁ॥
ਮੂਈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਬਾਦੁ ਅਹੰਕਾਰੁ॥
ਓਹ ਨ ਮੂਆ ਜੋ ਦੇਖਣਹਾਰੁ॥

The body is made of earth (various elements) and it is the air (breath) that keeps it alive. O wise one, then tell me who died because the body and the air it breathed are still here? It is consciousness that died along with disputes caused by egotistical pride, but the One (Creator) who takes care of all does not die.

AGGS, M 1, p. 152.

The meaning of the four pithy verses becomes abundantly clear when we consider that Kartar/Creator is both manifest as **Cosmos** and unmanifest as omnipresent **Hukam**. Death of the body affects only the manifest form of the Creator/Kartar - the matter (elements) that constitutes the body. The matter goes back to earth and is recycled to create new life. The Omnipresent One (Hukam), which operates in all living beings and pervades everywhere is Everlasting.

It is remarkable that **Guru Nanak defines death as the loss of consciousness**, which is similar to the modern understanding of death, medically speaking. Cosmos is the manifest form of the Creator/Kartar, which is continuously changing, but it does not change in its total content.

Guru Arjan elaborates on this issue further. In the AGGS ghumar (potter), bhanda (pot) and miti

(clay, earth) are used metaphorically for the Creator/Kartar, being and the material that makes the being, respectively:

ਪਵਨੈ ਮਹਿ ਪਵਨੁ ਸਮਾਇਆ ॥
 ਜੋਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਰਲਿ ਜਾਇਆ ॥
 ਮਾਟੀ ਮਾਟੀ ਹੋਈ ਏਕ ॥
 ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੇ ਕੀ ਕਵਨ ਟੇਕ ॥
 ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ਰੇ ਕਉਨੁ ਮੂਆ ॥
 ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਮਿਲਿ ਕਰਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰਾ ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਚਲਤੁ ਭਇਆ ॥
 ॥
 ਰਹਾਉ ॥
 ਅਗਲੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਬਰਿ ਨ ਪਾਈ ॥
 ਰੋਵਨਹਾਰੁ ਭਿ ਉਠਿ ਸਿਧਾਈ ॥
 ਭਰਮ ਮੋਹ ਕੇ ਬਾਂਧੇ ਬੰਧ ॥
 ਸੁਪਨੁ ਭਇਆ ਭਖਲਾਏ ਅੰਧ ॥
 ਇਹੁ ਤਉ ਰਚਨੁ ਰਚਿਆ ਕਰਤਾਰਿ ॥
 ਆਵਤ ਜਾਵਤ ਹੁਕਮਿ ਅਪਾਰਿ ॥
 ਨਹ ਕੋ ਮੂਆ ਨ ਮਰਣੈ ਜੋਗੁ ॥
 ਨਹ ਬਿਨਸੈ ਅਬਿਨਾਸੀ ਹੋਗੁ ॥
 ਜੋ ਇਹ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਸੋ ਇਹੁ ਨਾਹਿ ॥
 ਜਾਨਣਹਾਰੇ ਕਉ ਬਲਿ ਜਾਉ ॥
 ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਭਰਮੁ ਚੁਕਾਇਆ ॥
 ਨਾ ਕੋਈ ਮਰੈ ਨ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇਆ ॥

After death air [breath] merges into air, light merges into light (consciousness is lost when Hukam stops operating in the body) and the earth (lifeless body) becomes one with earth. What support is there for the one who cries over this loss? Who has died? O' who has died? O' enlightened beings get-together and ponder over this question. This is indeed a puzzle! Pause.

Without any information about what happened to the dead, the one who was crying also dies. The ignorant fools shackled by doubts and attachments babble about death as if dreaming. This world is the creation of the Creator/Kartar (Hukam). Coming (birth) and going (death) is controlled by the infinite Hukam. No one dies as no one is capable of dying. The Eternal One does

not perish. It is not what people think about "soul." I am awestruck by the one who understands this reality. Says Nanak, the Guru has dispelled my doubts. No one dies or no one comes and goes. AGGS, M 5, p. 885.

Purpose of life is neither 'divinely' inspired nor immutable nor same for everybody. It is end product of one's upbringing, surroundings, circumstances beyond one's control and a whole set of one's own life experiences. Each individual creates his or her own purpose of life just as one creates his or her own hell or heaven, in this life on this earth because there is no second coming.

One purpose of life, for sure, is not to meet the multiple 'Gods' of all the world's religions because those 'Gods' are man made fiction created by all the religions, each one with its own God. But they would all assert theirs is the only authentic religion and only way for humanity to save itself from itself is follow their way.

Global Hindu Heritage Foundation USA
www.Aalayavani.org, championing the global preservation of Hinduism makes a case that Hinduism is the ultimate saviour of humanity.
Which religion does not make a similar claim?

Quoting Sarvepalli Radhakrishnan, first Vice-President and second President of India, implies only Hinduism's connection with spirituality. "Spirituality is perceived in the context of integrating every segment in the universe to bring about unity – nothing is excluded and everything is included that will bring happiness and harmony. Spirituality involves the integration of three dimensions— knowledge base and belief systems, interior life and inner self, and exterior life and institutional activity. These three domains overlap and interact with each other – one dealing with individual experience, search for inner life and also the external world. Spirituality is the experience of connection to something higher level that transcends our ordinary lives. The most prominent feature of spirituality in Indian culture

is the ideal of oneness of all beings in the universe (Radhakrishnan 1929).

Then it takes on two largest religions of the world, Christianity and Islam, and paints them bad.

Islamic brutality on Hindus was unmatched in the annals of human history. It is bigger than the holocaust of Jews by the Nazis and also much bigger than the massacre of the Armenians by the Turks. According to the estimates as many as 60 million Hindus were massacred by Islamic rulers. Actual numbers could be very well up to one billion. Every Islamic ruler made hills of Hindu skulls to outnumber the previous rulers. In Afghanistan, Hindu Kush Mountains has seen more blood and brutality

Quoting Will Durant: “**Will Durant** has argued in his 1935 book “The Story of Civilization: Our Oriental Heritage” that “The Mohammedan conquest of India is probably the bloodiest story in history. The Islamic historians and scholars have recorded with great glee and pride the slaughters of Hindus, forced conversions, abduction of Hindu women and children to slave markets and the destruction of temples carried out by the warriors of Islam during 800 AD to 1700 AD. Millions of Hindus were converted to Islam by sword during this period.” (P: 459).

Quoting **Jurgen Todenhofer**: “The German writer and journalist **Jurgen Todenhofer**, who actually did the unthinkable and spent 10 days in the Islamic State as the Caliph's guest, says that the IS wants to kill "all non-believers and apostates and enslave their women and children. All Shiites, Yazidi, Hindus, atheists and polytheists should be killed . . . Hundreds of millions of people are to be eliminated in the course of this religious cleansing. All moderate Muslims who promote democracy should be killed [as well]. Because, from the IS perspective, they promote human laws over the laws of God.”

Quoting **Thomas Jefferson**, the third President of the United States stated, “Millions of innocent men, women and children, since the introduction of Christianity, have been burnt, tortured, fined, imprisoned; yet we have not advanced one inch towards humanity. What has been the effect of coercion? To make one half of the world fools, and the other half hypocrites. To support error and roguery all over the earth.”

The only solution to this mentality of conquering the humanity by terror and deception to submit to their respective religion is follow the advice of **Toynbee** who suggested all the nations to turn to India and embrace the spiritual path couched in the principle of ahimsa. Patanjali Yoga Sutras enumerate five yamas that are considered the codes of restraints, truthfulness, abstain from immoral acts, think of highest reality and non-acquisitiveness; the five niyamas prescribing the virtues such as purity, contentment, controlling the senses, surrender and self-study.

By practicing one will be elevated to the path of spirituality allowing one know the true nature of human existence and find the truth (atman) and it is relevant to the higher truth (Paramatma). Patanjali says “*Ahimsa pratishtayam tat sannidhau vairatyagaha*” meaning “When a person is established in non-violence, then violence is dropped in his or her presence.” (2:35). Dropping off these violent behaviors is the need of the hour if the humanity has to prevent itself from self-destruction. As Toynbee stated that the only salvation for the humanity is to turn to India for her spiritual legacy that can prevent the holocausts.

What Global Hindu Heritage Foundation USA does not mention is the role Hinduism played in the persecution and **decline of Buddhism in India**, the land of its birth, even as it continued to flourish beyond the frontiers of India.

Buddhism had seen a steady growth from its beginnings in the 6th century BCE to its

endorsement as state religion of the Maurya Empire under Ashoka in the 3rd century BCE. It continued to flourish during the final centuries BCE and the first centuries of the Common Era, and spread even beyond the Indian subcontinent to Central Asia and beyond to China. But a steady decline of Buddhism in India set in during the later Gupta era and under the Pala Empire.

Chinese monks travelling through the region between the 5th and 8th centuries CE, such as Faxian, Xuanzang, Yijing, Huisheng, and Song Yun, began to speak of a decline of the Buddhist sangha, especially in the wake of the White Hun invasion. Decline continued after the fall of the Pala dynasty in the 12th century CE and the gradual Muslim conquest in the Indian subcontinent. But that time, Buddhism had become especially vulnerable to hostile rulers because it lacked strong roots in society as most of its adherents were ascetic communities.

Apart from a small community in eastern Bengal (present-day Bangladesh) in which it had survived from ancient times and Nepal, Buddhism was virtually extinct in India by the end of the 19th century. In recent times Buddhism has seen a revival in India due to the influence of Anagarika Dharmapala, Kripasaran Mahasthavir, B. R. Ambedkar and Tenzin Gyatso, the 14th Dalai Lama.
Hardev Singh Shergill

THE DECLINE OF BUDDHISM IN INDIA

(Jasrajbir Singh Baath)

[From March 2001 Sikh Bulletin]

Buddhism, a religion teaching compassion and inner enlightenment, has enjoyed astronomical success in its history. From its humble beginnings under the *bodhi* tree in India, to its dominance of much of Asia, Buddhism has truly been a universal faith. However, there was an era in its history in which it failed to survive. It was an era that saw the death of Buddhism in its native land of India. The decline was slow, and scholars, as is

discussed later on, still do not agree upon the exact dates of it.

More important than the question of the dates is the question of what caused this great decline. Countless scholars have commented and theorized upon the cause of Buddhism's decline in India, yet none of their ideas have formed the general consensus. Some scholars, such as K.W. Morgan, attribute the decline to the moral decadence of the Buddhists.¹ This explanation is unsatisfactory because, as V.D. Savarkar reminds us, moral decadence was seen throughout India around the period of Buddhism's decline, even in Hindu institutions.² S.R. Goyal believes that "schisms and fierce disputes in the sangha"³ caused the decline, but fierce schisms were present in Buddhism as early as 390 B.C.⁴, well before the time of Buddhism's decline in India. These attempts to attribute the decline of Buddhism to internal factors are unsatisfactory because, contrary to the view of some scholars, the reasons for the decline of Buddhism in India were external rather than internal. These external factors are: assimilation by Hinduism, defamation of Buddhism by Hindu intellectuals, and the Moslem invasions.

However, before the discussion on the causes of the decline is undertaken, a distinct time period for the decline should be established. Scholars have provided a wide range of dates for the beginning of the decline of Buddhism in India. One of the prominent dates given for the beginning of the decline is the 8th century C.E, which is based on the writings of Chinese visitors to India who witnessed Buddhism in a declining stage.⁵

¹ K.W. Morgan, The Path of The Buddha (New York: South Asia Books, 1956), p. 48

² V.D. Savarkar, Hindutva (New Delhi: S.S. Savarkar, 1989), p. 18

³ S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India (Meerut: Kusumamanjari Prakashan, 1984), p. 365

⁴ Lewis M. Hopfe, Religions of the World (New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company, 1994), p.144

⁵ For details, see: Charles Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism Vol. 2, (London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd., 1921) p. 107-114.

Another prominent argument takes the position that the decline began when Buddhism attempted to reach out to the masses and therefore “both the rise and the decline of Buddhism began almost simultaneously”.⁶ This argument would put the beginning of the decline during the time period of King Asoka, in the 3rd century B.C.E. The dates for the end of the decline are even more obscure, as it becomes difficult to build a consensus between scholars for when Buddhism lost influence on Indian society.

For this paper, however, the dates that will be used are: 7th century C.E. for the beginning, and 12th century C.E. for the end of the decline. These dates were chosen because the argument that Buddhism began declining when it reached out to the masses uses the term “decline” to describe departure from the religion’s original practices whereas this paper uses the term “decline” to describe loss of influence on society and a drop in the number of adherents. The choice for 12th century C.E. as the date for the end of the decline is based upon the fact that Buddhism’s famous universities and monasteries were destroyed in this time period, the reasons for which are discussed later in this paper. After the 12th century Buddhism continued to live on in India but with almost no influence on the society and with very few and scattered adherents.⁷

It is now possible to return to the discussion of external factors as the cause of the decline of Buddhism in India. One external factor that led to the decline is the assimilation of Buddhist ideas by Hinduism. In a slow process, Hinduism assimilated many aspects of Buddhism after Buddhism had become a powerful force in India. Prior to Buddhism becoming a major force in India, the Brahmin priests of Hinduism had not felt any threat to their authoritative position in

society. They lived a privileged lifestyle and their duties were “teaching, studying, officiating at sacrifices, giving gifts, and accepting gifts”⁸ while the other three castes performed the grunt work of the society. When Buddhism became widespread, many of the lower caste Hindus converted to Buddhism where they were considered equal to all else. The Brahmins, who control the writings and teachings of Hinduism, began to assimilate many of the popular aspects of Buddhism, in order to regain the masses. This process, as S.R. Goyal says, “removed the distinction between the two faiths”⁹. Since Hinduism was the more tolerant and open religion, this new amalgamated religion came out under the name Hinduism, not Buddhism, as pointed out by L.M. Joshi in saying that by the result of “assimilation of Buddhism, the Vedic Brahmanism reshaped itself into Pauranic Hinduism”¹⁰. Therefore, the masses continued to adhere to the teachings of the Buddha that had attracted them to Buddhism, but now under the name of Hinduism. The religious organization referred to as “Buddhism” thus declined in influence because of this. There are many examples of this process of assimilation, some of which will be discussed now.

The most prominent attempt at the assimilation of Buddhism by Hinduism is the inclusion of the Buddha into the Hindu pantheon. According to Peter Harvey, “by around the eighth century, [Hinduism] recognized [the Buddha] as the ninth incarnation of Vishnu”.¹¹ Other scholars such as S.R. Goyal¹², and Klaus Klostermaier¹³ support

⁸ Code of Manu, as quoted in: Lewis M. Hopfe, Religions of the World (New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company, 1994), p. 90

⁹ S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India. (Meerut, India: Kusumanji Prakashan, 1984), p.369

¹⁰ L.M. Joshi, Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India. (Delhi: Vipassana Research Publications, 1970), p. 329

¹¹ Peter Harvey, An Introduction To Buddhism. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), p.140

¹² S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India. (Meerut, India: Kusumanji Prakashan, 1984), p. 369

¹³ Klaus Klostermaier, “Hindu Views of Buddhism”, in Roy C. Amore (ed.), Developments in Buddhist Thought:

⁶ Pt. Umesh Mishra, as quoted in: S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India (Meerut, India: Kusumanji Prakashan, 1984), p. 367

⁷ For details, see: Charles Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism (London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd., 1921), p. 112-118

this statement. This was an attempt by the Hindu intellectuals to lure followers of the Buddha towards Hinduism. The declaration of the Buddha to be an incarnation of the Hindu God Vishnu made it impossible for Buddhism to declare itself to be unique from Hinduism since its founder was seen only as an incarnation of a Hindu God. This was a devastating blow to Buddhism because as S.R. Goyal articulates, it “cut the ground from under the feet of Buddhism”.¹⁴ The two faiths became difficult to distinguish, but, for reasons already discussed, Hinduism benefited from such an amalgamation, while Buddhism suffered.

Other examples of the assimilation of Buddhism by Hinduism involve changes in Hindu practices based on Buddhist teachings. S.R. Goyal says that “the disapproval of animal sacrifice, the relaxation of caste rules and the organization of a monastic community on the lines of the Buddhist sangha... further helped the merger of Buddhism and Hinduism.”¹⁵ These three things were not seen in Hinduism prior to Buddhism. The Vedas encouraged animal sacrifice, had a strict caste system, and there was no monastic community. The features discussed by S.R. Goyal must, therefore, have been borrowed by Hinduism from Buddhism, which carried all three of these practices in its original doctrine. These are just more examples of ways that Buddhism lost its distinctive features to Hinduism through heavy borrowing from the Hindu side.

A second external factor that caused the decline is the defamation of Buddhists and their religion by Hindu intellectuals. This was a process by which Hindu intellectuals actively popularized myths in Indian society about the inferiority of Buddhism, and the shame associated with being a Buddhist. S.R. Goyal cites examples of this in the writings of

some prominent Brahmins from the time period surrounding Buddhism’s decline. Goyal states:

Yajnavalkya¹⁶ declares that the very sight of a Buddhist monk, even in dreams, is inauspicious. The *Brahannaraadiyapurana* lays it down as a principal sin for a Brahmana to enter the house of a Buddhist even in times of great perils. The drama *Mrchchhakatika* shows that in Ujjain the Buddhist monks were despised and their sight was considered inauspicious.¹⁷

All of these examples depict a recurring theme: influential Hindu intellectuals defaming Buddhists by surrounding it with an aura of untouchability. This theme is seen countless times in the *Puranas*, a collection of writings by various Hindu scholars written over many years. One prominent *Purana*, the *Vishnupurana*, “suggests complete excommunication of the Buddhists: all social contact must be broken, even looking at a heretic necessitates lengthy expiations. The Hindu who dines with a Buddhist goes to hell”.¹⁸ These Hindu writings popularized the belief that Buddhists were an inferior people. The Hindus acted towards them no differently than they did towards the untouchables in their own caste system.

However, these written attempts at the defamation of Buddhism could not have influenced Buddhism’s decline to the extent that they did without another very important factor. This factor was that both the assimilation and defamation of Buddhism occurred simultaneously. An excellent example of this is the manner by which the Buddha was included into the Hindu pantheon. This event was introduced earlier in this paper as an example of the Hindu assimilation of

Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies. (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1979), p.64-65.

¹⁴ S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India. (Meerut, India: Kusumanji Prakashan, 1984), p.369

¹⁵ IBID, p.369

¹⁶ A sage from the great epic, *Mahabharata*

¹⁷ S.R. Goyal, A Religious History of Ancient India. (Meerut, India: Kusumanji Prakashan, 1984), p.368

¹⁸ Klaus Klostermaier, “Hindu Views of Buddhism”, in Roy C. Amore (ed.), Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies. (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1979), p.66

Buddhism. The Buddha was introduced into the Hindu pantheon as a beguiler of demons. According to the Hindu intellectuals, the Buddha's teachings were meant to attract demons and would eventually lead them to their destruction.¹⁹ Therefore the Hindu intellectuals were able to simultaneously assimilate Buddhism while defaming the institution. The Buddha became an incarnation of Vishnu, and the Buddhists became the "demons" that he had lured to destruction. Therefore, with the two external factors described thus far, Hinduism was able to assimilate many of the parts of Buddhism which had originally attracted so many of the masses and then also defame the Buddhist institution through the writings of Hindu intellectuals.

The third external factor, the Moslem invasions, was the final blow to the Buddhist institution. As was discussed earlier, the dates for the decline of Buddhism are 7th century C.E and 12th century C.E for the beginning and end of the decline. The Moslem invasions took place in the 12th century C.E., after the first two external factors, which have been discussed, had already employed their influence. Therefore, when the Moslem invasions took place, Buddhism was already a declining force. Assimilation by Hinduism had caused a decrease in its number of adherents and defamation by Hindu intellectuals had caused it to retreat away from the masses and into monastic communities, while Hinduism began to enjoy the status of being the national religion.

The invading Moslems were hostile towards both Hinduism and Buddhism, but Buddhism was the easier target out of the two. Both Hinduism and Mahayana Buddhism, the popular form of Buddhism at the time, had heavy amounts of image worship in their daily rituals. The Mohammedan's who invaded India from

surrounding lands in the 12th century were iconoclasts who saw merit in the destruction of images and the slaughter of idolaters.²⁰ Therefore, both Hinduism and Buddhism were treated violently by the Moslems. So why did Buddhism die out at this time while Hinduism continued to live on? The reason for this is that since Buddhism had been confined to monastic and educational centers and had retreated from the masses, the destruction of these centers resulted in the demise of Buddhism as an institution. Charles Eliot explains that "Buddhism was concentrated in the great monasteries and when these were destroyed (by the Moslems) there remained nothing outside them capable of withstanding either the violence of the Moslems or the assimilative influence of the Brahmins".²¹ Thus, the Buddhist institution ceased to exist in its native land in any recognizable shape or form.

Therefore, as has been proven in this paper, the cause of the decline of Buddhism in India can be attributed only to external factors. Assimilation by Hinduism created an amalgamated version of the two faiths, which was known under the name "Hinduism" because of the flexible nature of the Hindu faith, and this therefore caused a decline in the number of adherents of the Buddhist institution. Defamation of Buddhists by Hindu intellectuals forced Buddhists to retreat from mainstream society and enter isolated monastic communities. When these monastic centers were destroyed by Moslem invaders in the 12th century, Buddhism as an institution lost all influence on Indian society. The cause of the decline, therefore, cannot be attributed to internal factors as has been suggested by some scholars. Buddhism's death in India was one of the few cases of the religion's failure to survive, and it was external factors that caused this failure.

¹⁹ For Details, see: Klaus Klostermaier, "Hindu Views of Buddhism", in Roy C. Amore (ed.), Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies, (Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1979), p.65

²⁰ For details, see: Charles Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism (London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd., 1921), p.112

²¹ Charles Eliot, Hinduism and Buddhism (London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd., 1921), p.113

Bibliography

- Eliot, Charles. Hinduism and Buddhism Vol. 2. London: Lowe and Brydone Ltd., 1921.
- Goyal, S.R. A Religious History of Ancient India. Meerut, India: Kusumamanjali Prakashan, 1984.
- Harvey, Peter An Introduction To Buddhism. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990.
- Hopfe, Lewis M. Religions of the World. New York: Macmillan College Publishing Company, 1994.
- Joshi, L.M. Studies in the Buddhist Culture of India. Delhi: Vipassana Research Publications, 1970.
- Klostermaier, Klaus, "*Hindu Views of Buddhism*", in Roy C. Amore (ed.), Developments in Buddhist Thought: Canadian Contributions to Buddhist Studies. Waterloo: Canadian Corporation for Studies in Religion, 1979
- Morgan, K.W. The Path of The Buddha. New York: South Asia Books, 1956.
- Savarkar, V.D. Hindutva. New Delhi: S.S. Savarkar, 1989.

[Note: Jasrajbir Singh is son of Dr. Jasbir Singh and Bibi Jugraj Kaur Baath of Saskatoon, Canada. This paper was written by him for his 'World Religions' course in Grade XI. It won him 'Harvey Cooper Memorial 2000' award for standing first in this course. We congratulate the young author on his great accomplishment. This article is timely also, since a similar fate seems to be closing in on Sikhism in India now. Editor]

PURPOSE OF MY LIFE

By
Parminder Singh Parmar
Toronto, Canada

Birth and death are not in our control and life is given to us and we have to complete this journey. Everybody is given a different task, capacity,

environment, society so there can't be a single purpose of life. It is multipurpose and we must learn how to live it in the best way we can under the given facilities.

When our mind is absolutely still, completely empty & calm, it is pure like a clear mirror & capable of reflecting the ineffable, unnamable, essence of the Creator. There being only one creator.

Let us stick to only one name of the unnamable spirit. We can't name the unnamable but for reference purpose only, let that name be Creator that Guru Nanak called Karta Purakh.

Creator/Kartar is eternal, infinite, complete, omnipresent, formless mystery, no one can explain. It is self-existent unnamable Spirit & Being before time, at present and for the future. We have heard uncountable names of It. All those names are given by humans.

To be a good being we must be truthful, calm, humble, loving, compassionate, honest, content, sincere, tolerant & willing to sacrifice for the love & welfare of Its creation.

As long as we are selfish and not willing to love and share with Its creation, we can't be with the Creator. Being perfectly pure & complete one must be able to accept the existence of impure & incomplete. One should be able to serve without claim, teach without speaking and convince others without thwarting. Let others live without monopolizing, let them act without exploiting. At the end we should not claim the credit of doing anything because it brings ego in our mind and which is the root cause of many problems in human life. To be with Creator one has to pass all the credit to the Creator.

Universe is concentration, expansion, exploration of things without interfering in the process of our daily life. Universe does not experience birth & death but all things in it experience birth & death. It gives the feeling of abundance without filling it

up. It is a feeling of peace, simple, modest & amicable. It changes continuously but gives the feeling of sameness. It is the same process as cells in our body grow and die without interfering in our daily life.

Self-improvement is good but improvement of society is better act. We must know second cannot happen without having the first. Main problem in the society is that most of us concentrate and motivate our children for self-improvement without putting emphasize to society. We don't teach them the world is one family of the Creator.

Energy and wisdom is a mysterious mother of all existence. Sometimes I feel that unnamable (Creator) is energy + wisdom filled with truth, love, service, and action. Then I feel guilty of defining the infinite and naming the unnamable. To me Its name, Creator/Kartar, is only for reference and is more acceptable.

A wheel looks to be made of visible spokes but it turns due to central axis of the hub. Vessels are made of clay but its hollow space is most useful. House is made of walls and roof but its hollow space, doors and windows are essential. Without them it won't be called house.

Same way imperceptibles which produce results are important in our lives. We don't live only with perceptible body but imperceptible thoughts, feelings and interests have more dominating influence on our life. We should learn to improve our thoughts, beliefs and interests as we take care of our body.

At birth we are dependent and we do not have wisdom, language or religion. But we have a small body to develop and five senses to acquire knowledge, languages, energy and awareness etc. Creator created this universe/nature/world to provide us air, water, food, wisdom and our needs. We have to experience a life journey in it. We all are part and parcel of this universe/world. Loving, serving and beautifying it are the only way, to

make our life happier, better, free from evils & problems. This is the only way to become spiritual. All wise men said, "Service and love for society keeps us in higher spirit, we must seek and pray for the welfare of all." According to them practicing religion is knowing and obeying the universal laws and performing good deeds in all situations.

Life journey is not long enough to waste any moments being unhappy or repenting. We are human beings, sometimes mistakes can happen. We must move forward with positive mental attitude and determination not to repeat those mistakes. That is normal path of life journey for us. Love the people around you then you will get love in return at least from 90 % of them.

We should never undervalue our capabilities. We are like a satellite that can receive many stations. It depends upon what we pay attention to. Our mindset works like a frequency. We perceive, judge and react according to our mind set. Through patience we can learn to control our reception and reaction. We can learn to understand the events at deeper level and receive guidance and answers to our questions. We need commitment which can make our body and mind stronger. Abilities do exist within us we have to be aware of self and share these abilities with others. We know one cannot do everything in this short period of time. That is where loving, sharing, acting, serving become continuous and necessary process for happy & successful life.

Favor is source of worry, because it can be lost. Greatness is source of fear, because it can be ruined. It arises from personal ambitions. Great are those who care for the society around them. This teaches us that we should not get attached to our possessions & positions but to our duties and principles.

We cannot see the Creator with eyes, nor can hear with ears, nor can smell, nor can feel with touch. But our conscience can see, hear & feel It. That is

why we need to awaken our conscience. All philosophies are an ocean of knowledge to awaken our conscience. Awakening cannot be done by performing rituals, reading and praying the way we are doing in our so called religious places. It has to be studied in class rooms, in Family, in group discussions the way we do our projects. It should be applied in our daily life the way we are applying the education of law, engineering and medical etc.

Greatest human beings are subtle, abstract and profound; no words can fully express them. They are prudent, reserved, indifferent, unsophisticated and live among common people with humbleness and simplicity. They are seekers of purity and peace.

Purity can be found in this world through interior calmness without being affected by the impurity which causes the trouble in the world. Peace is found in the movement of the world, by one who knows how to take part in that movement without interfering. Creator's only concern is better life for all without any personal desire.

By delivering good words but not delivering the same with action one can lose trust. All our troubles are because it is happening everywhere, in Gurudwaras, Temples, Churches, Masjids, schools, universities, governments through our preachers, teachers and politicians. They don't deliver what they preach, teach and promise. Problem of all preachers, teachers, political parties & politicians is that they have artificial principles which degenerate into politics. We know these artificial principles cannot lead us to better society still we try to govern all our institutions with them.

For happier life we should try to be simple, natural and having fewest possible personal desires and expectations. If one wants to learn anything he must learn with clear mind not with biased or troubled mind. We have limited time, energy wisdom & resources. We should never waste them on negativity. Let us try to stop talking about good

and evil. We should know that critics will never agree.

Try to be natural without any talent. Try to concentrate on what we want to do. Try to follow the route of truth wisdom love & good deeds. Formula of happiness is talk little & act without effort.

A gusty wind does not stay long, torrential rain does not happen all the time. They are created by the forced effort of Nature. Nature is the most powerful than any force of humanity. If forced effort of nature cannot sustain, how can our forced effort sustain. By imposing, pushing, boasting and showing off, we lose our credibility and cease to move forward in our life. Acting selfish & just for show off is distasteful and superfluous. This egoistic behavior finally proves to be pain in the stomach or tumor in the brain.

A good speaker offends no one. A good reckoner needs no tally. An expert locksmith can make a lock that no one can open. An expert on knots can make them so no one can untie them.

Each being exists through a prolongation of Creator in self. These prolongations are not detached from Creator. It does not therefore diminish by imparting itself. That prolongation of Creator in each being is his/her conscious. Creator is the universal consciousness in all the existence.

Knowing others is wisdom, but knowing one-self is superior wisdom. Imposing Will on others is strength, but imposing it on self is superior strength.

Our passion is the most difficult to control. Our nature is hidden & profound. Being satisfied is true wealth. It can take us to contentment.

Being master of habits and interests is the building stone of our personality. Life and death are two forms of life. Death is survival of one's conscious through others. We know conscious of prophets is living in millions of people.

Creator extends itself in all directions to do the job through all beings. When work is accomplished it does not attribute it to self. It nourishes all beings with kindness without imposing itself on them as a master. It installs feeling of freewill in us. One who develops & practices godly qualities becomes humble and acquires thereby true greatness.

Natural law is maximum expansion followed by the contraction and vice versa. Weakness follows the strength, decadence follows the prosperity. Being contented and working toward betterment is natural route of happy life. Creator/Kartar is always non-acting, yet does everything without seeming to participate. I wish I could live that way and that is the purpose of my life.

From: Hardev Singh Shergill

[<mailto:editor@sikhbulletin.com>]

Sent: Saturday, April 09, 2016 7:49 PM

To: IJ Singh (ijsingh99@gmail.com)

Subject: FW: Roseville : AKJ protest with placards "Dhunda & Dhumma HAI HAI"

Inderjit Singh Ji: Read both articles and am wiser than before. Health issues haunt the old age; we are all getting there. I have had my share.

My following response to Gurmit Singh of Australia relates to your first topic about the disturbance caused at Fairfield and Roseville, California Gurdwaras by Taksalias and AKJ followers denying missionary Dhunda his right to speak and sangat's right to listen. In the past when I was engaged in 'Sikhi Sudhar' up to my neck this article would have been pertinent to the task but now I am an outsider looking in.

Your second article is also very enlightening and will appear in a future issue of the Sikh Bulletin.

THE PURPOSE OF LIFE

I.J. Singh

I am minimally computer savvy, yet better than 55 e-mails have filled my inbox, each indulging in some micro-fine hair splitting of "The Purpose of Life." Some are book length papers on the question. And this entire bagful has inundated my inbox in less than two weeks.

These are Sikh sites so they largely dissect the idea from the perspective of Sikhi. But sometimes they lean on comparisons with other religious systems that surround us.

Mine is a brief take today that should equally engage people who are religious-spiritual or plainly spiritual minus any religious label. And even apply to those who may be agnostics or atheists.

Why frame my view by deliberately leaving out religion?

Although religions mostly parse life exactly for this purpose – the paradox of the goal or purpose of existence, it is undeniably true that a large segment of humanity is non-religious or is at the ever shifting borderline between faith and reason.

And if there is a purpose that's common to all humanity then it should be able to stand without necessarily leaning on one or many religious systems of mankind.

If the purpose of life is to meet God and merge in him at death then the sooner one dies the faster will be the union and that seems to dismiss any overarching purpose to life.

Similar reasoning prevails if at the end of life there is a heaven or hell waiting for us, as many religious systems insist. They seem like different versions of "Waiting for Godot" and perhaps equally without hope. I would think that the "Day of Reckoning" doesn't have to wait for the uncertain and unwelcome time of death, but

instead it occurs every moment of every day.

The models of heaven and hell that occupy most religions are universally and uniformly unrealistic but remain a tribute to human imagination and its yearnings. But to be living for heavenly (decidedly unearthly) reward seems childishly unrealistic regardless of what one is hoping for – a heavenly court with a seat near a prophet, or next to an imaginary physical form of the Creator, enjoying an endless company of beautiful sirens (for men) and what (hunks?) for women. Then, of course, there is the hell for non-believers or those of the “wrong” faith, perhaps like Dante’s Inferno. I recommend Mark Twain’s “Letters from the Earth” as a wonderfully creative but instructive riposte.

Sohan Singh, a Britain-based Sikh, has written a nice little book titled “The Real Purpose of Life” detailing the Sikh perspective on the matter. Guru Granth Sahib, instead of promoting a largely imaginative model of life after death, talks bravely of *Jeevan Mukh*, a concept that speaks of liberation while living a life (*Aap pachhane manu nirmal hoe; Jeevan mukh har pavae soi*, p 161) that is well and productively lived – a life attuned to a perspective that is bigger than the self (*Aap gavaaye seva karay ta kitch paaye maan*, p 474). And that beckons an unmatched purpose of life

And then I think of the variety of systems – religious as well as secular non-religious ways of life -- that humans have evolved over eons. A quick survey will convince us of a commonality of core beliefs and practices that transcend what we commonly encounter -- stark differences between the many religious models. The differences among them are raving mad is how I would put it.

If religions have given us a purpose larger than life they also have, as their critics assert, willed us the Pandora’s Box of war, hatred, pestilence, destruction and so on, in an endless list.

And then there are the non-religious models of human development. Some stem from politico-economic necessities, others flow from psychological underpinnings of human behavior – ego, anger, envy, lust, greed and their cousins, but also those that define their kissing cousins on the other side of the coin – love, kindness, charity, loyalty and their ilk.

They, like religions, give us hope and sometimes the opportunities to dream big but they too, carry their boxful of troubles with them.

There is an ongoing discussion on the purpose of life on Gurmat Learning Zone (GLZ) that is perhaps destined never to end but it will surely take a breather.

I want to submit to you a model that both the religious-spiritual minded and the non-religious could equally embrace without feeling diminished or left out.

My perspective here starts with the obviously self-evident fact that ***at birth, we inherit the world as it is -- the good, bad and the ugly. This has always been true as it will always be.***

True that technology was not as advanced millennia ago or even 500 or 100 years ago as it is today but the wheel had been invented, along with many other things that made life remarkably richer. The car, computer and the telephone did not exist. Today’s generation has much more complexity to its life along the instruments of convenience that were not available then. And the next generation would do even better in such matters. Our inheritance includes not just the technology but also the cuisine, music and history etc that make a culture. This is self-evident.

The point, however, is that at birth we are on a certain rung on the ladder of achievement and progress because we are at a certain point on the timeline of human existence. Where exactly? It depends on the education, resources, opportunities and the personal talents as well as our cultural context and constraints. This then defines our

moment. At birth we inherit a full bucket.

So, look at the rung of the ladder of existence that we are on at birth or at any given time of our life. Now, that is a debt that we are born with. ***How do we pay back this debt that we inherited? How then to treat what makes life possible, our Earth Mother, known to us by her many monikers – Terra Mater, Tellus, Gaia, Panchamama, Prithvi, Dharti – the Mother of a myriad names. Her singular voice rumbles through our endless variety. There is only one way to nurture this mother -- leave the world a bit better -- even an iota of progress matters.***

This then becomes the purpose of life, simplified.

But what exactly do we mean by leaving the world a bit better? How will we define progress? I leave the details to my readers at this time; it is however, something that should be a primary goal of education, whether religious or secular. |

The goal of human societies -- religious or secular -- remains unchanged. Both recognize that the puny human alone is too slow and weak to escape or manage the existential threats that threaten him. Safety and progress demand the creation of coalitions into families, *sangats*, congregations, religions and collectives, clans, tribes, and progressively larger groupings, even nations.

The collectives make it possible for us to survive and thrive. They enable us to bend nature and its forces to our will and needs. Ergo, our desires have to be progressive and goal oriented.

The traditions that morph into religious codes and laws of society become the glue that binds a people. In time, such traditions become sacred, and then good people will live and die for them. That is what social scientists tell us. There is strength and unmatched collective power in a community that transcends individual initiative and achievement. That's why *sangat* is supreme.

Fair warning: sometimes the glue sets and hardens to the consistency of crazy glue and then rather than binding people it imprisons and chains them.

Here I have focused on the common goals of humanity regardless of which religion, if any, or culture we follow or which language or definition of God claims our fealty. Then why do the religions differ so vehemently, even violently, in their assumptions and processes?

This baffled me until I looked at the trade that I have plied all my life. Look at education and how we impart it. The fundamentals of mathematics or anatomy (I teach anatomy) do not change at all from country to country or from one school to another. But often different school systems differ in how they teach and where they place their emphasis. What shapes the teaching is the language, cultural context and economy, even socio-political realities. Yet the student is expected to master largely the same material and put it to similar use in life.

Let different schools (of thought) compete as they do even in religions but we need to recognize the common ground which makes life possible, even magical.

Fragment of an old poem from my school days comes to mind. It reminds us that:

*Stone walls do not a prison make,
Nor iron bars a cage.*

Richard Lovelace (*In* To Althea from Prison)

I absolutely do not mean to split the purpose of life from the fundamentals of Sikh core values. Guru Granth Sahib, the scripture of the Sikhs, pointedly challenges us in a manner that applies to all -- those of any religious persuasion or none. It says:

Eh sareera merya iss jugg meh aye ke kya tudh karam kamayya (p 922). In other words, this challenging line forthrightly asks us **what**

footprints we would leave in the sands of time.

And the Guru Granth further tells us (*"Ghaal khaaye kitch hatho deh; Nanak raah pahtchanay seh"*, p 1245): **From an honest living share your rewards; in that, says Nanak, is found the true path of life.**

Sikhi fully embraces the progressive meaning of this teaching with a life inseparably connected to the One Creator of all creation.

That to me speaks timelessly of the primary goal of life.

ijsingh99@gmail.com October 10, 2015

FALSE LURE OF THE PAST: Lap Dogs, Watch Dogs & Attack Dogs?

I could just as well have dubbed this column "My Trump Moment."

Donald Trump seems to be trumping all and sundry rivals, on his drunken sailor's merry dance, to the prize at the end of the rainbow. He has triumphed handsomely over the past six months, ever since the Republican Party launched its campaign to identify its presidential nominee. His demise was predicted at every turn of the primary fight by his own party leaders but he emerged stronger every time. Many party stalwarts are now in a major dilemma: how to deny Trump his opportunity, his day in the sun.

The party elites don't want Trump to be around but the base obviously loves him, regardless of his teeny bopper's angst towards the world he wants to lead. Such rupture and factionalism is almost unique in political history with one notable exception; I can never forget the 1968 Democratic convention which was pure shambles. I never realized until then that responsible people could be so irresponsible. This year it is the Republican's turn.

The question that remains in the realm of guess work by the political talking heads and pundits is how and why such an abyss opened between the two defining wings of the party – its base and its elite leadership. Can the rift be healed and spanned in time for the 2016 elections? If not, will it damn the Republican Party to a historic disaster, never before seen or understood very well?

This is a political reality show but digging further in it is not my goal today. Remember that Donald Trump rues a changing world and what he sees as a loss of prestige and muscular power of this nation compared to the rest of world. And many ordinary Americans feel this loss of American privilege at a gut level.

I want to mine this for some lessons for our gurdwaras. What I am going to describe is not unusual and is not so dissimilar from the Republican Party's mess today.

A friend of mine is involved in a Midwestern gurdwara that is going through the usual yearly conniptions on managerial structure.

A quick summary:

The community at and around this gurdwara is quite expectedly bifurcated. There are those who came around a generation ago; they are reasonably integrated in the larger (non-Sikh) population around them, and are financially comfortable. This generation founded the gurdwara years ago and has managed it ever since.

But now there are oodles of new immigrants, usually from rural village antecedents, still fighting for a place in this society. There is an expectedly wide gulf between the worldviews of the two components of our community. They do not trust each other at all. How do we close that distance is the question.

In my view there are two intimately connected inter-twined themes working together that define

the problem but can also provide us a possible path to resolution. Keep in mind that I am only outlining the two models here. The devil is in the details but can be tamed:

I Given that the community is polarized isn't it obvious that a successful administration would need not the ouster of a minority so as to render it voiceless, but instead a collaborative structure of management. Look at the world around us. There are many successful examples in history of unity or coalition governments stitched together from many minorities. The programs and policies then reflect the common ground that exists in the community, not the triumph of one side over the other. Obviously both sides will be somewhat disappointed because a negotiated compromise, to hardheads, reflects weakness and failure, simply because it indicates accommodation to each other.

The alternative would be perpetual civil war, suppression of a minority or partition of a country. In coalition or unity management no party to the dispute gets its way completely. Yet, the process promises another day when change is possible.

As an example, I submit that in many gurdwaras a silent minority shows little interest in managing a gurdwara but serves methodically in preparing and serving the weekly meal (*langar*). I would urge that they not be ignored or their contribution diminished. They may not be seeking headlines but without their weekly service the gurdwara would likely be quickly abandoned by the sangat.

Running to the judicial system means a horrendous expense without the guarantee of peace and reconciliation. To me this step indicates that we lack the sense or a system for reconciling our differences and need a monkey in the middle.

II. In the past, yearly elections produced the management team. But as you know gurdwara elections all over the world are noted not for their transparency but for their opacity. Electoral rolls of voters are famous for their incomplete data.

Trust becomes the casualty. Procedural shenanigans guarantee that the same small slate triumphs and reappears every year. Leaders have to be cajoled, begged and flattered to enter the management but, once in, they are so reluctant to walk away that they have to be kicked out. It is the rare management committee that practices transparency or participatory self-governance.

Nothing new so far! It is also obvious that in an election good people have to create opposition parties and programs. One has to diminish the competitor (opponent) with promises that we can do better. Voting gets determined by social connections, class, caste and/or profession etc – minor or irrelevant criteria. Bitterness results; community gets divided and fissures rarely heal. Partially the blame rests with the electoral model and dysfunctional system of India that immigrants are ingrained to practice and have imported here. And partially it is hubris of the financially comfortable vis-a-vis the less established lesser educated new arrivals; reminds me a bit of the maelstrom surrounding the current crop of Republican presidential hopefuls and their take on immigration reform.

Some of our leaders who claim perpetual, if not divine, Guru mandated authority to manage gurdwaras falsely liken their behavior to faithful dogs that guard the sanctity of gurdwaras and of Sikhi. I wonder what kind of dogs they are: lap dogs watch dogs or attack dogs. **Keep in mind that a dog is unfailingly loyal to its master but not to its own species.** I hope to further pick up this tempting theme another day.

I would submit that members of a gurdwara are like citizens of a country. At least in this country, the law requires that citizens serve on Jury duty as and when called to do so. Everyone must serve when picked by random selection. And there has to be an overarching cause for excuse from such duty. Given a reasonable pool of available citizens one may need to serve only once in several years. A very sane model, I believe.

But that would rob our management class (oligarchs) of their unique glory and pretense as Guru-anointed leaders. So they cavil but imaginatively. What if some incompetent people or crooks get selected, they ask.

My response is blunt: Look at gurdwara management across the world. Surely we have had both incompetents and scoundrels in the past and yet we have survived. If we limit, as we do now, management to few hand-chosen oligarchs, the results are horrendous. We hardly come across a gurdwara where peace and progress reign and who have not been dragged to courts at tremendous cost and little or no benefit to the community.

Earlier I have written at length about such a jury model where every citizen owes some time and energy to the system that nurtures him/her. It also becomes a teaching moment for those who serve, even though briefly.

Those who participate develop a sense of intimacy, humility and ownership in the institution that they serve. That's been my personal experience of the legal jury system in this country. But I confess that it has not yet caught on with the gurdwara crowd.

For too many of us who came from elsewhere, the past beckons more intensely as we grow older and the longer we stay away from our (Indian?) roots. Unless and until we bring a radical change to our thinking our gurdwaras will continue to increase exponentially by fission, not by fusion; they will **not create a community but splinter it**. Such growth is not a matter of joy; it is toxic.

All I can say is that once these leaders sneak in they no longer let any grass grow under their feet. Their roots are quickly replaced by the Astroturf of pomp and arbitrary power.

I guess power corrupts and absolute power corrupts absolutely, no matter how small the arena and how low the stakes.

ijsingh99@gmail.com

April 4, 2016

PURPOSE OF LIFE Some Quotes

"What does the Bible say about how to find purpose in life?"

The Bible is very clear as to what our purpose in life should be. Men in both the Old and New Testaments sought for and discovered life's purpose. Solomon, the wisest man who ever lived, discovered the futility of life when it is lived only for this world. He gives these concluding remarks in the book of Ecclesiastes: "Here is the conclusion of the matter: Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil" ([Ecclesiastes 12:13-14](#)). Solomon says that life is all about honoring God with our thoughts and lives and thus keeping His commandments, for one day we will stand before Him in judgment. Part of our purpose in life is to fear God and obey Him.

Another part of our purpose is to see life on this earth in perspective. Unlike those whose focus is on this life, King David looked for His satisfaction in the time to come. He said, "And I—in righteousness I will see your face; when I awake, I will be satisfied with seeing your likeness" ([Psalm 17:15](#)). To David, full satisfaction would come on the day when he awoke (in the next life) both beholding God's face (fellowship with Him) and being like Him ([1 John 3:2](#)).

In [Psalm 73](#), Asaph talks about how he was tempted to envy the wicked who seemed to have no cares and built their fortunes upon the backs of those they took advantage of, but then he

considered their ultimate end. In contrast to what they sought after, he states in verse 25 what mattered to him: "Whom have I in heaven but you? And earth has nothing I desire besides you" (verse 25). To Asaph, a relationship with God mattered above all else in life. Without that relationship, life has no real purpose.

The apostle Paul talked about all he had achieved religiously before being confronted by the risen Christ, and he concluded that all of it was like a pile of manure compared to the excellence of knowing Christ Jesus. In [Philippians 3:9-10](#), Paul says that he wants nothing more than to know Christ and "be found in Him," to have His righteousness and to live by faith in Him, even if it meant suffering and dying. Paul's purpose was knowing Christ, having a righteousness obtained through faith in Him, and living in fellowship with Him, even when that brought on suffering ([2 Timothy 3:12](#)). Ultimately, he looked for the time when he would be a part of the "resurrection from the dead."

Our purpose in life, as God originally created man, is 1) glorify God and enjoy fellowship with Him, 2) have good relationships with others, 3) work, and 4) have dominion over the earth. But with man's fall into sin, fellowship with God is broken, relationships with others are strained, work seems to always be frustrating, and man struggles to maintain any semblance of dominion over nature. Only by restoring fellowship with God, through faith in Jesus Christ, can purpose in life be rediscovered.

The purpose of man is to glorify God and enjoy Him forever. We glorify God by fearing and obeying Him, keeping our eyes on our future home in heaven, and knowing Him intimately. We enjoy God by following His purpose for our lives, which enables us to experience true and lasting joy—the abundant life that He desires for us.

The purpose of life is to live it, to taste experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and without

fear for newer and richer experience." — **Eleanor Roosevelt**

"The purpose of life is not to be happy. It is to be useful, to be honorable, to be compassionate, to have it make some difference that you have lived and lived well." **Ralph Waldo Emerson**

"The mystery of human existence lies not in just staying alive, but in finding something to live for." **Fyodor Dostoyevsky, The Brothers Karamazov**

"Doubt as sin. — Christianity has done its utmost to close the circle and declared even doubt to be sin. One is supposed to be cast into belief without reason, by a miracle, and from then on to swim in it as in the brightest and least ambiguous of elements: even a glance towards land, even the thought that one perhaps exists for something else as well as swimming, even the slightest impulse of our amphibious nature — is sin! And notice that all this means that the foundation of belief and all reflection on its origin is likewise excluded as sinful. What is wanted are blindness and intoxication and an eternal song over the waves in which reason has drowned."

Friedrich Nietzsche, Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality

"The human race is a monotonous affair. Most people spend the greatest part of their time working in order to live, and what little freedom remains so fills them with fear that they seek out any and every means to be rid of it."

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, The Sorrows of Young Werther

"It does not matter how long you are spending on the earth, how much money you have gathered or how much attention you have received. It is the amount of positive vibration you have radiated in life that matters,"

Amit Ray, Meditation: Insights and Inspirations

"You were put on this earth to achieve your

greatest self, to live out your purpose, and to do it courageously.”

Steve Maraboli, Life, the Truth, and Being Free

“All religions, arts and sciences are branches of the same tree. All these aspirations are directed toward ennobling man's life, lifting it from the sphere of mere physical existence and leading the individual towards freedom.”[*Moral Decay* (first published 1937)]”

Albert Einstein, Out of My Later Years: The Scientist, Philosopher, and Man Portrayed Through His Own Words

“The purpose of life is to contribute in some way to making things better.”

Robert F. Kennedy

“Human beings are so destructive. I sometimes think we're a kind of plague, that will scrub the earth clean. We destroy things so well that I sometimes think, maybe that's our function. Maybe every few eons, some animal comes along that kills off the rest of the world, clears the decks, and lets evolution proceed to its next phase.”

Michael Crichton, The Lost World

“The purpose of life is a life of purpose.”

Robert Bryne

“You were ordered to obey to Allah, and you were created to perform good deeds.”

Hazrat Ali Ibn Abu-Talib A.S

“Things don't have purposes, as if the universe were a machine, where every part has a useful function. What's the function of a galaxy? I don't know if our life has a purpose and I don't see that it matters. What does matter is that we're a part. Like a thread in a cloth or a grass-blade in a field. It is and we are. What we do is like wind blowing on the grass.”

Ursula K. Le Guin, The Lathe of Heaven

“Things don't have purposes, as if the universe were a machine, where every part has a useful function. What's the function of a galaxy? I don't know if our life has a purpose and I don't see that

it matters. What does matter is that we're a part. Like a thread in a cloth or a grass-blade in a field. It is and we are. What we do is like wind blowing on the grass.”

Ursula K. Le Guin, The Lathe of Heaven

“To think what is true, to sense what is beautiful and to want what is good, hereby the spirit finds purpose of a life in reason.”

Johann Gottfried Herder

“It was the ghost of rationality itself ... This is the ghost of normal everyday assumptions which declares that the ultimate purpose of life, which is to keep alive, is impossible, but that this is the ultimate purpose of life anyway, so that great minds struggle to cure diseases so that people may live longer, but only madmen ask why. One lives longer in order that he may live longer. There is no other purpose. That is what the ghost says.”

Robert M. Pirsig, Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance: An Inquiry Into Values

“The purpose of life is to live, learn, and love.”

Christine Rice

“We have many goals, but only one ultimate purpose of life. That purpose is to be happy.”

Debasish Mridha

“To experience the unknown, developing understanding and to care, that is our purpose.”

Maurice Randall

“I feel the reason we are all here, our purpose of being, is to help others find their little piece of happiness and heaven right here on earth.”

Ken Poirot, Mentor Me: GA=T+E—A Formula to Fulfill Your Greatest Achievement

“Nothing in the Universe exists solely for itself. You are not alive just for the sake of being alive. The purpose of your life is much bigger than your life so if all you think about is your life, then you're missing out on the purpose for your life.”

Damilola Oluwatoyinbo

“The purpose of life is to discover your gift. The work of life is to develop it. The meaning of life is to give your gift away.” **David Viscott**

“You do the right thing even if it makes you feel bad. The purpose of life is not to be happy but to be worthy of happiness.” **Tracy Kidder**

“The meaning of life is to adventurously discover our gift. The purpose of life is joyfully share our gift with the world.” **Robert John Cook**



ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ?

-: ਸੰਪਾਦਕ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਨਿਊਜ਼

ਹੈਅਅਮ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਨੇ ਆ ਕੀ ਕਹਿ ਦਿੱਤਾ "ਅਕਲੀ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸੇਵੀਐ ..." ?

ਪਰ ਹੇ ਪਾਤਸ਼ਾਹਿ, ਤੇਰੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਅਖਵਾਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਕਲ ਵਰਤਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਨੂੰ ਗਾਹਲਾਂ ਨਾਲ ਨਿਵਾਜਦੇ ਨੇ, ਏਜੰਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬੰਦਾ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ... ਫਿਰ ਅਕਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਵਰਤੀਏ ? ਤੇਰੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਫੁਰਮਾਨ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਸਿੱਖ, ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਦੁਆਰੇ 'ਤੇ ਆਉਣ ਲੱਗਿਆਂ ਬਾਹਰ ਹੀ ਛੱਡ ਦਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ !!!

ਤੇਰੀ ਕੋਈ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਮੰਨਣ ਨੂੰ ਤਿਆਰ ਨਹੀਂ...

- ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਆਉਣ ਤੋਂ ਪਹਿਲਾਂ ਹੀ ਪੈਰ ਧੋਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਪਾਣੀ ਨੂੰ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਸਮਝ ਕੇ ਪੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਨੇ, ਫਿਰ ਜੇ ਤੂੰ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਬਾਰੇ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ 'ਚ ਕਿਹਾ ਹੈ, ਉਹ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਕਿਵੇਂ?

ਮ:1 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਾਣੀਆ ॥ ਤੇਰਿਆ ਭਗਤਾ ਰਿਦੈ ਸਮਾਈਆ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 72, ਸਤਰ 10

ਮ:3 ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਤੁ ਪੀਤੈ ਤਿਖ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 35, ਸਤਰ 8

ਮ:3 ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਰੁ ਵਡਭਾਗੀ ਨਾਵਹਿ ਆਇ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 40, ਸਤਰ 10

ਮ:5 ਰਤਨ ਜਵੇਹਰ ਮਾਣਿਕਾ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਨਾਉ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 48, ਸਤਰ 14

ਮ:3 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਫਲੁ ਹਰਿ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਆਪੇ ਦੇਇ ਖਵਾਇ ॥੩॥ ਪੰਨਾ 66, ਸਤਰ 6

ਮ:4 ਜਨੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬੋਲੈ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਣੀ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 96, ਸਤਰ 11

ਮ:5 ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਤੇਰੀ ॥ ਪੰਨਾ 103, ਸਤਰ 7

ਪੈਰਾਂ ਵਾਲਾ ਪਾਣੀ ਵੀ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਦਿੱਤੀ ਪਾਹੁਲ ਵੀ "ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ" ? ਹੈਅਅਮ

- ਫਿਰ ਝੰਡੇ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥਾ, ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੱਥਾ, ਫਿਰ ਉਹੀ ਮੱਥਾ ਤੇਰੇ ਅੱਗੇ, ਫਿਰ ਦਸ ਵੱਡਾ ਕੇਣ ਝੰਡਾ, ਜੁੱਤੀਆਂ ਕਿ ਤੂੰ?

- ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਸਾਹਮਣੇ ਕੱਚੀਆਂ ਰਚਨਾਵਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਫਿਰ "ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ..." ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਵੇਂ?

- ਹਰ ਰੋਜ਼ ਗੱਜ ਵੱਜ ਕੇ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ ਨੇ "ਸਭ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕੇ ਹੁਕਮ ਹੈ ਗੁਰੂ ਮਾਨਿਓ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ", ਪਰ ਮੰਨਦੇ ਨਹੀਂ, ਫਿਰ ਗ੍ਰੰਥ ਗੁਰੂ ਕਿਵੇਂ?

- "ਗੁਰੂ ਦੁਆਰੇ ਹੋਇ ਸੇਝੀ ਪਾਇਸੀ ॥" ਨੂੰ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ "ਸਿਮਰਨ ਦੇ ਨਾ "ਤੇ ਬੱਤੀਆਂ ਬੰਦ ਕਰਕੇ ਤੇਤਾ ਰਟਨ ਕਰੀ ਜਾਂਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤੇਰੀ ਗੁਰਬਾਣੀ ਦੀ ਸੇਝੀ ਕਿਵੇਂ ਪਾਉਣਗੇ?

- ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਧਰਮਸ਼ਾਲਾ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ ਚੌਧਰ ਦਾ, ਲੜਾਈ ਦਾ ਥਾਂ ਬਣਾ ਦਿੱਤਾ, ਫਿਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਕਰੀਏ ?

- ਰੱਬ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਸਰੀਰ ਨੂੰ ਸ਼ਰਾਬ, ਹੋਰ ਨਸ਼ੇ, ਤੇਰੀ ਕੁਦਰਤ ਤੋਂ ਉਲਟ ਹਰ ਕੰਮ ਕਰਕੇ ਵਿਗਾੜ ਲਿਆ... ਫਿਰ "ਇਹੁ ਸਰੀਰੁ ਸਭੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਹੈ ਜਿਸੁ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਸਚੇ ਕੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੋਤਿ ॥" ਕਿੱਥੇ ਰਹਿ ਗਿਆ?

ਫਿਰ ਵੀ ਅਖਵਾਉਂਦੇ ਅਸੀਂ ਸਿੱਖ ਹੀ ਹਾਂ... ਕਿਵੇਂ ???; ਗੱਲ ਕਿ ...99% ਕੰਮ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਤੋਂ ਉਲਟ, ਤੇਰੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਹੋ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ; ਫਿਰ ਦੱਸ ਅਕਲ ਕਿੱਥੇ ਵਰਤਾਂ ਗਾਹਲਾਂ ਕੱਢਣ ਦੀ ਬਜਾਏ, ਜੇ ਜਾਵਬ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤਾਂ ਜ਼ਰੂਰ ਦੇਣਾ ਜੀ।