

**Relocating Gender In Sikh History
*Transformation, Meaning and Identity***

(Author: Doris R. Jakobsh)

A Critical Analysis

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Dedication

To my mother Bhagwan Kaur, sister Surjeet Kaur, wife
Nakshatar Kaur, daughters Amrita Kaur and Nimrta Kaur, and

granddaughters Asha Kaur, Lillia Kaur, Akashi Kaur and Kiran Kaur.

Acknowledgement

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Introduction

Discrimination against women in employment, their sexual exploitation, their battering, their rapes and murders are reported in the news on a daily basis in the United States of America where I have lived since 1963. In our male dominated world of hegemonic patriarchal culture, there is widespread discrimination, persecution and exploitation of women not to exclude the religious communities including

the Sikhs, who are beset with the pathology inherited from two cultures: Hindu and Muslim patriarchal cultures. A vast majority of Sikhs of today are descendents of so-called "Sultani-Hindus,"--Hindus who were moving away from their temples to the mosque, whose allegiance and devotion was shifting away from gods and goddesses to *pirs* and *fakirs* (Muslim holy men), during the 18th and 19th centuries.

In India where I grew up, it hurts to read that modern medical sciences and its tools are being used for the detriment of womankind—female feticide through sex selection. If this heinous crime of killing of female fetuses fails to shake the conscience of mankind, what else would? Individuals and organizations exposing such evil practices and fighting for justice for women deserve applause and our support. Violence against woman and the unspeakable crime of female feticide through sex selection should be denounced from every available platform to shake the dormant conscience of mankind. The United Nations and other international human rights organizations must hold countries and communities accountable that allow this practice. Health care personnel performing such procedures and the family members forcing helpless pregnant woman to abort the female fetus must face the court of law for committing murder.

Sikhs are well aware of the gender bias, ill treatment of women and the practice of female feticide within their community, and many of them are speaking out against it.^{1, 2} This problem is headlined and editorialized in Sikh publications. More efforts are needed. This practice should be regularly denounced in Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) and other Sikh gatherings. Moreover, in-depth research by anthropologists, sociologists and psychologists is needed to understand the reasons and circumstances that are responsible for gender bias in the Sikh community, as it is contrary to the teachings of the Sikh scripture: **ਆਦਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ** [Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS)].

Recently, Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann³ pointed out to me Jakobsh's study of historical construction of gender in the Sikh community.⁴ Jakobsh earned her Ph.D. under the supervision of Professor Harjot Oberoi from the Department of Asian Studies, University of British Columbia (UBC) in Canada. Currently she is an Assistant Professor of Religion at the University of Waterloo in Canada. To my knowledge, this is

the first academic work on gender bias in Sikhs, so I was eager to study it. However, after reading the first few chapters, my enthusiasm faded to disappointment, as her work sounds more and more like Harjot Oberoi's *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*.⁵ It seems she is using the study of gender as a ploy to spread false information about Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) and the Sikhs. As a cursory note I may point out here that neither the external examiner of her thesis, Gloria Goodwin Raheja, nor the university examiners Margery Fee and Tineke Hellwig, nor Joy Dixon, Chair of the examining committee, nor Kenneth Bryant and Mandakranta Bose who read the thesis have expertise on Sikhism.

McLeod's "Western methodology of historical research" on Sikhism is simply a process utilized to distort Sikhism under the cover of "academic research," and I find that Oberoi has ushered this process a step further to diffuse the "Sikh identity" through a campaign of misinformation. Therefore, it is no surprise that Jakobsh's "gender research" on Sikhs under Oberoi is beyond the boundary of academic norms, standards and ethics—blatant malicious propaganda put together against Sikhism.

No one will argue that a degree such as a Ph.D. requires high caliber original research. But that's not the case with Jakobsh. She has managed to utilize secondary or tertiary sources of information--relying mainly on the writings of McLeod, Oberoi, Christians (British colonists and missionaries), Hindus and spurious literature like *janam-sakhis*, *Dasam Granth* and *Rehatnamas* to concoct her thesis. She spent seven years (1993-2000) gleaning information from the above-mentioned sources and manipulating it to fit into her scheme—false propaganda against Sikhism and Sikhs.

Jakobsh approach to the study of gender in Sikh history is also problematical as there is a pitfall here: The inherent shortcomings of a Eurocentric approach to the study of non-Europeans have been well publicized and this may have had a direct bearing on Jakobsh's study. For example, black scholars in the United States have pointed out and argued effectively that a Eurocentric scholar looks at slavery and the history of black people from the perspective of a slave owner, not of a slave, from the perspective of colonizers, not the victims of colonization. Similarly, black women

scholars have objected to a Eurocentric approach to the study of black women because, though white and black women live in the same country, their experiences are not the same. Then it should not be unreasonable to ask how could Western paradigms like Joan Wallach Scott's⁶ hypotheses of gender study be applied to Sikh women who are oceans apart and separated by centuries in time?

Further there is important background information that the reader should know in order to understand the ideological base and mindset that produced *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*.⁴ Because W.H. McLeod and Harjot Oberoi exercised tremendous influence on Jakobsh and her thesis, it is imperative for readers to read Appendixes A, B and C. A cursory examination of the University of British Columbia will come in handy to understand and unfold the mystery under discussion.

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3. S. S. Sodhi and J. S. Mann. "Latest Exercise In Distortion: Doris R. Jakobsh's Eurocentric Research." *Abstracts of Sikh Studies*, 2004, July-September, pp. 41-49.

4. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003. Asa Johal Fellowship in Asian Studies funded Jakobsh's research. Asa Singh Johal also endowed Asa and Kashmir Johal Chair in India Research in the Department of Asian Studies at the University British Columbia.

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Chapter 1

University of British Columbia (UBC)

Jakobsh's work is a typical example of Ph.D. research produced by a Western university with an "endowed Sikh Chair." Her work throws light on the motives behind Sikh studies programs. To begin with, let us examine some background information on UBC and her thesis supervisor. Generally a graduate student investigates the reputation of

the university, the department of study and the supervisor before committing to begin studies. It seems Jakobsh relinquished this early homework because at the time, UBC was already knee-deep in a controversy with the Canadian Sikhs about the objectives of the "endowed Sikh Chair," as disclosed in the following advertisement:¹

The Department of Asian studies anticipates making a one-year visiting appointment in Punjabi language and literature and Sikh Studies for the academic year 1987-1988. We invite your application or nomination of others who may be qualified to teach courses in beginning and intermediate Punjabi language and at least one other field such as Sikh literature, religion or history. Ph. D. degree required, as well as a very good command of spoken and written Punjabi.

Candidate should send a complete C. V., samples of research papers and publications, and the names and addresses of three referees to Professor Daniel L. Overmyer, Head, Department of Asian Studies, Asian Centre, 1871 West Mall, University of British Columbia, Vancouver, B. C., Canada V6T 1W5. Candidates should request their referees to send confidential letters of recommendation directly to the same address. The deadline for completion of applications is May 15, 1987.

The department expects to make a tenure-track appointment to an endowed position in Punjabi and Sikh studies beginning in July 1988, following the University's normal procedures. The person appointed to the one-year visiting position may be a candidate for the tenure-track appointment the following year.

Sincerely,

Daniel L. Overmyer,
Professor and Head.

However, without regard to the above advertisement, UBC hired Harjot Oberoi. Amazingly, this fellow had neither expertise nor fluency in the Punjabi language. He grew up in Delhi and consequently had very little appreciation of the Punjabi culture. Moreover, his paper "*Popular Saints, Goddesses and Village Sacred Sites: Rereading Sikh Experience in the Nineteenth Century*" that he read at the University of California, Berkeley, in February 1987, revealed that he had no knowledge of Aad Guru Granth Sahib (Sikh Scripture). And his knowledge of Sikh history was somewhat parochial--learning from the writings of Hindus, Christians and Marxists/Communists. Sikhs (scholars as well as laity) criticized Oberoi's paper for gross distortions of Sikh religion and history.^{2, 3} Sikhs were alarmed and rightly questioned Harjot Oberoi's qualifications and suitability for holding the Sikh Chair. To investigate his credentials further, they requested a copy of his Ph.D.

thesis from Australian National University, but the librarian denied the request on February 9, 1990:

With reference to your letter dated 7th Nov. 89, concerning the following A. N. U. Ph.D. Thesis.

Oberoi, H. S.

A world reconstructed: religion, ritual and community among the Sikhs, 1850-1901.

A.N.U. Ph. D. Thesis 1987.

I regret the author has denied us permission to make copies. Your order is, therefore, cancelled.

The published version should be released soon and wishes potential readers to consult it, when available.

Please find enclosed your open cheque.

Yours sincerely,
Lending Services Librarian,
User Services Division,
R. G. Memzies Building.⁴

Pursuing this matter further, on July 22, 1994, a delegation of India-based Sikh scholars: Professors Balkar Singh, Darshan Singh, Kehar Singh, and Gurnam Kaur held a meeting with Professors Harjot Oberoi and Kenneth Bryant of UBC and Professor Hugh Johnston of Simon Fraser University, to discuss the objectives of the Sikh Chair. It was the unanimous opinion of the Sikh scholars that the incumbent Dr. Harjot Obroi was not contributing to the fulfillment of the objectives spelled out in the agreement concerning the Sikh Chair.⁵

Elaborating on the sordid affair of UBC Sikh Chair, Jasbir Singh Mann writes:

It is very interesting to note that the Sikhs paid the money and signed the contract with the UBC in 1985 but the chair was not started until 1987. Sardar Mohinder Singh Gosal, the president of Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada and signatory to the contract, made a statement on July 22, 1994 "that there is evidence to prove that the two-year delay to start this chair was intentional under the pressure of anti-Sikh political forces." It seems very clear from this statement that UBC became a part of the plan to defuse the Sikh identity from the inception of this chair. It is possible that UBC waited for two years to hire an applicant who was being groomed for anti-Sikh propaganda. As is evident from the objectives of the Sikh Chair, the applicant must be qualified for Punjabi language, Literature and Sikhism (doctrine, religious practice, and philosophy). Dr. Oberoi has admitted himself that he is only a student of Sikh history, has nothing to do with religion and his qualifications for Punjabi language and literature remain questionable. Many other applicants with appropriate qualifications were rejected. How the selection process was held to fulfill the special objective, as

outlined in the contract, is a serious matter and needs thorough investigation.⁶

The following memo by Fritz Lehman lends credence to Gosal's assertion that UBC was consulting the Indian Government regarding the objectives of the Sikh Chair:

TO: U. B. C. South Asianists
From: Fritz Lehmann, History (x5748)

Re: Highlights of Shashtri Indo-Canadian Institute Annual Meeting

India's acting High Commissioner, Mr. K. P. Fabian wishes to visit U. B. C. in the very near future to meet South Asia Specialists and administrators. He would likely address us on an aspect of Indian foreign policy (he prefers North-South dialogue) and wishes to discuss the proposed chair in Sikh studies, about which his government is concerned. He seemed to me to be a reasonable and sympathetic person.⁷

Since it was the Sikh community of Canada that raised funds for the "Sikh Chair,"⁸ one may ask why the Indian government was concerned about it? And why was UBC consulting the Indian government about the objectives of the "Sikh Chair" and who should hold this chair? The answer to these questions lies in what happened in India shortly after the British imperialist relinquished their rule over the Indian subcontinent in 1947 and divided it into two nations: one Hindu, India and the other Muslim, Pakistan. The world community is well aware of the genocide of Jews and Gypsies by the Nazis, but not many people except Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists, know the "constitutional genocide" of the three communities by the framers of the Indian constitution. In 1949, Jawaharlal Nehru, handpicked successor of the "apostle of peace," Mahatma Gandhi, led the Indian Parliament to declare Sikhs, Jains and Buddhists as Hindus under Article 25 of the Indian Constitution in spite of the vehement opposition of two Sikh representatives, Hukam Singh and Bhupinder Singh Mann who refused to sign the document. To date, the Sikh community has not signed to ratify the Indian Constitution. Shortly thereafter, Hindu Code Bill was imposed on them. In other words, in India, the world's "largest democracy," it is the majority Hindu community that determines the religious identity of its minorities and imposes Hindu values and customs on them.^{9, 10} Distortion of Sikh history and theology to defuse the "Sikh identity" is a common theme of the Indian Government propaganda and Hindu controlled news media. For example, two historians of Jawaharlal Nehru University, Satish

Chandra and Bipin Chandra have distorted Sikh religion and history via books prescribed by the National Council of Education Research and Training (NCERT) for high school classes, XI & XII, respectively.^{11, 12, 13, 14} This is the reason why the Indian government was concerned about the Sikh Chair at UBC or for that matter at any other university. Why did the UBC administration comply with the wishes of the Indian government? After all, UBC kept the chair vacant until a suitable candidate who met Indian government's approval was found. And that is why Harjot Oberoi, who grew up in Delhi and got his M.A. degree from Jawaharlal Nehru University was selected whereas several other well-qualified candidates with better credentials were rejected. According to Oberoi:

"My interest in social history was originally provoked and then sustained by my teachers at the Jawaharlal Nehru University, particularly Professors Bipin Chandra, Sarvepalli Gopal, Romila Thapar, K.N. Pannikar and Satish Saberwal. I hope this work reflects what I learnt from them."¹⁵

Under a storm of strong criticism against his qualification and suitability to head the Sikh Chair, Harjot Oberoi vacated it in 1995. Nevertheless, UBC found him a place in the Department of Asian Studies from where he continues his schedule of distorting Sikhism at every given opportunity.

References

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2. Ibid., pp. 1-373.
3. Ibid., Appendix III.
4. Ibid., Appendix II.
5. Ibid., Appendix III.

6. Ibid., p. 303.
7. Ibid., Appendix V.
8. Ibid., Appendix I: Memorandum of Agreement Between the Federation of Sikh Societies of Canada and the University of British Columbia.
9. Sangat Singh. *The Sikhs In History*. New Delhi: Uncommon Books, 4th edition, 2001, pp. 280-83.
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Chapter 2

Women in Sikh History

"Yet if women and men are inherently equal in Sikh tradition in terms of roles and status, why are they not given similar representation in the pages of Sikh history?"¹

Jakobsh has raised a valid and pertinent question, which requires an equally valid answer. To begin with, a historian must study the environment that shaped the history of Sikhs. The history of any people is the product of the influences of the environment. The following factors must be considered:

(1) Sikhs are descendants of Hindus, Muslims and Sultani-Hindus, the latter being the predominant component.

(2) The Sikh movement developed in a very corrosive patriarchal culture, as a product of Hindu patriarchal values, super-imposed by Muslim patriarchal values.

(3) The impact of oppression of bigoted Muslim rulers coupled with equally oppressive and dehumanizing impact of the caste system on the Sikh movement. So it is not difficult to imagine what would have been the reaction of Indian society towards "open involvement of women in the Sikh movement."

(4) Due to the notion of "woman as the family honor" and the heightened concern for their safety, women sought the safety of their homes or places where their menfolks were around.

(5) In the 500 years of Sikh history, there is less than 100 years of Sikh rule when the Sikhs did not face religious persecution. Even in India after 1947 the Hindu Government led by Jawaharlal Nehru declared Sikhs as Hindus in the Indian Constitution and imposed Hindu code on them. It is rather intriguing that McLeod, Oberoi and Jakobsh had made no mention of this fact in their writings on Sikhism.

(6) If the Sikh Gurus thought that recording history was that important, they could have written it themselves or had it written by someone else, just as the compilation of AGGS by Guru Arjan who employed Bhai Gurdas as amanuensis! Further if they thought that additional manuals were needed as moral instructions for the Sikhs, they would have written those too. The authentic teachings of Gurus are enshrined in AGGS, but other than their teachings (Gurmat) there is scant personal reference to them and their activities. However, there is a laudatory mention of Guru Angad's wife, Mata (mother) Khivi for her excellent management of Langar (community kitchen) and dedicated service to the Sangat (Sikh congregation):

ਬਲਵੰਡ ਖੀਵੀ ਨੇਕ ਜਨ ਜਿਸੁ ਬਹੁਤੀ ਛਾਉ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਲੀ ॥
ਲੰਗਰਿ ਦਉਲਤਿ ਵੰਡੀਐ ਰਸੁ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਖੀਰਿ ਘਿਆਲੀ ॥
ਪਏ ਕਬੂਲੁ ਖਸੰਮ ਨਾਲਿ ਜਾਂ ਘਾਲ ਮਰਦੀ ਘਾਲੀ ॥

ਮਾਤਾ ਖੀਵੀ ਸਹੁ ਸੋਇ ਜਿਨਿ ਗੋਇ ਉਠਾਲੀ ॥

Hey Balvand, Khivi was a great lady who provided comfort to the congregation like a dense shady tree. She served sumptuous food in the Langar—pudding made with butter that tasted like nectar. Like her husband (Guru Angad), who succeeded to the house of Guru Nanak as his successor, she too worked very hard with great dedication. *Mata* (mother) Khivi and her husband were praised for taking upon their shoulders the enormous responsibility of Guru Nanak's mission. AGGS, Balvand and Satta, p. 967.

Notwithstanding the absence of their names in Sikh history, it is amply clear that Gurus' mothers, wives, sisters and daughters were active participants in the Sikh movement. For example, Guru Hargobind and Guru Gobind Singh were very young when they assumed Guruship after the execution of their respective fathers by the Muslim rulers and Guru Har Krishan was a mere child of five when he took over as Guru after the death of his father. What was the major influence on these Gurus at that very critical period in Sikh history when the Sikh movement was under attack not only from the Muslim rulers, but more so from other dangerous foes, the schismatic groups and the defenders of the caste ideology? The answer, of course, is the influence of their mothers: Mata Ganga, Mata Gujri and Mata Krishan Kaur, respectively. Further, it was Mata Sundri (Jito)-- wife of Guru Gobind Singh--who guided the Sikh community through a very difficult period of external repression and internal divisions after her husband's death -- about forty years (1708-1747 C.E.), longer than any of the nine Gurus subsequent to Guru Nanak.² Guru Amar Das' daughter, Bibi Bhani, according to Sikh tradition, was the one who selected her groom herself, Guru Ram Das. She was very active in the affairs of the community during her father and her husband's Guruship. Women headed some of the twenty-two manjis (dioceses) set up by Guru Amar Das. And what about those Sikh mothers, wives and sisters who sent their sons, husband and brothers to join the Khalsa forces when it meant sure death to become a Khalsa?³ And many who suffered innumerable hardships, and torture in jails and saw their own little ones being cut into pieces before their very own eyes by the enemy who wanted to frighten them to relinquish the budding faith and convert to Islam! The Sikhs remember those brave women of unsurpassed fortitude, collectively in the daily prayer:

“ਤੇ ਮਾਈਆਂ ਨੇ ਆਪਣੇ ਬੱਚਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਟੁਕੜੇ ਟੁਕੜੇ ਕਰਵਾ ਝੋਲੀਆਂ ਵਿਚ ਪਵਾਇਆ, ਸਿਦਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹਾਰਿਆ”

And those women who remained steadfast in upholding their faith, while their children were cut into small pieces and made into necklaces to put around their necks.

Ardas (Sikh congregational prayer).

There were many women who fought side by side with men, against the Mughal armies and foreign invaders. Hundreds of women fighters were killed during the small and big *Ghaloogharas* (holocausts) in 1746 C.E. and 1762 C.E., respectively. It is true that not much is known about them like most of the men who laid down their lives fighting against the forces of tyranny: Mughal rule, foreign invaders and the proponents of caste ideology. It was not only the lonely “Mai Bhago,” many other Sikh women also joined the Khalsa ranks:

In the period of guerrilla warfare, Sikh women were imprisoned and subjected to hard labour, but they did not forsake their faith. Sada Kaur the wife of Gurbakhash Singh ruled the area, which was under the control of Kannahya Misal. She led her armies in battle and Ranjit Singh owed his success, in his initial struggle for supremacy against the rival Misals, in no small measure to her political acumen and military help. Ahmed Shah Batalvi has given more instances where women took a leading part in political and military activities of the Misals. Rani Rajinder Kaur was one of the most remarkable women of age. She possessed all the virtues which men pretend their own—courage, perseverance and sagacity. Sahib Kaur was made the Chief Minister of Patiala in 1793. She refused to leave the battle when pressed by the Marathas near Ambala and with a drawn sword rallied troops to repulse the enemy. Similarly, Aus Kaur was placed at the head of the administration of Patiala and she conducted the affairs of that state with conspicuous success. George Thomas writes in his memoirs ‘Instances indeed have not infrequently occurred in which they (Sikh women) had actually taken up arms to defend their habitation, from the desultory attacks of the enemy, and throughout the contest behaved themselves with an intrepidity of spirit, highly praiseworthy.’⁴

Reverend C. F. Andrews (1871-1940) was shocked by the atrocities committed on peaceful Sikh protesters by the British administrators and their henchmen when he visited Guru-ka-Bagh morcha site (Guru-Ka-Bagh is name of the place; morcha means agitation) in September 1922. He admired the Sikhs (Akalis) for their patient suffering without any sign of fear. He declared the peaceful Sikh struggle against the British as a “new lesson in moral

warfare.”⁵ “Being fully aware of severest beating of Sikh volunteers, Sikh mothers, wives and sisters came forward with great enthusiasm to send off their loved ones to face the oppressors,” writes Ruchi Ram Sahni:

Many Sikh mothers, wives and sisters garlanded their sons, husbands and brothers and gave them a loving send-off to Jaito. A mother whose eldest son had fallen in the first Shahidi Jatha, garlanded her second son for the second Shahidi Jatha and said to him, “Dear son, fight the battle of your Panth and bless your mother with the heroic sacrifices.”⁶

What Jakobsh considers “Sikh history” is literature like janam-sakhis, Bansavlinama, Gurbilas Patshahi 6, Gurbilas Daswin Patshahi, Rahitnamas and Dasam Granth! This plethora of spurious literature was written by: schismatic groups, detractors and other opponents of Nanakian philosophy like the ascetic orders of Udasis and Nirmalas. There may have been some works by Sikhs that were interpolated later on! Why would any scholar undermine her/his own research by using this spurious information? Jakobsh needs to reflect upon this question!

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2. Ibid., pp. 10-11.

3. Gokul C. Narang. *Transformation Of Sikhism*. New Delhi: New Book Society of India, 5th edition, 1960, p. 128: Aliud-Din, *Ibrat Namah*:

Mir Mannu asadi datari asi Mannu de soe,
(ਮੀਰ ਮੱਨੂੰ ਅਸਾਡੀ ਦਾਤਰੀ ਅਸੀਂ ਮੱਨੂੰ ਦੇ ਸੋਏ),

Jyon, jyon Mannu wadhada, gharin gharin asi hoe.
(ਜਿਉਂ ਜਿਉਂ ਮੱਨੂੰ ਵਢਦਾ ਘਰੀਂ ਘਰੀਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਹੋਏ).

We are the crop and Mannu the sickle,
The more he cuts us,
The more we grow,
In every house and hamlet.

4. Jagjit Singh. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, pp. 134-35.

5. J. S. Grewal. *The Sikhs Of The Punjab*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 161.

6. Ruchi R. Sahni. *Struggle For Freedom In Sikh Shrines* (Ganda Singh, Ed.). Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), Un-dated, p. 229.

Chapter 3

Who is Interpreting Aad Guru Granth Sahib?

Generally, scholars are very cautious and careful in using the information that is beyond the pale of their expertise. However, Jakobsh solves this problem by making a terse disclaimer: "Let me point out that I am not a scripture scholar. I have heavily relied on the contribution of scripture scholars from the discipline of Sikh studies."¹ She uses unreliable second and third hand information to suit her preconceived notion that Sikh theology is anti-women. From G.S. Talib's² Brahmanical and "literal and incorrect" English translation, she has gleaned less than two dozens verses out of a total of 5,894 verses of AGGS.³ Without checking the veracity of meaning/interpretation of these verses with experts, she argues that bias against women started with Guru Nanak and it became stronger with his successors until it reached its climax with the emergence of "hypermasculine Khalsa." It is not surprising that she has either distorted or misinterpreted or used the literal translation or interpreted the verses out of context to suit her preconceived notion that Sikh Gurus were biased against women. One wonders at the identity of those "scripture scholars from the discipline of Sikh studies" whom she had consulted! The quality and integrity of Talib's translation is demonstrated by the following two examples, one literal and the other Brahmanical:

ਧਨੁ ਜੋਬਨੁ ਅਰੁ ਫੁਲੜਾ ਨਾਠੀਅੜੇ ਦਿਨ ਚਾਰਿ ॥
 ਪਬਣਿ ਕੇਰੇ ਪਤ ਜਿਉ ਢਲਿ ਢੁਲਿ ਜੁੰਮਣਹਾਰ ॥

"Wealth, youth and bloom of flowers after four days vanish: Like water-cresses as they decline, they slump and fall".

AGGS, M 1, p. 23.

In Punjabi the expression "*char din* (ਚਾਰਿ ਦਿਨ)" means short-lived, not literally "four days."

ਤਿਥੈ ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਮਾਹਿ ॥

"In that sphere abide numberless heroines like Sita of surpassing praise and beauty indescribable."

AGGS, Jap 37, p. 8.

"*sito sita* (ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ)" means stitched together (one with God), not Sita the wife of Rama Chandra, son of King Dasratha.

Jakobsh has utilized this type of translation to accuse Sikh Gurus of harboring anti-woman feelings, as illustrated by the following examples:

1. Criticizing Nikki-Guninder Singh's (professor of religion at Colby College, Maine) *The Feminine Principle in the Sikh Vision of the Transcendent*, Jakobsh asserts, "The Ultimate in Sikh scripture was most often conceived in masculine terms, as *Akal Purkh, Karta Purkh*."⁴

Here Jakobsh exhibits gross ignorance of the Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) by making this ludicrous statement. The Sikh Gurus did not assign any gender or name to God, Who is described as "One and Only," represented by a special symbol "ੴ" in Gurmukhi script in the very beginning of AGGS (numeral one and open Ura with an extended curved arm). *Akal Purkh* and *Karta Purkh* are attributes of God described in the "Commencing Verse" as well as throughout the AGGS: *Akal* (Timeless), *Purkh* (Transcendent, the One who pervades everywhere) and *Karta* (Creator). Besides, God described in the AGGS is gender neutral, both man and woman:

ਆਪੇ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਨਾਰੀ॥

God is both man and woman.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1020.

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਮੇਰਾ ਮਾਤਾ ॥

ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਬੰਧਪੁ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਭ੍ਰਾਤਾ ॥

You are my father, You are my mother, You are my relative and You are my brother.

AGGS, M 5, p. 103.

Further in the AGGS, the creative aspect of God is portrayed as that of a mother:

ਆਪੁਨੇ ਜੀਅ ਜੰਤ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਰੇ॥

ਜਿਉ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਮਾਤਾ ਸੰਮਾਰੇ॥

God takes care of Its creation (world of life) the way mother nurtures her children.

AGGS, M 5, p. 105.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਉਤਭੁਜ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

It is God who created the world from within Itself, not anyone else.

AGGS, M 1, p. 905.

Furthermore, it is remarkable that in the *bani* (sacred hymns) of the AGGS there are roughly 100 verses starting with the word "mother" whereas the hymns starting with the word "father" number about nineteen. This is quite amazing considering the corrosive patriarchal culture millieu of Guru's time when the mention of women was absent in public discourse and she was looked down upon as an impediment in the path of spiritual growth of man.

2. Continuing, Jakobsh says: "Yet numerous passages in the scripture associate woman with *maya*, that which is sensual as opposed to spiritual."⁵

Attachment to progeny, wife is poison,
None of these at the end is of any avail. (Adi Granth,
p. 41)⁵

Maya attachment is like a loose woman,
A bad woman, given to casting spells. (AG, p. 796)⁵

First, Jakobsh does not even know the proper name of the Sikh scripture. She should know that Adi Granth is the first Sikh scripture compiled by Guru Arjan in 1604 C.E. The scripture in the final form as we have it today is *Adi Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji* (ਆਦਿ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗਰੰਥ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਜੀ) commonly called *Guru Granth Sahib* or *Aad Guru Granth Sahib*, or even simply *Guru Granth*.

Second, her statement "association of woman with *maya*" is an echo of McLeod:

"In Sant and Sikh usage the term (*maya*) has strong moral overtones and is frequently symbolized by lucre and woman."⁶

Both Jakobsh and McLeod have used Hindu concept of *Maya* in their interpretations, not the way Sikh Gurus used it in the AGGS. The word *Maya* occurs so frequently in the AGGS that there are about 215 verses that begin with this word. *Maya* in the AGGS does not mean illusion or the unreality of the physical world. According to Guru Nanak, world is real, as it is the creation of the True One:

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥

This world is the abode of the True One, Who resides in it.

AGGS, M 1, p. 463.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਚੈ ਸਾਜੀ॥

It is for the *gurmukh* (God-centered being) that the True One has fashioned this Earth.

AGGS, M 1, p. 941.

ਧਰਤਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਧਰੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾ ॥

The Earth was created to practice righteousness.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1033.

Liberation (*mukti*) from ignorance and falsehood is possible while performing worldly duties, fulfilling worldly needs and enjoying worldly pleasures:

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਭੇਟਿਐ ਪੂਰੀ ਹੋਵੈ ਜੁਗਤਿ ॥

ਹਸੰਦਿਆ ਖੇਲੰਦਿਆ ਪੈਨੰਦਿਆ ਖਾਵੰਦਿਆ ਵਿਚੇ ਹੋਵੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ॥

When one understands the True Guru (God), the objective of life is fulfilled. One is liberated (becomes a *sachiarā/gurmukh*, one with God) while laughing, playing, eating good food and wearing good clothes.

AGGS, M 5, p. 522.

That is why Guru Nanak denounced ascetic life and celibacy and proclaimed householder life as the "proper way" for the realization of God. Moreover, in the AGGS, the relationship between God and human beings is depicted in the imagery of family life, God as husband and human being as wife. Unlike other religions, God, according to Guru Nanak, is the center of family life with the attributes of father, mother, husband, relative, sibling and friend.

According to Nanakian philosophy, Maya is the corrupting influence of the world that alienates humankind from God: "Whosoever is afflicted by duality is the slave of Maya. Intoxicated with Maya one is vain and mean, thereby getting away from God. Maya is that which causes humans to forget God through attachment."⁷

ਏਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

Maya is that which makes a human being forget God and creates attachment resulting in a sense of duality.

AGGS, M 3, p. 921.

Maya is *Haumai* and its progeny of five: *Kam* (lust, sexual drive), *Kroadh* (anger), *Lobh* (covetousness, economic

drive), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride with arrogance). The five drives/instincts are responsible for the corruption of morals and the development of criminal behavior. Behind all human problems from individual suffering to bloody international conflicts is the invisible fire of *Haumai* fueled by these five elements. That is why in the AGGS the Gurus warn us again and again not to yield to the pressure/temptations of - *Kam*, *Kroadh*, *Lobh*, *Moh* and *Ahankar*, and to live a life of restraint and modesty:

ਪੰਚ ਦੂਤ ਮੁਹਿ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ॥

ਮਨਮੁਖ ਅੰਧੇ ਸੁਧਿ ਨ ਸਾਰਾ॥

The whole world is deceived by the "five drives/instincts," but the ignorant self-centered person (*manmukh*) does not understand this fact. AGGS, M 3, p. 113.

ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥

O yogi! Make your *Aee Panth* (a sect of yogis) universal brotherhood, and subdue your mind to conquer the worldly temptations. AGGS, Jap 28, p. 6.

ਕਾਮ ਕ੍ਰੋਧ ਅਰੁ ਲੋਭ ਮੋਹ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਇ ਅਹੰਮੇਵ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਸਰਣਾਗਤੀ ਕਰਿ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦੁ ਗੁਰਦੇਵ ॥

Nanak surrenders to God and prays for guidance to overcome the deleterious effects of lust, anger, greed, attachment and "pride with arrogance." AGGS, M 5, p. 269.

It needs to be pointed out here that the renowned psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) proposed his dual theory to account for the instinctual aspects of our mental lives, by the existence of two drives: sexual and aggressive.⁸ One drive gives rise to the erotic component of mental activities, while the other gives rise to the purely destructive component. Freud further assumes that the two drives are regularly "fused" though not in equal amounts. Thus even the most callous act of intentional cruelty that seems on the surface to satisfy nothing but some aspect of the aggressive drive, still has some unconscious sexual gratification. In the same way there is no act of lovemaking, however tender, which does not simultaneously

provide an unconscious means of discharge to the aggressive drive.

On the other hand, Guru Nanak (1469-1539) proposed *Haumai* and five drives/instincts -- *Kam* (lust, sexual drive), *Kroadh* (anger), *Lobh* (covetousness, economic drive), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride with arrogance) that control human behavior. Then what is *Haumai*? It has been translated as pride, ego, egotism, I-ness and self-centeredness, but these words are inadequate to describe it fully. Guru Nanak says that all human activity from birth to death is under the control of *Haumai* unless one submits to God's *Hukam* (Divine Law, Cosmic Law):

ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਆਇਆ ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਗਇਆ ॥
ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਜੰਮਿਆ ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਮੁਆ ॥

...

ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਮਾਇਆ ਹਉ ਵਿਚਿ ਛਾਇਆ ॥
ਹਉਮੈ ਕਰਿ ਕਰਿ ਜੰਤ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥

One comes in *Haumai* and goes in *Haumai*. One is born in *Haumai* and one dies in *Haumai*. ... *Haumai* is *Maya* and its influence. The whole world of life is created with innate *Haumai*.

AGGS, M 1, p. 466.

ਕਿਤੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਬਿਧਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਕਿਤੁ ਕਿਤੁ ਦੁਖਿ ਬਿਨਸਿ ਜਾਈ॥
ਹਉਮੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਜਗੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਪੁਰਖਾ ਨਾਮਿ ਵਿਸਰਿਐ ਦੁਖੁ ਪਾਈ ॥

Holy one, how is the world of life created and how could its suffering be eliminated? Holy one, the world of life is created with innate *Haumai* and alienation from God causes suffering.

AGGS, M 1, p. 946.

According to Guru Nanak, all forms of life have innate capability (capacity/driving force/instinct) to survive in the environment in which they evolve and he calls it *Haumai*. So *Haumai* is an innate capability, which is essential for the survival of life. However, unlike other forms of life, human beings are also endowed with innate superior intellect and power of reasoning. Whereas other forms of life live in harmony with *Hukam* (Divine Law, Cosmic Law) according to predetermined instincts (*Haumai*), human beings due to superior intellect and power of reasoning, get alienated from God, thus making them "self-centered (*manmukhs*)" under the control of *Haumai*. And it is

Haumai that produces the five drives/instincts: *Kam*, *Kroadh*, *Lobh*, *Moh* and *Ahankar*:

ਅਵਰ ਜੋਨਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਪਨਿਹਾਰੀ ॥
ਇਸੁ ਧਰਤੀ ਮਹਿ ਤੇਰੀ ਸਿਕਦਾਰੀ ॥

Other living beings are at your (human being) service and you are their leader in this world.
AGGS, M 5, p. 374.

ਕਰਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਕਰਣੀ ਕਰਿ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਿਨਿ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

The Creator creates mankind and lets it free to do as it wills. But how it is accomplished, only the Creator knows.
AGGS, M 1, p. 932.

ਮਾਟੀ ਕਾ ਲੇ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਕਰਿਆ ॥
ਉਕਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਲੈ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਪਰੀਖਿਆ ॥

The Creator fashions human body from the earthly elements and by some method endows it with life, wisdom and discerning intellect.
AGGS, M 5, p. 913.

With this crucial understanding of *Maya* and *Haumai* described above, let us now look at the verses cited and misinterpreted by Jakobsh:

Attachment to progeny, wife is poison,
None of these at the end is of any avail. (Adi Granth, p. 41)

Maya attachment is like a loose woman,
A bad woman, given to casting spells. (AG, p. 796)

It is absurd for Jakobsh to suggest: "Yet numerous passages in the scripture associate woman with *Maya*, that which is sensual as opposed to spiritual"⁵ when God Itself is described as "mother" repeatedly and both as progenitrix (ਜਣਨੀ) and progenitor (ਜਣਦਾ) in the AGGS. Jakobsh has cited the following verses from pages 41 and 796 of AGGS and their true meaning is altogether different from what she has quoted above from Talib's "literal and incorrect" translation:

ਭਾਈ ਰੇ ਮੈ ਮੀਤੁ ਸਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੋਇ ॥

ਪੁਤੁ ਕਲਤੁ ਮੋਹੁ ਬਿਖੁ ਹੈ, ਅੰਤਿ ਬੇਲੀ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

Hey brother, my real friend and companion is God.
Attachment to son and wife (family) poisons my
relationship with God. In the end none is of any help
except God.

AGGS, M 4, p. 41.

Attachment to family or any other material thing makes us forget God. Being one with God is the objective of human life in Nanakian philosophy. In the couplet cited above, Guru Ram Das advises against family attachment. How often people commit crimes and break laws for the sake of their families? It is a warning against that type of attachment when people misplace sense of right and wrong in the interest of their family. A Sikh as a householder is obligated to take care of his/her family and fulfill family needs within the constraint of an ethical life. Jakobsh needs to ask herself how she construed this verse being a put-down of woman when son is mentioned before wife in the same verse. There are other verses by Guru Ram Das wherein the same message is imparted about father and brother. Moreover, AGGS is composed in poetry, not all the expected thoughts could be included in a single verse due to the constraints of rhyme and rhythm:

ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਸੁਤ ਭ੍ਰਾਤ ਮੀਤ ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੋਈ॥

Mother, father, son, brother and friend are of no
avail in the end except God.

AGGS, M 4, p. 1318.

Now let us examine the other two verses from page 796 of AGGS, misinterpreted by her:

ਮਾਇਆ ਮੋਹੁ ਧਰਕਟੀ ਨਾਰਿ ॥

ਭੁੰਡੀ ਕਾਮਣਿ ਕਾਮਣਿਆਰਿ ॥

The attachment to Maya is like the love of a sexually
loose woman, a bad woman given to casting spells.

AGGS, M 1, p. 796.

How could any reasonable person interpret this couplet as a slur on womankind? In every civilized society, sexual immorality of man or woman is condemned. Additionally, the debauchery and other immoral acts of men are condemned again and again in the AGGS.

3. "Further, women are exalted when obedient and subservient as wives to their divine husbands and men are ridiculed when they are not dominant."⁹

Men obedient to their womenfolk,
Are impure, filthy, stupid,
Man lustful, impure, their womenfolk counsel follow.
(AG, p. 304)⁹

This is grotesquely "literal and incorrect" translation of the following three verses, as it does not make any sense.

ਮਨਮੁਖਾ ਦੈ ਸਿਰਿ ਜੋਰਾ ਅਮਰੁ ਹੈ ਨਿਤ ਦੇਵਹਿ ਭਲਾ ॥
ਜੋਰਾ ਦਾ ਆਖਿਆ ਪੁਰਖ ਕਮਾਵਦੇ ਸੇ ਅਪਵਿਤ ਅਮੇਧ ਖਲਾ ॥
ਕਾਮਿ ਵਿਆਪੇ ਕੁਸੁਧੁ ਨਰ ਸੇ ਜੋਰਾ ਪੁਛਿ ਚਲਾ ॥

Manmukhs (self-centered men) controlled by *Haumai* (*jora*, ਜੋਰਾ) commit bad deeds daily to satisfy their *Haumai*. Such men who follow the command of *Haumai* are depraved, stupid and devoid of wisdom. Lustful (womanizer) and dishonest men follow the dictates of *Haumai*.

AGGS, M 4, p. 304.

The above three verses are from a stanza of five verses and all of them are about *manmukhs*, men whose actions are controlled by *Haumai*. A *manmukh* is the opposite of a *gurmukh* (God-centered being). Here, there is no reference to exalted wives or divine husbands. Jakobsh has further twisted the "literal and incorrect" translation by Talib to malign Guru Ram Das.

4. Continuing with the criticism of Nikki-Guninder Kaur Singh, she says:

Nikki-Guninder Kaur Singh is also very much in line with this principle of accommodation in her analysis of goddess Durga in the writings of Guru Gobind Singh. She critiques the way many Sikh historians and writers have attempted to distance the Guru from passages celebrating Durga, striving to show that they were not actually written by Gobind Singh but by Hindu elements in his entourage. She describes this distancing as a 'not fully conscious fear of "female power"' (Singh, N. K. 1993:123). Instead she insists that Guru Gobind Singh's incorporation of the deity is indicative of the positive Sikh attitude towards the feminine, though these instances cannot be understood as goddess worship. Accentuating the continuity of the gurus within the Sikh tradition, Singh attempts to accommodate the writings of tenth guru and the clear rejection by the earlier gurus of goddess

within Sikh sacred scripture, particularly with regard to the following verse:

Whoever worships the Great Mother
Shall though man, be incarnate as woman. (AG, p. 874)¹⁰

First of all, the passages celebrating goddess Durga are from Dasam Granth. I have pointed out in chapter 6 of this manuscript that the *mahants* (priests in-charge of a shrine) of Takhat Patna prepared the Dasam Granth at the behest of the East India Company. Secondly, Nikki-Guninder Kaur Singh's idea that Guru Gobind Singh wrote these passages (*Chandi Di Var*) celebrating Durga is a reflection of the deplorable health of Sikh scholarship in general and academia in particular. Thirdly, the Gurus are not the authors of the verses cited above. They are from the following stanza of Bhagat Namdev:

ਭੈਰਉ ਭੂਤ ਸੀਤਲਾ ਧਾਵੈ ॥
ਖਰ ਬਾਹਨ ਉਹੁ ਛਾਰ ਉਡਾਵੈ ॥
ਹਉ ਤਉ ਏਕੁ ਰਮਈਆ ਲੈ ਹਉ ॥
ਆਨ ਦੇਵ ਬਦਲਾਵਨਿ ਦੈ ਹਉ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥
ਸਿਵ ਸਿਵ ਕਰਤੇ ਜੋ ਨਰੁ ਧਿਆਵੈ ॥
ਬਰਦ ਚਢੇ ਡਉਰੁ ਢਮਕਾਵੈ ॥
ਮਹਾ ਮਾਈ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰੈ ॥
ਨਰ ਸੈ ਨਾਰਿ ਹੋਇ ਅਉਤਰੈ ॥
ਤੂ ਕਹੀਅਤ ਹੀ ਆਦਿ ਭਵਾਨੀ ॥
ਮੁਕਤਿ ਕੀ ਬਰੀਆ ਕਹਾ ਛਪਾਨੀ ॥
ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਗੁਰੁ ਮੀਤਾ ॥
ਪ੍ਰਣਵੈ ਨਾਮਾ ਇਉ ਕਹੈ ਗੀਤਾ ॥

If one worships Bhairo (dreadful incarnation of Shiva), one becomes *bhoot* (evil spirit). If one worships the goddess of small pox, one rides a donkey like her covered with a cloud of dust. I meditate only on the Beautiful One, God. I will exchange all your gods for God. Pause. Anyone, who worships Shiva, rides a bull, beating a tambourine. **A man who worships Parvati (great mother) shall be born as a woman.** You say Bhawani (goddess Durga) is the source of all power, but where does she hide when her devotees ask for deliverance? My dear friend, Namdev appeals to you to seek shelter in God, that is the right way to praise God.

AGGS, Namdev, p. 874.

In this stanza Bhagat Namdev advises a Brahman/priest in a satirical humour that the maximum reward one can achieve by worshipping gods and goddesses is to become like them (one could become what one worships is a Hindu belief). So a man who worships the great mother (goddess) could expect to be incarnated as a woman. Again let me emphasize the point: Bhagat Namdev is speaking to his audience who understand the context of Hindu worship and imagery of which Jakobsh has no idea or clue!

5. Jakobsh asks: "Why did monotheism attempt to get rid of the goddess? Could it have anything to do with androcentrism and patriarchy?"¹¹

Here Jakobsh shows-off her ignorance of Indian history and religions. Even today many millions of Hindus worship the great "goddess." Goddess is and was the favourite deity among the Rajputs (Kshatriyas). These same men were once supposed to defend India and the Hindu Dharma. Instead, during the Muslim onslaught, they submitted without putting much resistance and, during the Mughal rule they offered their daughters en-masse to Mughals whom they regarded as *malesha* (unclean, polluted).

6. Continuing with her criticism of Nikki-Guninder Kaur Singh, Jakobsh says:

In the Durga mythology of the *Dasam Granth*, Sikhs have the goddess in their midst. To draw an unrealistically rigid line between the recognition of Durga's literary merit and actual homage to the goddess is to miss an opportunity to explore how and why a system did away with the feminine which was so obviously and critically integrated into early Sikh tradition.¹²

First of all, here Jakobsh is contradicting what she said earlier: "clear rejection by the earlier gurus of goddess within Sikh sacred scripture."¹⁰ Second, she has raised this question without even studying AGGS or Dasam Granth. She is unaware of the fact that the writings of Dasam Granth contradict the fundamental principles of Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) as enshrined in the AGGS. She does not know that AGGS does not assign any gender to God. She is also unaware of the fact that Guru Nanak rejected all earlier religious traditions including the worship of gods and goddesses.

The concept of "one God" was known before Guru Nanak but that "one God" is nothing more than a tribal god—an

exclusive god, which has caused balkanization and disintegration of mankind. In addition to the millions of gods, Hindus also believe in a God who communicates only through the Brahmans and then there is a God for the chosen people, the Jews. Christian God is approachable only through his only son Jesus Christ. For the Muslim, Mohammed is the last and final in a long line of Prophets of Allah (God) and they claim that theirs is the only true prophetic religion. For Guru Nanak the Creator is "One and Only" and Its creation, mankind is also one:

ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥

ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ਭਾਈ ਏਕੋ ਹੈ ॥

My Master is One. It is One, hey brother! It is One.
AGGS, M 1, p. 350.

ਏਕ ਮਹਿ ਸਰਬ ਸਰਬ ਮਹਿ ਏਕਾ ਏਹ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਦੇਖਿ ਦਿਖਾਈ ॥

"The One is in all and all are in One" that is what the True Guru (God) has made me understand.
AGGS, M 1, p. 907.

ਸਭਿ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਸੋਇ ॥ ਤਿਸ ਕੈ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥

It is God's light that is in all. Its brightness enlightens all.
AGGS, M 1, p. 663.

ਨਾਨਕ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਐਸਾ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜੋ ਸਭਸੈ ਲਏ ਮਿਲਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

Nanak understands that the True Guru (God) brings all together.
AGGS, M 1, p. 72.

The compatible thoughts of many Indian sages of diverse background with the Nanakian philosophy are incorporated in the AGGS. However, there are no direct quotes from the texts of Semitic and Hindu religions, as these religions are based on the concept of an "exclusive God":

ਬੇਦ ਕਤੇਬੀ ਭੇਦੁ ਨਾ ਜਾਤਾ ॥

Neither the *Vedas* (four Hindu texts) nor the four *Katebs* [Semitic texts: the *Torah*, the *Zabur* (Psalms), the *Injil* (Gospel), and the *Quran*] know the mystery of the Creator.
AGGS, M 1, p. 1021.

ਕਥਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੇਦੀ ਆਣੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਦੇ ਦੇ ਲੇਣਾ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਦੇਣਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਅਵਤਾਰ ॥
ਉਤਮ ਮਧਿਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਭਰਿਮ ਭਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥

It is the teachings of Vedas, which has created the myths of sin and virtue, hell and heaven, and karma and transmigration. One reaps the reward in the next life for the deeds performed in this life—goes to hell or heaven according to the deeds. The Vedas have also created the fallacy of inequality of caste and gender for the world.

AGGS, M 2, p. 1243.

ਮਿਹਰਵਾਨ ਮਉਲਾ ਤੂਹੀ ਏਕੁ ॥ ਪੀਰ ਪੈਕਾਂਬਰ ਸੇਖ ॥
ਦਿਲੁ ਕਾ ਮਾਲਕੁ ਕਰੇ ਹਾਕੁ ॥ ਕੁਰਾਨ ਕਤੇਬ ਤੇ ਪਾਕੁ ॥

The Merciful One is the only Emancipator (*Maula*), not the holy men (*pir* and *sheikh*), or Prophet. The Master of every heart, Who delivers justice, is beyond the description of the Quran and other Semitic texts.

AGGS, M 5, p. 897.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਨਾਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਵੇਦੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਰਹਿਆ ਸਮਾਈ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਈਸਰੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਗੋਰਖੁ ਬਰਮਾ ਗੁਰੁ ਪਾਰਬਤੀ ਮਾਈ ॥

A *gurmukh* (God-centered being) learns through knowledge (ਵੇਦੰ) of ਨਾਦੰ (Word, Divine knowledge, Truth) that the Almighty, Who is omnipresent, is not Shiva or Gorakh or Brahma or Parvati (the wife of Shiva).

AGGS, Jap 5, p. 2.

ਰੋਵੈ ਰਾਮੁ ਨਿਕਾਲਾ ਭਇਆ ॥
ਸੀਤਾ ਲਖਮਣੁ ਵਿਛੁੜਿ ਗਇਆ ॥

...

ਰੋਵਹਿ ਪਾਂਡਵ ਭਏ ਮਜੂਰ ॥
ਜਿਨ ਕੈ ਸੁਆਮੀ ਰਹਤ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥

Ram bewailed in exile when he was separated from Sita and Lachman. Even the Pandvas who lived in the company their master (Lord Krishna) cried when they were forced to do hard labor in destitution.

AGGS, M 1, p. 953.

ਰੋਗੀ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਾ ਬਿਸਨੁ ਸਰਦ੍ਰਾ ਰੋਗੀ ਸਗਲੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥
ਹਰਿ ਪਦ ਚੀਨਿ ਭਏ ਸੇ ਮੁਕਤੇ ਗੁਰ ਕਾ ਸਬਦੁ ਵੀਚਾਰਾ ॥

Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva are afflicted with self-centeredness (*Haumai*) as the rest of the world. Only

those are free from this affliction, who realize God through the Word (Truth).
AGGS, M 1, p. 1153.

ਬਹੁ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਬਹੁ ਸਿਮ੍ਰਿਤੀ ਪੇਖੇ ਸਰਬ ਢਡੋਲਿ ॥
ਪੂਜਸਿ ਨਾਹੀ ਹਰਿ ਹਰੇ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਮ ਅਮੋਲ ॥

I have searched many *Shastars* and *Simrtis*, they do not show the way to God, but contemplation on God is invaluable.
AGGS, M 5, p. 265.

ਬੇਦ ਪੜੇ ਪੜਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੇ ਹਾਰੇ ਇਕੁ ਤਿਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਕੀਮਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

...

ਦਸ ਅਉਤਾਰ ਰਾਜੇ ਹੋਇ ਵਰਤੇ ਮਹਾਦੇਵ ਅਉਧੁਤਾ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਭੀ ਅੰਤੁ ਨ ਪਾਇਓ ਤੇਰਾ ਲਾਇ ਥਕੇ ਬਿਭੁਤਾ ॥

Many a Brahma got tired of studying Vedas, but they could not estimate even an iota of God's greatness. Ten incarnations of Vishnu and the famous ascetic Shiva, who got tired of smearing his body with ashes, could not fathom God's extent.
AGGS, M 5, p. 747.

ਦੇਵੀ ਦੇਵਾ ਪੂਜੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਕਿਆ ਮਾਗਉ ਕਿਆ ਦੇਹਿ ॥
ਪਾਹੁਣੁ ਨੀਰ ਪਖਾਲੀਐ ਭਾਈ ਜਲ ਮਹਿ ਬੂਡਹਿ ਤੇਹਿ ॥

Hey brother, why worship idols of gods and goddesses, what can you ask of them and what can they give to you? What is the use of washing stones (statues of gods/goddesses), which themselves drown in water?
AGGS, M 1, p. 637.

7. Jakobsh talks about "Sikh tradition" without even mentioning once, what does it mean? And what is the source of Sikh tradition? She says: "How and why a system did away with the feminine which was so obviously and critically integrated into early Sikh tradition."¹²

She is saying that Sikhs used to worship Durga during the time of Gurus without providing any evidence. She is not aware of the sacred hymns of the Gurus against the worship of gods and goddesses. Nor she knows anything about the tradition of writing hymns by the Gurus. It is preposterous on her part to assume that Guru Gobind Singh authored the celebrated passages adoring Durga due to the following reasons.

First, all of Guru Nanak's successors (second to fifth and the ninth) whose *banis* (sacred hymns) constitute the bulk of the AGGS, wrote their *banis* under the name of "Nanak" whereas the *banis* attributed to Guru Gobind Singh are under his name which is against the tradition of his predecessors. Why would Guru Gobind Singh break the tradition?

Second, when Guru Arjan compiled the Adi Granth in 1604, he also incorporated his own *bani* in it. Similarly, later on, the ninth Guru Teg Bahadur, father of Guru Gobind Singh added his *bani* to a copy Adi Granth. Why didn't Guru Gobind Singh do the same?

Third, if Guru Gobind Singh wrote Dasam Granth, then what did he do with it afterwards? What did he want the Sikhs to do with Dasam Granth? We know for sure that before his death, Guru Gobind Singh in his infinite wisdom invested Guruship jointly on the *Damdami Bir* (final version of Adi Granth) and the corporate body of the Sikh community. This is how the Sikh scripture came to be known as "Guru Granth." If Dasam Granth had any importance for the Sikhs, why did not Guru Gobind Singh issue any instructions to the Sikhs? As already pointed out, Dasam Granth was prepared under the influence of British imperialists to subvert Sikh theology by creating dichotomy between Guru Gobind Singh and his predecessors. Jakobsh should know that.

8. Here is Jakobsh's grotesque interpretation of Grewal's translation of Guru Nanak's celebrated passage extolling womankind:

However, procreation, the procreation of sons, specifically, was central to Nanak's vision of the ideal woman. An oft-quoted verse, supposedly indicative of Guru Nanak's positive evaluation of womanhood, points to an appreciation of woman only vis-à-vis the procreative process.¹³

We are conceived in the woman's womb and we grow in it. We are engaged to women and we wed them. Through the woman's cooperation new generations are born. If one woman dies, we seek another; without the woman there can be no bond. Why call her bad who gives birth to rajas. The woman herself is born of woman, and none comes into this world without woman; Nanak, the true one alone is independent of the woman (Adi Granth, quoted in Grewal, 1993:5).¹⁴

What seems to be a rather straightforward positive comment, Jakobsh interprets this as:

Guru Nanak's stance towards women as mentioned in this passage was strikingly similar to that of the writer of *Brhaspatismrti*,

written in the fourth century CE, albeit from within a different context. The earlier writer questioned the inconsistencies in the inheritance rights of daughters and sons. These two were based upon the same notion later advocated by Nanak: 'A daughter is born from the [the same] human bodies as does a son. Why then should the father's wealth be taken by another person' (Aiyanger 1941, cited in Bose 1996:3). While Guru Nanak's words have been lauded as slogan of female emancipation for women in the Sikh tradition, they had more to do with the rejection of prevailing notions of ritual purity and support of the social hierarchy of the time. For women gave birth to sons, especially those of noble birth; how then could they be considered ritually impure? The birthing of sons was the most elevated of aspirations; sons were avenues to fulfillment and the fervent wish of any woman during Indo-Islamic times. Thus, Guru Nanak's challenge, in referring to the contemporary hierarchical order, one which placed rajahs at the top of that order, also indicated his support of the dominant social and political order of his time.¹⁵

May I ask: What has gone wrong with Jakobsh? Here her interpretation is a flagrant distortion of Guru Nanak's hymn extolling womankind. I guess not if Grewal shares her views, as I have no access to Grewal's *Guru Nanak and Patriarchy*. Here is Guru Nanak's hymn in Gurmukhi script and my interpretation:

ਭੰਡਿ ਜੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਨਿੰਮੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਮੰਗਣੁ ਵੀਆਹੁ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੋਸਤੀ ਭੰਡਹੁ ਚਲੈ ਰਾਹੁ ॥
 ਭੰਡੁ ਮੁਆ ਭੰਡੁ ਭਾਲੀਐ ਭੰਡਿ ਹੋਵੈ ਬੰਧਾਨੁ ॥
 ਸੋ ਕਿਉ ਮੰਦਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜਿਤ ਜੰਮਹਿ ਰਾਜਾਨ॥
 ਭੰਡਹੁ ਹੀ ਭੰਡੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਝੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਭੰਡੈ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਏਕੋ ਸਚਾ ਸੋਇ ॥

Man betroths woman and marries her. It is she who conceives, nourishes the fetus inside her and gives birth. It is she who nurtures and sustains the human race. It is she whose company man seeks. When wife dies man seeks another one. It is she through whom relations are created. How could she from who are born kings be considered inferior? It is she who gives birth to another woman. No one could be born without woman. Nanak, only the True One is independent of woman.

AGGS, M, 1, p. 473.

Jakobsh's citing of *Brhaspatismrti* (one of the Hindu law books) imparts an impression as if "Brihaspati" stood on an equal footing with Guru Nanak as a true humanist in his revolutionary ideas. Nothing could be further from truth.

With her two secondary or even tertiary references to *Brhaspatismrti*, and recognizing Jakobsh as an untrustworthy scholar, I thought it was time to check *Brhaspatismrti*. Little was I surprised at the contents and I share some of those with the readers.¹⁶

Even though I dispute what Jakobsh has written, I myself wouldn't mind accepting it at face value if indeed the author of *Brhaspatismrti* questioned the unfairness in the inheritance rights of daughters and sons. It is great and admirable if someone raised a voice about the property rights of daughters long before Nanak's time. After all, Guru Nanak's fifth successor, Guru Arjan honored sages of diverse backgrounds from different regions of the sub-continent, who stood for justice and equality for all, by incorporating their views in the Sikh scripture. But the point of discussion here is: What was the status of woman in the Indian society during Guru Nanak's time? Both Hindu and Muslim religious texts and Indian history of that period indicate that women were at the lowest totem pole of the social hierarchy. Moreover, women were persecuted and despised, as Jakobsh herself acknowledges "Kabir's attitude towards women was similar to that of yogis in that he too viewed women as seductive, as tempting men away from their true calling."¹⁷ So much so that woman was relegated to a worn-out shoe of man. And this expression is still in usage in the Indian languages and movies.

It was this pathetic condition of women to which Guru Nanak responded in this hymn under discussion. Guru Nanak poured out his concern and sympathy and declared his solidarity with women:

ਰੰਨਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਬੋਧੀਆ ਪੁਰਸ ਹੋਏ ਸਈਆਦਾ॥
ਸੀਲੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਸੁਚ ਭੰਨੀ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਜੁ ਅਹਾਜੁ॥
ਸਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ਘਰ ਆਪਣੈ ਪਤਿ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਨ ਸਚਾ ਭਾਲਿ॥

Women have lost their vitality and become submissive and men have become brutal. Politeness, soberness (self-control) and sincerity have banished and dishonest living has become the way of life. The sense of shame and honor has disappeared from the society. Nanak, only the One is True, do not look for another one.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1243.

In the passage distorted by Jakobsh, Guru Nanak declares that woman is the hub of humanity—the lifeline of humanity. It is she who conceives, it is she who nurtures humanity from birth to death. Both Hinduism and Islam sanction the inferior and subservient role of woman and, in both religions it is the ruler who is the protector of religion. Guru Nanak reprimands the rajas (rulers) for the ill treatment of woman because as the defender of faith, they were the enforcers of religious rules and regulations that discriminate against women. That is why in a rhetorical way Guru Nanak asks, "How could those who give birth to such rulers (rajas) be considered inferior?" Moreover, Nanak placed woman at the apex of "human evolution" by declaring that only God is independent of woman. To bring home Guru Nanak's message to the rigid, oppressive and corrosive patriarchal society, Guru Amar Das declared gender equality in a forceful way:

ਇਸੁ ਜਗ ਮਹਿ ਪੁਰਖੁ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਹੋਰ ਸਗਲੀ ਨਾਰਿ ਸਬਾਈ॥

In this world there is one "Man," the rest are women.
AGGS, M 3, p. 591.

As discussed earlier, Guru Nanak neither assigned any specific name, or gender to God, nor he passed on the leadership of the Sikh community to either of his two sons. Besides, according to Guru Nanak, the process of procreation is subject to *Hukam* (Cosmic Law) of the Creator, not controlled by woman as implied by Jakobsh:

ਮਾ ਕੀ ਰਕਤੁ ਪਿਤਾ ਬਿਦੁ ਧਾਰਾ ॥

ਮੂਰਤਿ ਸੂਰਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਆਪਾਰਾ ॥

The infinite Creator has fashioned human body with beautiful countenance from father's semen and mother's blood (eggs).

AGGS, M 1, p. 1022.

ਮਿਲਿ ਮਾਤ ਪਿਤਾ ਪਿੰਡੁ ਕਮਾਇਆ ॥

ਤਿਨਿ ਕਰਤੈ ਲੇਖੁ ਲਿਖਾਇਆ ॥

Mother and father create a child through sexual union according to the *Hukam* (Cosmic Law) of the Creator.

AGGS, M 1, p. 989.

Therefore, it is preposterous for anyone to suggest: "Procreation, the procreation of sons, specifically, was central to Nanak's vision of the ideal woman. An oft-quoted

verse, supposedly indicative of Guru Nanak's positive evaluation of womanhood, points to an appreciation of woman only vis-à-vis the procreative process."

Further, to suggest that Guru Nanak "supported the contemporary hierarchical order, one which placed rajas at the top of that order" is equally absurd and scurrilous. While the custodians of Christianity were investing despots with "divine rights" and the Hindu elite was prostrating and singing paeans to bigoted and tyrant Muslim rulers, *Ishwaro va Dillishwaro va* (the king of Delhi is as great as God), Guru Nanak denounced them, their administrators and their allies in no uncertain terms. He called for the establishment of a just rule:

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥
ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ॥

The rulers are like hungry lions and their officials as wild dogs, who harass and persecute the innocent subjects.
AGGS, M 1, p. 1288.

ਰਤੁ ਪੀਣੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਸਿਰੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਰਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਵੇ ਜਾਪੈ ਭਾਉ ॥
ਭੀ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਸਾਲਾਹਣਾ ਆਖਣ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਚਾਉ ॥

Even if I were to live under blood-sucking rulers, I will love and glorify God and would continuously do so tirelessly. In other words, I will not waver from the path of righteousness.
AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

There is no other king, except the Almighty.
AGGS, M 1, p. 936.

ਏਕੋ ਤਖਤੁ ਏਕੋ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੁ ॥

There is one Throne and one King.
AGGS, M 1, p. 1188.

ਤਖਤਿ ਬਹੈ ਤਖਤੈ ਕੀ ਲਾਇਕ ॥

ਪੰਚ ਸਮਾਏ ਗੁਰਮਤਿ ਪਾਇਕ ॥

Only a *gurmukh* (God-centered being) deserves to occupy the throne, who has control over -- lust, anger, greed, attachment and pride with arrogance.
AGGS, M 1, p. 1039.

Commenting on the atrocities committed on the Hindu masses by the bigoted Muslim rulers, Guru Nanak exposed the nexus between Muslim rulers and the Khatris along with Brahmans in a biting political satire. It was the Muslim ruler, who was responsible for the persecution of Hindu masses, but it was the Khatri officials who executed the orders of their master, and the Brahman priests approved of the actions of the Khatris:

ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥
ਛੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਘਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਨਾਦ ॥
ਉਨਾ ਭਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਓਈ ਸਾਦ ॥

The man-eater performs *Namaz* (Muslim prayer). The one who carves out the flesh for him wears the sacred thread around his neck (Khatri). The Brahman blows the conch in the Khatri's house to sanctify his doings. The Brahman shares the ill-gotten bread of the Khatri. AGGS, M 1, p. 471.

For Jakobsh to suggest that Guru Nanak's words, which are dictum of women emancipation in the Sikh tradition, "had more to do with the rejection of prevailing notions of ritual purity and support of the social hierarchy of the time" is insane. As already pointed out, Guru Nanak rejected all earlier religious traditions. Moreover, he denounced the oppression and bigotry of Muslim rulers, cowardice and hypocrisy of Khatris and Rajputs and the tyranny of the caste system. He condemned the discrimination against women and the religious exploitation of masses by Brahmans, mullahs, qazis, yogis and other religious orders:

ਹੋਰਿਓ ਗੰਗ ਵਹਾਈਐ ਦੁਨਿਆਈ ਆਖੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਓਨੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਈਸਰਿ ਜਗ ਨਾਥਿ ਉਚਹਦੀ ਵੈਣ ਵਿਰਿਕਿਓਨੁ॥

The people of the world say that Nanak--the image of Controller (Nath) of the world has promulgated a philosophy of the highest order that has changed the course of Ganges*.

* It means that Guru Nanak rejected old religious beliefs, and the social, political and economic order of his time.

AGGS, Balvand and Satta, p. 967.

From early on, Guru Nanak rebelled against the Hindu beliefs. To the embarrassment of family and relatives, he refused to wear the sacred thread (*janaeu*) at the ceremony by raising questions about its benefit:

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ॥

ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ॥

Let compassion be the cotton, contentment yarn, continence knot and truth as the twist thereof. O pundit (priest), a thread of this type awakens the inner-self (conscience). If you have such a *janaeu*, then put it on me?

AGGS, M 1, p. 471.

Breaking caste taboos and social injunction against socializing with Muslims, he fraternized with Muslims and low caste Hindus. This may sound trivial to a modern Western mind but during Guru Nanak's time the Muslims were regarded as *malesh* (unclean, polluted). They were considered so much outside the pale of Hindu society that Hindus once converted to Islam could never be taken back in the parent fold even though converted forcibly.¹⁸ The mere shadow or touching the utensils or food of high caste people by an untouchable, was an act of pollution deterred by severe punishment. Guru Nanak accepted the invitation of a poor low caste carpenter, Bahi Lalo and, spurned the invitation of a rich landlord, Malik Bhago, demonstrating that hard work and honest living is divine whereas ill-gotten wealth is evil:

ਪਾਪਾ ਬਾਝਹੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਥਿ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

Wealth cannot be amassed without illegal means and it does not go with the dead.

AGGS, M 1, p. 417.

ਸੰਪਉ ਸੰਚੀ ਭਏ ਵਿਕਾਰ ॥

Amassing riches leads to moral degradation.

AGGS, M 1, p. 222.

Guru Nanak condemned the bigotry of Muslims while he denounced the cowardice of Hindus:

ਬਾਬਾ ਅਲਹੁ ਅਗਮ ਅਪਾਰੁ ॥

...

ਤੇਰਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੀ ਕੇਤਤਾ ਲਿਖਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

...

ਪੁਛਿ ਨ ਸਾਜੇ ਪੁਛਿ ਨ ਢਾਹੇ ਪੁਛਿ ਦੇਵੈ ਲੇਇ ॥
ਆਪਣੀ ਕੁਦਰਤਿ ਆਪੇ ਜਾਣੈ ਆਪੇ ਕਰਣੁ ਕਰੇਇ ॥

Dear *baba* (Sir), Allah (God) is Unreachable and Infinite— beyond human comprehension in totality. No one can even describe the power of Its *Hukam* (Cosmic Law). Allah does not consult any one when It makes or unmakes, or when It gives or takes away. Allah alone knows Its *qudrat* (nature, cosmos), It alone is the Doer.

AGGS, M 1, p. 53.

ਹਕੁ ਪਰਾਇਆ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਉਸੁ ਸੁਅਰੁ ਉਸੁ ਗਾਇ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰੁ ਹਾਮਾ ਤਾ ਭਰੇ ਜਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ਨ ਖਾਇ ॥
ਗਲੀ ਭਿਸਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਈਐ ਛੁਟੈ ਸਚੁ ਕਮਾਇ ॥
ਮਾਰਣੁ ਪਾਹਿ ਹਰਾਮ ਮਹਿ ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਨ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਗਲੀ ਕੂੜੀਈ ਕੂੜੇ ਪਲੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

To violate or usurp someone's right is like eating pork for a Muslim and beef for a Hindu. The Guru/Prophet would support only if the follower does not make unlawful living. Mere talk does not lead to paradise; salvation lies in right conduct. If you add spice to unlawfully earned food, it does not become *Halal* (lawful). Nanak, falsehood begets only falsehood.

AGGS, M 1, p. 141.

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥
ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥

If one accepts dishonourable life then all efforts to subsist are inconsequential.

AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

He held the disunity of Hindus caused by the atrocious caste system responsible for their subjugation and humiliation by Muslim conquerors. In a poetic interpretation of the problem, he said, "Only a whole grain germinates to bear fruit, not a split one":

ਸਚਿ ਕਾਲੁ ਕੂੜੁ ਵਰਤਿਆ ਕਲਿ ਕਾਲਖ ਬੇਤਾਲ ॥
ਬੀਉ ਬੀਜਿ ਪਤਿ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਅਬ ਕਿਉ ਉਗਵੈ ਦਲਿ॥

Truth has vanished and falsehood prevails everywhere, as the society has gone astray due to immorality of the age. The Hindus have lost their honour due to

their own actions. Now how can disunity restore their honour?

AGGS, M 1, p. 468.

Stung by Guru Nanak's actions, the proponents of the caste ideology called him *karahiya* (gone astray):

ਕੋਈ ਆਖੈ ਭੂਤਨਾ ਕੋ ਕਹੈ ਬੇਤਾਲਾ॥

ਕੋਈ ਆਖੈ ਆਦਮੀ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਵੇਚਾਰਾ॥

ਭਇਆ ਦਿਵਾਨਾ ਸਾਹ ਕਾ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਬਉਰਾਨਾ॥

ਹਉ ਹਰਿ ਬਿਨੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਨਾ॥

Some say that Nanak is an evil spirit, others say that he has gone astray, still others say that he is a helpless poor man. But I (Nanak) am intoxicated, as I am madly in love with the Lord/King (God). I do not care about anyone except God.

AGGS, M 1, p. 991.

He rebuked the Khattris for abdicating their responsibility for not protecting the Hindu masses against the tyranny of bigoted Muslim rulers:

ਖੜ੍ਹੀਆ ਤ ਧਰਮੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥

ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟਿ ਸਭ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

The Khattris have abdicated their duties. Instead they have adopted the language and manners of their masters (Muslims), whom they consider as *malesh* (unclean/polluted). The whole society has degenerated abdicating moral obligations.

AGGS, M 1, p. 663.

He denounced the Khatri officials and exposed their hypocrisy:

ਗਉ ਬਿਰਾਹਮਣ ਕਉ ਕਰੁ ਲਾਵਹੁ ਗੋਬਰਿ ਤਰਣੁ ਨ ਜਾਈ ॥

ਧੋਤੀ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੈ ਜਪਮਾਲੀ ਧਨਿ ਮਲੇਛਾਂ ਖਾਈ ॥

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਪੂਜਾ ਪੜਹਿ ਕਤੇਬਾ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਤੁਰਕਾ ਭਾਈ॥

ਛੋਡੀਲੈ ਪਾਖੰਡਾ ॥

ਨਾਮਿ ਲਇਐ ਜਾਹਿ ਤਰੰਦਾ॥

You are taxing the cow and Brahman whom you worship; you are mistaken if you think that cow-dung-coating of your kitchen would absolve you of your sins. You wear a mark on your forehead, a *dhoti* (cloth worn around the waist) and tell beads, but you are dependent on

the *malesh* (Muslim ruler) to make a living. You perform Hindu worship secretly but you behave like Muslims and read Quran with them. Give up this hypocrisy! Salvation lies in practicing Truth/*Nam*.
AGGS, M 1, p. 471.

Nanak denounced the religious establishment for misleading and exploiting the masses:

ਕਾਦੀ ਕੂੜੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਮਲੁ ਖਾਇ॥
ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣ ਨਾਵੈ ਜੀਆ ਘਾਇ॥
ਜੋਗੀ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਨ ਜਾਣੈ ਅੰਧੁ॥
ਤੀਨੇ ਓਜਾੜੇ ਕਾ ਬੰਧੁ॥

Qazi (Muslim magistrate) tells lies and accepts bribe. The Brahman priest bathes ceremoniously, but practices cruelty and deceit. The blind yogi has lost his way in search of "tranquility." The three are spiritually barren.

AGGS, M 1, p. 662.

ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਏ ॥
ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥

Never touch the feet of those who claim to be spiritual guides, but live on charity.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1245.

To break the caste barriers and the stigma of fraternizing with Muslims, Guru Nanak started the institution of *Sangat* (congregation) and *Pangat* (commensality, eating together sitting in a row). *Sangat* was made up of people without regard to religion, caste and gender. Food prepared in the *Langar* (public kitchen) by volunteers was served to the *Sangat* sitting in a row without regard to any basis of discrimination. Not only that, Nanak also advised his followers to address each other as *bhai* (brother) and *mai* (mother, elder sister) and touch each other's feet while greeting. These were daring and effective attacks on the pillars on which the superstructure of the caste system rested. These practices drew sharp and relentless condemnation from both the Brahmans and Khatris.

9. Continuing her hateful propaganda against Guru Nanak, Jakobsh pronounces:

Yet, more, often than not, one senses Guru Nanak's apprehension of female. Women are often associated with *maya*, the feminine

principle that deludes the seeker; she acts as a barrier to the attainment of emancipation. According to Adi Granth, '[t]here is pleasure in gold, pleasure in silver, pleasure in woman, pleasure in scents, pleasure in horses, pleasure in conjugal bed, pleasure in sweets, pleasure in the flesh—there are so many pleasures of the body that there is no room for the name' (Adi Granth: 3). While woman is only one of the various attachments specified, she is mentioned time and again; as an attraction to the male, woman thus becomes part of maya.¹⁹

This hymn she has quoted is from page 15, not page 3 of AGGS. Why Jakobsh seems so desperate in distorting this hymn? Is it because she can't read AGGS and thus falsely making a case out of sheer ignorance to fit her agenda? Besides, in her desperation to malign Guru Nanak, she has become impervious to her own set of contradictions. For example, here she accuses Guru Nanak of regarding woman as a "barrier to the attainment of emancipation" while earlier on the previous page she says: "Guru Nanak, on the other hand, criticized yogis for their solitary, acetic, spiritual search. Contrary to the yogic apprehension of sexuality, Guru Nanak furthered the ideal of householder."²⁰ The only thing she understood correctly about this hymn is that it is about attachment, which cause separation from God. This hymn is about a rich man and the worldly pleasures that make him forget God. In this hymn there is mention of sexual pleasures twice: pleasure in woman and pleasure in conjugal bed. "Pleasure in woman" refers to adultery of man and "pleasure in conjugal bed" refers to sex within marriage. Most often, in the AGGS, when there is reference to woman in sexual sense, it is about male adultery, not that woman is Maya as Jakobsh implies. Besides, there are other hymns where family and family members are mentioned as attachment. In an oppressive and corrosive patriarchal milieu where men dominated every aspect of life, Gurus ideas were revolutionary. Most often, their criticism is targeted at the rulers, their administrators, leaders of religious establishment and the rich.

10. Continuing in the same vein she complains that negative images of women were frequently compounded by ambivalent messages towards outcastes of the time:

"Evil mindedness is a low woman, cruelty a butchers wife, a slanderous heart a sweeper woman, wrath which ruineth the world a pariah woman (Adi Granth, Macauliffe 1990, Vol. 1:52)."²¹

First of all, Jakobsh has totally misinterpreted what Guru Nanak says in this couplet. Second, there are only few, not frequent metaphoric references to women of low castes in the sense described by Macauliffe. Third, there is metaphoric usage of men of low caste in the same sense, also. Now let us examine Macauliffe's interpretation of the verses quoted by her:

ਕੁਬੁਧਿ ਡੂਮਣੀ ਕੁਦਇਆ ਕਸਾਇਣਿ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਘਟ ਚੂਹੜੀ ਮੁਠੀ ਕੋਧਿ ਚੰਡਾਲਿ॥
ਕਾਰੀ ਕਢੀ ਕਿਆ ਥੀਆ ਜਾਂ ਚਰੇ ਬੈਠੀਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

Evil-mindedness is a low woman; cruelty a butchers wife; a slanderous heart a sweeper woman; wrath which ruineth the world a pariah woman. What availeth thee to have drawn the lines of *thy cooking place* when these four are seated with thee?

AGGS, M 1, p. 91.

Amazingly, M.A. Macauliffe understood the meaning of the above couplet accurately at the time when proper understanding of AGGS was limited; whereas Jakobsh has misinterpreted it so badly almost a century later when there is so much new information/knowledge about Guru Nanak and his message. Why? Macauliffe was a retired British government officer in India whose objective was to interpret Sikhism properly according to the information available to him. On the other hand Jakobsh's agenda is the opposite: to distort the hymns of AGGS as much as possible. That is why she has concealed the meaning of the second verse, which is so essential to understand the meaning of the first:

"What availeth thee to have drawn the lines of *thy cooking place* when these four are seated with thee?"²²

She has also concealed Macauliffe's explanation of the context in which Guru Nanak used this hymn:

"The Guru, requiring fire to cook his food, went into a Brahman's cooking-square for it. The Brahman charged him with having defiled his viands."²³

In this hymn Guru Nanak condemns the Brahmanical Order, the caste system and the concept of ritual purity. He uses the most despised section of the Indian society, low caste and untouchable women as metaphors. He says that the caste label does not make one *dumni* (ਡੂਮਣੀ, a woman of low caste of

minstrels) or *ksain* (ਕਸਾਇਣਿ, a woman from butcher caste) or *chuhri* (ਚੂਹੜੀ, a sweeper woman) or *chandalni* (ਚੰਡਾਲਨੀ, an untouchable woman), rather it is evil mind that is *dumni*, cruelty that is *ksain*, slander that is *chuhri* and anger that is *chandalni*. "O Brahman! Evil mind, cruelty, slander and anger, the four are within you, how by marking of your cooking-square with a line around it, will keep your food pure, when the cook (Brahman) is already defiled."

Jakobsh has also concealed part of the hymn from page 15 of AGGS wherein Guru Nanak has used low caste men¹⁹ as metaphors to condemn the caste system. It is bad habits, bad actions and wickedness, which makes one low not the caste label imposed by the Brahman:

ਲਬੁ ਕੁਤਾ ਕੂੜ ਚੂਹੜਾ ਠਗਿ ਖਾਧਾ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ॥
ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਪਰ ਮਲੁ ਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਧੀ ਅਗਿਨ ਕ੍ਰੋਧੁ ਚੰਡਾਲੁ॥

Greed is astray dog, falsehood is a scavenger/sweeper and thuggee is eating carrion. Slander is like putting other's filth in mouth and the fire of anger is wicked person/untouchable.

AGGS, M 1, p. 15.

11. Further on she says: "While Guru Nanak grieved the rape of the woman during the time of Babur, he did not censure the social order on the whole. Moreover, he firmly believed in God's omnipotence and the will of God behind such events (Grewal 1979: 162, 176)."²⁴

This is a malicious lie as Guru Nanak denounced Babur's invasion as well as the failure of the Indian rulers to defend the country and their subjects. Besides, Guru Nanak couldn't have been clearer in his composition, *Babur-bani*: that it was not God who commissioned Babur to invade India. God does not take sides in a war, as It is the protector of all. Guru Nanak holds the Indian rulers responsible for failing to protect the country. He was an eyewitness to the atrocities committed by Babur's army on the civilian population. Did God send Babur to punish the people of India? Did not God hear heartrending cries of the people? Guru Nanak answered such questions in the *Babur-bani*:

ਪਾਪ ਕੀ ਜੰਵ ਲੈ ਕਾਬਲਹੁ ਧਾਇਆ ਜੋਰੀ ਮੰਗੈ ਦਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥
ਸਰਮੁ ਧਰਮੁ ਦੁਇ ਛਪਿ ਖਲੋਏ ਕੁੜੁ ਫਿਰੈ ਪਰਧਾਨੁ ਵੇ ਲਾਲੇ ॥

O Lalo, he [Babur] has attacked with an army of sin (vicious and powerful army) to marry the bride with

force (want to rule over India by force). O Lalo, sense of shame and righteousness has disappeared and falsehood prevails everywhere.
AGGS, M 1, p. 722.

ਖੁਰਾਸਾਨ ਖਸਮਾਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਹਿੰਦੁਸਤਾਨੁ ਡਰਾਇਆ॥
ਆਪੈ ਦੋਸੁ ਨ ਦੇਈ ਕਰਤਾ ਜਮੁ ਕਰਿ ਮੁਗਲੁ ਚੜਾਇਆ ॥
ਏਤੀ ਮਾਰ ਪਈ ਕੁਰਲਾਣੈ ਤੈਂਕੀ ਦਰਦੁ ਨ ਆਇਆ॥
ਕਰਤਾ ਤੂੰ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਾ ਸੋਈ॥
ਜੇ ਸਕਤਾ ਸਕਤੇ ਕਉ ਮਾਰੇ ਤਾ ਮਨਿ ਰੋਸੁ ਨ ਹੋਈ ॥ ਰਹਾਉ॥
ਸਕਤਾ ਸੀਹੁ ਮਾਰੇ ਪੈ ਵਗੈ ਖਸਮੈ ਸਾ ਪੁਰਸਾਈ॥
ਰਤਨੁ ਵਿਗਾੜਿ ਵਿਗੋਏ ਕੁਤੀ ਮੁਇਆ ਸਾਰ ਨ ਕਾਈ॥

After conquering Khurasan (Afghansitan) Babur has threatened India with an invasion, but the Creator is blameless as It did not commission Babur, the angel of death, to do so. You (Creator) do not feel pity after hearing such heartrending cries? The Creator is the protector of all. (The implication is that God does not take sides in a war or human conflicts). One may not feel indignation if the conflict is between two equally strong forces. On the other hand, if one side is like a lion and the other like a herd of cows then it is the duty of the herdsman to protect the herd. (Here Guru Nanak is talking about the overwhelming superiority of Babur's army and he is holding the Lodhis responsible for failing to protect their subjects). No body will mourn the death of these dogs (Lodhis), who have wasted this jewel (India and its people). (Here Guru Nanak blames the Indian rulers, Lodhis for their failure to protect the country and its people).

AGGS, M 1, p. 360.

In his composition, Guru Nanak emphasises again and again that behind all the human problems from individual suffering to bloody international conflicts is the invisible hand of *Haumai* and its progeny of five: *Kam* (lust, sexual drive), *Kroadh* (anger), *Lobh* (covetousness, economic drive), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride with arrogance). That is why the Gurus warn us not to yield to the pressure of *Haumai* and the five temptations. *Haumai* driven men/women cause bloody conflicts; not God. Both Babur and the Lodhis were *Haumai* driven and were responsible to what transpired.

Besides, Guru Nanak digs at the ignorant and superstitious minds of the Lodhi rulers and hollow claims of the supernatural powers of the *pirs*. The desperate Indian rulers engaged *Pirs* (holy men) to perform miracles and sorcery to defeat the Mughals. The hollowness of the claims of the supernatural powers of the *Pirs* was exposed, as they could not blind a single Mughal soldier. It was the superior weaponry and determination of Babur's army, which defeated the Indians:

ਕੋਟੀ ਹੂ ਪੀਰ ਵਰਜਿ ਰਹਾਏ ਜਾ ਮੀਰੁ ਸੁਣਿਆ ਧਾਇਆ ॥
 ਥਾਨ ਮੁਕਾਮ ਜਲੇ ਬਿਜ ਮੰਦਰ ਮੁਛਿ ਮੁਛਿ ਕੁਇਰ ਰੁਲਾਇਆ ॥
 ਕੋਈ ਮੁਗਲ ਨ ਹੋਆ ਅੰਧਾ ਕਿਨੈ ਨ ਪਰਚਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

When they heard of the invasion of Babur, the Indian rulers engaged many *Pirs* for their protection. The Mughals overran Indian posts and burnt down fortresses to the ground and cut down the princes to pieces. The supernatural power of the *Pirs* could not blind a single Mughal soldier.

AGGS, M 1, p. 418.

12. After exhausting Talib's Brahmanical and "incorrect and literal" translation of AGGS for the denigration of Gurus, Jakobsh found a passage in Prof. Surjit Hans' *A Construction Of Sikh History From Sikh Literature*. She has distorted this passage on Guru Ram Das' composition beyond recognition, the way she has distorted Grewal's exposition of Guru Nanak's tribute to women:

While earlier gurus had indeed addressed the divine in the female voice as a symbol of their submission, with Guru Ram Das the symbol takes on a more palpable reality; indeed, love of the divine came to be expressed in utterly profane language. Further, the female perspective towards the body of the Guru is conspicuously emphasized; corporeality of Ram Das is central in these writings: 'Looking again and again at the body of the Guru has filled me with intense joy' (ibid.). And, 'How can I meet my handsome Man? God accepts even wayward and squat women.' According to Hans (1988:95), the 'increased presence of women in the sangat and their greater participation in the Sikh panth is very much in evidence in the composition of Guru Ram Das.'²⁵

Before commenting on the above passage, it is important to understand what the words "Guru, *Satguru* and personal Guru" mean in AGGS. Most often the words--Guru and *Satguru*--stand for God or Word (Truth, *Sabad*, *Bani*, Guru's teaching) and when used for a "personal Guru," they represent his spiritual attributes, and not his physical body/appearance:

ਗੁਰੂ ਦੇਵਾ ਗੁਰੂ ਅਲਖ ਅਭੇਵਾ ਤਿਭਵਣ ਸੋਝੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ॥

Guru is Enlightener, Formless/Invisible and Mysterious (incomprehensible in totality). One, who understands the Guru (God), comprehends the nature of the universe.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1125.

ਅਪਰੰਪਰ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪਰਮੇਸਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰ ਮਿਲਿਆ ਸੋਈ ਜੀਉ ॥

Nanak met the Guru, Who is Sovereign/Self-Sufficing, Formless/Invisible (beyond the material world) and Almighty.

AGGS, M 1, p. 599.

In his discussion with the yogis, Guru Nanak affirms that his Guru is *Sabad*. *Sabad* means "Word, sound, and voice" but in Nanakian philosophy it also means the sacred hymns enshrined in AGGS--hence the voice of God—Divine knowledge (Word). *Sabad* is synonymous with *bani* and *gurbani*:

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ॥

...

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ॥

"Who is your Guru or whose disciple are you of?"

"*Sabad* is my Guru and my mind which is focused on the *Sabad* and comprehends it, is the disciple," replied Guru Nanak.

AGGS, M 1, p. 942.

Here Guru Nanak makes it abundantly clear that Guru is the *Sabad* (Divine knowledge), not a Guru in person. Personal Guru is the medium for transmitting the Divine knowledge. Guru Nanak's successors affirmed the same that Guru is God or *Sabad* or *bani*:

ਵਾਹੁ ਵਾਹੁ ਬਾਣੀ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਹੈ ਤਿਸੁ ਜੇਵਡੁ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਇ ॥

Marvelous is *bani*, as it is the voice of the Formless One and nothing equals it.

AGGS, M 3, p. 515.

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਸਾਰੇ ॥

ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨੁ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥

Bani is the Guru and Guru is the *bani* as it contains the elixir of spiritual life. Guru utters the *bani*; the Sikh who accepts it certainly obtains salvation.

AGGS, M 4, p. 982.

ਏਹੁ ਅਖਰੁ ਤਿਨਿ ਆਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਜਗਤੁ ਸਭੁ ਉਪਾਇਆ ॥

The One, Who created the whole world, uttered this Word.

AGGS, M 4, p. 306.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ ॥

Dear Sikhs, consider the *bani* of the true Guru as Truth, as it is the Creator, Who makes the Guru utter it.

AGGS, M 4, p. 308.

ਹਉ ਆਪਹੁ ਬੋਲਿ ਨ ਜਾਣਦਾ ਮੈ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਭੁ ਹੁਕਮਾਉ ਜੀਉ ॥

I don't know what to say, I speak what God orders me to say.

AGGS, M 5, p. 763.

ਸਤਗੁਰੁ ਨਿਰੰਜਨੁ ਸੋਇ॥

ਮਾਨੁਖ ਕਾ ਕਰਿ ਰੂਪੁ ਨ ਜਾਨੁ॥

The True Guru (God) is *Niranjan* (without material content/invisible/formless); do not believe that God is in the form of a man.

AGGS, M 5, p. 895.

ਸੋ ਮੁਖੁ ਜਲਉ ਜਿਤੁ ਕਹਹਿ ਠਾਕੁਰੁ ਜੋਨੀ ॥

May that mouth burn, which says that God incarnates.

AGGS, M 5, p. 1136.

And Guru Amar Das warns that mere glimpse of the Guru person is of no avail until one imbibes Guru's teachings:

ਡਿਠੈ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜਿਚਰੁ ਸਬਦਿ ਨ ਕਰੇ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥

Mere glimpse of the personal Guru is of no avail unless the devotee deliberates on the *Sabad*.

AGGS, M 3, p. 594.

From the above discussion it is abundantly clear that Guru is God or Sabad/Guru's teaching, not Guru's body. So when Jakobsh says: "Looking again and again at the body of the Guru has filled me with intense joy," it only highlights the fact she doesn't know what she is talking about and, for that she walked away with a Ph.D. degree from UBC. Furthermore, she had ignored what Hans says about the relationship between the Guru and Sikhs in the first paragraph on page 94 from which she has quoted the above line:

The Guru is father, mother, relation and friend to them.²⁶

Now let us examine the hymns under discussion in some detail:

ਸੋ ਧੰਨੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਾਬਾਸਿ ਹੈ ਹਰਿ ਦੇਇ ਸਨੇਹਾ॥

ਹਉ ਵੇਖਿ ਵੇਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਵਿਗਸਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਦੇਹਾ ॥

Great is the Guru, applaud him as he brings the message of God's love. I am immensely pleased to see the Guru again and again because he is the embodiment of God's excellences.

AGGS, M 4, p. 726.

Hans has only highlighted the literal meaning of the second line of the couplet to suit his purpose and Jakobsh had no qualms in using it. Hans has also failed to quote any hymn attributed to his statement: "Divine love is being expressed almost in profane idiom."

Incidentally, it should come as no surprise that Jakobsh changed Hans' statement "Divine love is being expressed almost in profane idiom" to "utterly profane language." Even more interesting is to read Hans' full quote:

No doubt, the Sikh Gurus before Ram Das had addressed God as if they were women as a symbol of their submission. But with Guru Ram Das the symbol begins to assume a palpable reality. Consequently, the 'physicality' of Guru begins to enter the picture. 'Looking again and again at the body of the Guru has filled me with intense joy.' There is an emphasis on his 'friendly and loving' aspect. He is 'handsome and winning.' 'God shoots arrows of love through him.' Divine love is being expressed almost in profane idiom. 'I am utterly forlorn without the Guru.' 'God is my friend, love and King. I wish someone could bring the giver of life to me. I cannot help seeing Him and tears well up in my eyes. The Guru is a childhood friend, I cannot help seeing him, O mother.'²⁶

The "references (21-24)" cited in the above quote do not record what is being purported as "profane idiom." On the pages of AGGS from which Hans has cited the references, there is not a single verse, which can be characterised as "profane idiom."

Further, "How can I meet my handsome Man? God accepts even wayward and squat women"²⁷ is a literal translation of the hymns wherein "handsome Man" means God and "wayward and

squat women" means devotees. The Gurus called themselves as low, lowly and wretched. These are expressions of humility. Only a poet can do justice in explaining the passages cited by Hans on page 94-95. These are intense feelings/longings of a devotee for God expressed in the language of lovers: husband and wife. These feelings perhaps are hard to appreciate for some including Jakobsh.

In the beginning of chapter 4, Hans talks about the musical genius of Guru Ram Das. "The art of musical verse reaches its acme in Guru Ram Das, with an unchallenged record down to modern times. The achievement of Guru Ram Das in musicality has both theological and sociological significance, which is likely to be missed for want of analytical attention. Guru Ram Das introduced a number of musical modes, or rags, not used by the earlier Gurus."²⁸

References

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3. H. Lal. "Guru Granth as Guide, Friend & Philosopher." *The Sikh Review*, 2006, 54(1), pp. 12-13.
4. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 11.
5. Ibid., p. 11.

6. W. H. McLeod. *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1996, p. 243.
7. Daljeet Singh. *Sikhism: A Comparative Study of its Theology and Mysticism*. Amritsar: Singh Brothers, 1994, pp. 205-210.
8. Charles Brenner. *An Elementary Textbook of Psychoanalysis*. New York: Doubleday, 1973, pp. 20-21.
9. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 12.
10. Ibid., p. 15.
11. Ibid., p. 16.
12. Ibid., p. 16.
13. Ibid., p. 24.
14. Ibid., pp. 24-25.
15. Ibid., p. 25.
16. English translation of *Brihaspatismṛti* (or using Jakobsh's spelling, *Brhaspatismṛti*) is located in the **Sacred Books of the East** (Vol.33), a series of books edited by F. Max Muller. Even though this translation is not exhaustive, one can understand the profundity of the literature from reading the 27 chapters incorporated. It is quite clear to "Brihaspati" that any smṛti text opposed to the teachings of Manu has no validity (XXVII, 3). Therefore viewing and approximating the teachings of Guru Nanak with that of "Brihaspati" runs into serious trouble. Here are some more glimpses:

* A Sudra teaching the precepts of religion, or uttering the words of the Veda, or insulting a Brahman, shall be punished by cutting out his tongue (XX, 12).

* Female slaves can never be acquired by possession, without a written title; nor (does possession create ownership) in the case of property belonging to a king, or to a learned Brahman, or to an idiot, or infant (IX, 21). In other words, you can possess female slaves provided you have the proper title.

* In chapter 25, titled "The Law of Inheritance," we learn from a fairly represented sample:

a. Houses and landed property inherited from an ancestor shall be shared equally by the father and sons; but the sons cannot claim a share of their father's own property without the consent of the father (XXV, 2).

- b. Those (sons) for whom their shares have been arranged by the father whether equal, less, or greater, must be compelled to abide by such arrangement. Otherwise (if they try to alter the arrangement), they shall be punished (XXV, 4).
- c. All sons of the twice-born [Brahman, Kshatriya or Vaisya], begotten on women equal in caste (to their husbands), shall take equal shares, after giving a professional share to the eldest (XXV, 8).
- d. He may make a gift out of that property, or even consume it, at his will. But in his default, his sons are pronounced to be equal sharers (XXV, 13).
- e. Whatever has been acquired by all together, in that property they all have equal shares. Their sons, whether unequal or equal (in number), are declared (to be) heirs of the shares of their (respective) fathers (XXV, 14).
- f. Should there be younger brothers, whose initiation has not been performed, they must be initiated by the other brothers (the expense being defrayed) out of the family property (inherited) from the father (XXV, 21).
- g. Let Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas, and Sudras, begotten in order by a Brahman, take four, three, two shares, and one share, in succession. Let those begotten by a Kshatriya (take) three shares, two shares, and one share (respectively). Let those begotten by a Vaisya take two shares and one share (XXV, 27-28).
- h. A son begotten with a Sudra woman by a twice-born man is not entitled to a share of the landed property; one begotten with a woman of equal caste shall take all. Thus has the law been settled (XXV, 32).
- i. No one but a legitimate son of the body is declared to be heir of his father's wealth. An appointed daughter is said to be equal to him. All the others are stated to have a claim to maintenance (only) (XXV, 35).
- j. A daughter, like a son, springs from each member of a man; how then should any other mortal inherit the father's property while she lives? (XXV, 56)
- k. Equal in caste (to her father) and married to a man of the same caste as her own, virtuous, habitually submissive, she shall inherit her father's property, whether she may have been (expressively) appointed or not (XXV, 57).
- l. As her father's wealth becomes her wealth, though kinsmen be in existence, even so her son becomes the owner of his mother's and grandfather's wealth (XXV, 58).

It is clear that the above laws are applicable to a caste-ordained society. Moreover, these inheritance laws applied only to property owners who were Brahmans, Kshatriyas and Vaisyas, the overwhelming majority of the people who were Sudras and Antyajjas (outcasts/untouchables) had very little property to speak of. These laws have nothing in common with the teachings of Guru Nanak. Even though there might be some un-clarity with a possible contradiction, it is safe to say that woman's role is subservient to that of a male in the inheritance laws. This should not surprise us. After all, we are dealing with the Hindu laws. Who is Brihaspati? Is he a person as historical as was Guru Nanak? Judge for yourself. According to *Rig Veda*: "Brihaspati" was born in the sky with seven faces and seven rays. He has seven horns, etc. Some features of him resemble that of Jesus Christ as depicted in the Book of Revelation. "Brihaspati" is also known by other names such as: the priestly-lord (Brahmanas-pati), the lord-of-assemblies (Sdadas-pati), the-king-of-elders (Jyestha-raj), and the lord-of-heavenly-hosts (Gana-pati). Jakobsh should seriously consider the possibility of this individual as purely mythological.

17. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 24.
18. Jagjit Singh. *The Sikh Revolution: A Perspective View*. New Delhi: Bahri Publications, 4th reprint, 1998, p. 50.
19. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 25.
20. Ibid., p. 24.
21. Ibid., pp. 25-26.
22. Max A. Macauliffe. *The Sikh Religion* (Vols. I & II). Delhi: Low Price Publications, reprint, 1993, Vol. I, p. 52.
23. Ibid., Vol. I, pp. 51-52.
24. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 26.
25. Ibid., pp. 31-32.
26. Surjit Hans. *A Reconstruction Of Sikh History From Sikh Literature*. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1988, p. 94.
27. Ibid., p. 95.
28. Ibid., p. 91.

Chapter 4

False Statements about Sikh Gurus

It is evident from chapter 3 that Jakobsh's knowledge of the Sikh theology is barely minimal. Intentionally or otherwise Jakobsh has misinterpreted/distorted the hymns to suit her thesis. It is hardly a surprise to read about her ignorance of Indian as well as Sikh history. After exhausting the hymns from AGGS to denigrate Guru Nanak, she attacks him directly for being uncaring about women without providing any evidence or reasoning:

While aware of the social challenges facing the widows of his days, Nanak instead censured them for their unrestrained desires. He did not re-evaluate social institutions such as marriage and marriage practices to make them more equitable for women. Moreover, his silence regarding sati is rather surprising, given that it was primarily confined to the upper echelons of society, to which he belonged. There was also no critique of female infanticide, again a practice aligned to upper castes. In the final analysis, when it came to social status of woman, Nanak seemed content to leave the prevailing system in place.¹

His was a message of interior religion, a vision of love and devotion to the Ultimate, who in grace and promise of emancipation made no distinction between men and women, or between castes.²

Only a person who has not studied Guru Nanak's teachings or someone whose agenda is to malign him would make such outrageous statements. These statements echo what McLeod has said about Sikh Gurus and to which she added some of her own. Like McLeod and Oberoi, she fails to mention the political and religious conditions prevalent in the Indian subcontinent when Nanak launched the movement. At the advent of Guru Nanak (1469-1539 C.E.), most of the North Indian subcontinent had been under oppressive Muslim rule for at least five centuries. Nanak was born in a small village near Lahore, a town situated between two Muslim capitals, Delhi and Kabul. The bigotry and oppression of Muslim rulers had reduced the Hindu population to the level of slaves. They were deprived of all human dignity as revealed by Muslim and Hindu writers:

Al-Biruni (973-1048/1049), the renowned Indologist came to India in the wake of the invading forces led by Mahmud of Ghazni. He writes:

No Muslim conqueror passed beyond the frontier of Kabul and the river Sindh until the days of the Turks, when they seized power in Ghazna under the Samani dynasty and the supreme power fell to the lot of Nasiraddaula Sabuktigin. This prince chose the holy war as his calling, and therefore, called himself *Al-ghazi* (i.e. *warring on the road of Allah*). In the interest of his successors he constructed, in order to weaken the Indian frontier, those roads on which afterwards his son Yaminaddaula Mahmud marched into India during a period of thirty years and more. God be merciful to both father and son! Mahmud utterly ruined the prosperity of the country, and performed there wonderful exploits, by which the Hindus became like atoms of dust scattered in all directions, and like a tale of old in the mouth of the people. Their scattered remains cherish, of course, the most inveterate aversion towards all Muslims.³

Quoting various historical sources, Daulat Rai, a Hindu Arya Samajist has described in "*Sahib-i-Kamal*" *Guru Gobind Singh* (Par Excellent Master, Guru Gobind Singh) the conditions of Hindus under Muslim rule as horrible, degrading, dehumanizing and pathetic. Not only did Muslim invaders killed Hindus by the thousands, looted their properties and carried away men and women as slaves in the thousands, but also under some Muslim rulers Hindus were not allowed even the comforts of good life like good clothes, good food, ride horses, wear turbans or keep good homes or valuables or even beautiful children or wives. They were allowed to have minimum possessions for mere survival. Often they were given two alternatives: conversion to Islam or pay *Jazia* (tax on non-Muslims).⁴

Another prominent Arya Samajist, Gokul Chand Narang concurs with Daulat Rai when he says:

But the on rush of Islam spread such confusion and consternation among the Hindu ranks that all chances of reconsideration and reform came to an end. The instinct of self-preservation, in any form and at any sacrifice, became supreme and all-absorbing. The storm threatened to sweep every thing before it, and the Hindus, evidently, thought it more politic to preserve chaff as well as wheat than try to winnow and loose both. The priests, the hereditary guardians of Hinduism, lazy and lifeless like all hereditary incumbents of high position, could not unite all Hindus together so as by one united action to hurl back the waves of invasion.⁵

Ishwaro va Dillishwaro va "the Lord of Delhi is as great as God" had long been a maxim with the terrified Hindus.⁶

Nanak had, no doubt greatly succeeded in reviving the dying Hindu society, which was fairly on the way to convalescence, but environments were still unfavorable, the orthodox priesthood being still so strong, that he feared a relapse, unless some one was appointed to look after the patient. Had Nanak died without a successor there would have been no Sikhism today or at best simply another Kabirism.⁷

In view of this it is difficult to imagine what "upper echelon" of "Hindu society" Jakobsh is talking about? There were no Hindu rulers or aristocrats on the horizon where Guru Nanak lived. Only those Hindus had some privileges who worked for or collaborated with the Muslim rulers. And they could be regarded as "upper echelon of society" and Guru Nanak rebuked such Hindus, as discussed earlier in Chapter 3.

Bedi sub-caste into which Nanak was born, was not ranked high among Khatris and Nanak renounced his caste the day he

refused to wear *Janeo* (sacred thread), which was mandatory for Khatri men. Besides, his father was a small shopkeeper. Before Guru Nanak there is no evidence that any Hindu ever protested against the oppression of Muslim rulers let loose on the Hindu population or the injustice and inhumanity of the caste system including the exploitation of the masses by the Hindu and Muslim clergy and the prevailing ill treatment of women. On the other hand, writes Grewal: "A rigorous analysis of the compositions of Guru Nanak reveals that there is hardly anything in contemporary politics, society or religion that he finds commendable."⁸ I wonder how Jakobsh has missed this observation as she has cited Grewal eight times and listed his writings including the one, which contains the above citation, thirteen times in references and selected bibliography. Contrary to Jakobsh's assertion, Nanak happened to be the first Indian composing a song extolling the virtues of women.

Guru Nanak describes very vividly the effect of the tyranny of the caste system and Muslim rule on the Indian society and women in particular:

ਰੰਨਾ ਹੋਈਆ ਬੋਧੀਆ ਪੁਰਸ ਹੋਏ ਸਈਆਦਾ॥
 ਸੀਲੁ ਸੰਜਮੁ ਸੁਚ ਭੰਨੀ ਖਾਣਾ ਖਾਜੁ ਅਹਾਜੁ॥
 ਸਰਮੁ ਗਇਆ ਘਰ ਆਪਣੈ ਪਤਿ ਉਠਿ ਚਲੀ ਨਾਲਿ॥
 ਨਾਨਕ ਸਚਾ ਏਕੁ ਹੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਨ ਸਚਾ ਭਾਲਿ॥

Women have lost their vitality and become submissive and men have become brutal. Politeness, soberness (self-control) and sincerity have banished and dishonest living has become the way of life. The sense of shame and honor has disappeared from the society. Nanak, only the One is True, do not look for another one.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1243.

Contrary to what was happening in the Indian society, Guru Nanak says that Earth was created to practice righteousness and the objective of human life is become Godlike-- *sachiara* / *gurmukh* (God-centered being):

ਇਹੁ ਜਗੁ ਸਚੈ ਕੀ ਹੈ ਕੋਠੜੀ ਸਚੇ ਕਾ ਵਿਚਿ ਵਾਸੁ ॥

This world is the abode of the True One, Who resides in it.

AGGS, M 1, p. 463.

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਧਰਤੀ ਸਾਚੈ ਸਾਜੀ ॥

It is for the *gurmukh* that the True One has fashioned the Earth.

AGGS, M 1, p. 941.

ਧਰਤਿ ਉਪਾਇ ਧਰੀ ਧਰਮਸਾਲਾ ॥

The Earth was created to practice righteousness.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1033.

In the beginning of Japji, on the opening page of AGGS, Guru Nanak has described God as *Sach*, meaning Everlasting or Truth. Then in the first stanza of Japji on the same page he has enunciated the purpose of human life:

ਕਿਵ ਸਚਿਆਰਾ ਹੋਈਐ ਕਿਵ ਕੂੜੈ ਤੁਟੈ ਪਾਲਿ॥

ਹੁਕਮਿ ਰਜਾਈ ਚਲਣਾ ਨਾਨਕ ਲਿਖਿਆ ਨਾਲਿ॥

"How could one become a *sachiara* (Godlike or *gurmukh*) and how could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood?"

"By living in harmony with *Hukam* (Cosmic Law)," says Nanak.

AGGS, Jap 1, p. 1.

How could one get rid of ignorance and falsehood? On the pages of AGGS it is mentioned again and again that *Sabad* (Word, Truth) destroys ignorance, falsehood, superstition and doubt. When the yogis asked Guru Nanak, "Who is your Guru or whose disciple are you of?"

"*Sabad* (Word, Divine knowledge) is the Guru and my mind, which is focused on the Word and comprehends it, is the disciple," replied Guru Nanak.

ਤੇਰਾ ਕਵਣੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਜਿਸ ਕਾ ਤੂ ਚੇਲਾ॥

...

ਸਬਦੁ ਗੁਰੂ ਸੁਰਤਿ ਧੁਨਿ ਚੇਲਾ ॥

AGGS, M 1, pp. 942-943.

What is needed to understand *Hukam*? It is true knowledge. So a *sachiara* (*gurmukh*) is the one who understands the *Hukam* and conducts himself/herself accordingly. Man-made social distinctions are worthless, as it is God, Who judges the real worth of a person. The real low-castes are those who turn their back on God:

ਕਚ ਪਕਾਈ ਓਥੈ ਪਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਗਇਆ ਜਾਏ ਜਾਇ ॥

Nanak, whether one is inferior or superior is found out when one goes to the court of God (God-Consciousness).
AGGS, Jap 34, p. 7.

ਖਸਮੁ ਵਿਸਾਰਹਿ ਤੇ ਕਮਜਾਤਿ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਨਾਵੈ ਬਾਝ ਸਨਾਤਿ ॥

Nanak, without imbibing God one becomes low; the real low-castes are the ones who turn their back on God.
AGGS, M 1, p. 10.

ਜਾਤੀ ਦੈ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਸਚੁ ਪਰਖੀਐ ॥

ਮੁਹਰਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਹਥਿ ਮਰੀਐ ਚਖੀਐ ॥

Caste-pride is like tasting poison that causes death. Caste is of no consequence in the judgment of the content of character/truthfulness.
AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

ਅਗੈ ਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਜੋਰੁ ਹੈ ਅਗੈ ਜੀਉ ਨਵੇ ॥

ਜਿਨੁ ਕੀ ਲੇਖੈ ਪਤਿ ਪਵੈ ਚੰਗੇ ਸੇਈ ਕੋਇ ॥

Caste or worldly power is of no avail in the court of God, as there the rules are different; only those are honored who have earned spiritual merit by living truthful lives.
AGGS, M 1, p. 469.

ਐ ਜੀ ਨਾ ਹਮ ਉਤਮ ਨੀਚ ਨ ਮਧਿਮ ਹਰਿ ਸਰਣਾਗਤਿ ਹਰਿ ਕੇ ਲੋਗ ॥

Respected one, we are neither of high or low or medium caste; we belong to God Who is our refuge.
AGGS, M 1, p. 504.

ਬਾਪੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਵੇਜਾਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਇ ॥

ਏਕੇ ਕਉ ਨਾਹੀ ਭਉ ਕੋਇ ॥

Those who believe in the fatherhood of God are not outcastes/untouchables/low-caste and they are not afraid of anyone else.
AGGS, M 1, p. 796.

ਖੜੀ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਸੂਦੁ ਕਿ ਵੈਸੁ ॥

ਨਿਰਤਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਆ ਗਣੀ ਸਹੰਸੁ ॥

ਐਸਾ ਦੀਵਾ ਬਾਲੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਸੇ ਪਾਰੰਗਤਿ ਹੋਇ ॥

There are thousands and thousands (innumerable) of Khatris, Brahmans, Sudras and Vaisyas. If anyone of

them becomes a *gurmukh* (enlightened being) then such a one would find salvation.
AGGS, M 1, p. 878.

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਚਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਨੀਚੁ ਨ ਦੀਸੈ ਕੋਇ ॥
ਇਕਨੈ ਭਾਂਡੇ ਸਾਜਿਐ ਇਕੁ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਤਿਹੁ ਲੋਇ ॥

Truth is higher than every thing but higher still is truthful living. Regard everyone high; do not look at anyone as low because the One, Whose light shines in all, creates all.
AGGS, M 1, p. 62.

ਜੈਸਾ ਕਰੇ ਸੁ ਤੈਸਾ ਪਾਵੈ ॥
ਆਪਿ ਬੀਜਿ ਆਪੇ ਹੀ ਖਾਵੈ ॥

One gets what one does. What one sows, so shall one reap.
AGGS, M 1, p. 662.

ਦਿਨੁ ਰੈਨਿ ਅਪਨਾ ਕੀਆ ਪਾਈ ॥
ਕਿਸੁ ਦੋਸ ਨ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਿਰਤੁ ਭਵਾਈ ॥

We earn what we do day and night. Why blame others, it is our own doings that lead us astray.
AGGS, M 5, p. 745.

ਨਾਨਕ ਅਉਗੁਣ ਜੇਤੜੇ ਤੇਤੇ ਗਲੀ ਜੰਜੀਰ ॥
ਜੇ ਗੁਣ ਹੋਨਿ ਤ ਕਟੀਅਨਿ ਸੇ ਭਾਈ ਸੇ ਵੀਰ ॥

Nanak, vices/faults are like chains around our necks and they can be cut only with virtues, which are our only loved ones.
AGGS, M 1, p. 595.

ਚੰਗਿਆਈਆ ਬੁਰਿਆਈਆ ਵਾਚੈ ਧਰਮੁ ਹਦੂਰਿ ॥
ਕਰਮੀ ਆਪੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਕੇ ਨੇੜੈ ਕੇ ਦੂਰਿ ॥

Good and bad deeds determine the relationship with God. According to their deeds some are drawn closer to God, whereas others move away.
AGGS, Jap, Slok, p. 8.

ਸੰਜੋਗੁ ਵਿਜੋਗੁ ਦੁਇ ਕਾਰ ਚਲਾਵਹਿ ਲੇਖੇ ਆਵਹਿ ਭਾਗ ॥

There are two types of human activities, the ones that bring about union with God and others that cause separation from God.
AGGS, M 29, p. 6.

The one who realizes union with God is called *jiwan mukta*, the liberated one (*gurmukh*), the other who is separated from God is called reprobate (*manmukh*), the self-centered being.

One must ask Jakobsh: Where is the evidence that Guru Nanak showed no concern for widows, institution of marriage, sati and female infanticide? Perhaps the evidence exists only in Jakobsh's mind? Or she is duplicating one of McLeod's tricks: "As a historian I will ask questions; it is for the Sikhs to answer." On the contrary, there is overwhelming evidence that at the very beginning of his preaching Guru Nanak made it abundantly clear that he stands by the lowest of lowest of Indian society. Who was the lowest of the lowest of Indian society? In the social milieu of that time period it was the woman who occupied the lowest rung of the caste hierarchy in each major caste and its sub-caste levels. Nanak never shirked from denouncing injustice and cruelty and, preached love, compassion and reverence for life:

ਨੀਚਾ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਨੀਚ ਜਾਤਿ ਨੀਚੀ ਹੂ ਅਤਿ ਨੀਚੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕੁ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਸੰਗਿ ਸਾਥਿ ਵਡਿਆ ਸਿਉ ਕਿਆ ਰੀਸ॥
ਜਿਥੈ ਨੀਚ ਸਮਾਲੀਅਨਿ ਤਿਥੈ ਨਦਿਰ ਤੇਰੀ ਬਖਸੀਸ॥

Nanak will stand by the lowest of lowest, not with the elite. Societies that take care of the downtrodden have the blessing of God.
AGGS, M 1, p. 15.

Guru Nanak's theology is rooted in compassion without which one cannot find the righteous path. Without compassion one is spiritually deaf, blind and mute. Using the mythical bull as metaphor for the gravitational force, which keeps the cosmos in equilibrium, Guru Nanak says the mythical bull is "righteousness" born out of compassion (*daya*). In other words, all human ethics are rooted in compassion:

ਧੌਲ ਧਰਮੁ ਦਇਆ ਕਾ ਪੂਤੁ॥
ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਥਾਪਿ ਰਖਿਆ ਜਿਨਿ ਸੁਤਿ॥

Mythical bull is righteousness, which is born out of compassion and it is righteousness that keeps peace and harmony in the world.
AGGS, Jap 16, p. 3.

ਨਾਨਕ ਜਿਸੁ ਪਿੰਜਰ ਮਹਿ ਬਿਰਹਾ ਨਹੀ ਸੋ ਪਿੰਜਰ ਲੈ ਜਾਰਿ ॥

Nanak, a body that is devoid of love and longing is lifeless.
AGGS, M 2, p. 89.

ਸਚੁ ਤਾ ਪਰੁ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਜਾ ਸਿਖ ਸਚੀ ਲੋਇ ॥
ਦਇਆ ਜਾਣੈ ਜੀਅ ਕੀ ਕਿਛੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਦਾਨੁ ਕਰੋਇ ॥

Truthful is the one who follows the truth and shows compassion for all living beings and practices charity.
AGGS, M 1, p. 468.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Guru Nanak condemned Babur for the atrocities and the rape of women perpetrated by his army and he denounced the Lodhis for not protecting them. Guru Nanak emphatically denounced cruelty.

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ॥
ਕੂੜ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ॥

It is a murderous age, the kings are butchers and righteousness has taken on wings. It is the dark night of falsehood and the moon of truth does not rise anywhere.
AGGS, M 1, p. 145.

ਅਸੰਖ ਮੂਰਖ ਅੰਧ ਘੋਰ॥
ਅਸੰਖ ਚੋਰ ਹਰਾਮਖੋਰ॥
ਅਸੰਖ ਅਮਰ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ ਜੋਰ॥
ਅਸੰਖ ਗਲਵਢ ਹਤਿਆ ਕਮਾਹਿ॥
ਅਸੰਖ ਪਾਪੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਹਿ॥
ਅਸੰਖ ਕੂੜਿਆਰ ਕੂੜੇ ਫਿਰਾਹਿ॥

Countless are fools, ignorant to the utmost. Countless are thieves, who devour others' possessions. Countless are the tyrants who impose their will on others by brute force. Countless are cutthroats who commit murders. Countless are sinners who go on committing crimes. Countless are liars who keep repeating lies.
AGGS, Jap 18, p. 4.

ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਲਗੈ ਕਪੜੈ ਜਾਮਾ ਹੋਇ ਪਲੀਤੁ।
ਜੇ ਰਤੁ ਪੀਵਹਿ ਮਾਣਸਾ ਤਿਨ ਕਿਉ ਨਿਰਮਲੁ ਚੀਤ।

If bloodstain makes the clothes unclean then how could the conscience of those who drink human blood (exploit and murder human beings) be clean?
AGGS, M 1, p. 140.

Commenting on Nanak's theology Jakobsh asserts: "His was a message of interior religion," a line taken from McLeod. Like McLeod, she doesn't say what does "interior religion" mean? She seems to be ignorant that Guru Nanak rejected the Hindu and Semitic ideas of hell, heaven and salvation. In his theology, salvation means moral life, freedom from ignorance; freedom from religious, political and, economic tyranny (spiritual and temporal sovereignty); and providing altruistic service to society. Guru Nanak's God is not located far and far away in a place called "heaven," it is the center of family life. It is father, mother, lover, husband, sibling, relative and friend. Taking notice of the dismal condition of the masses, Guru Nanak pointed out three major problems:

ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਛੋੜਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭੂਖ ॥
ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਕਤਵਾਰ ਜਮਦੂਤ ॥

One pain is the separation from God, second pain is grinding poverty and third pain is the tyranny of the ruler. (It should be noted that vast majority of the human population is still facing these three problems!)
AGGS, M 1, p. 1256.

ਵਿਚਿ ਦੁਨੀਆ ਸੇਵ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥
ਤਾ ਦਰਗਹ ਬੈਸਣੁ ਪਾਈਐ॥

It is service to humanity that earns seat in God's court.
AGGS, M 1, p. 26.

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਿ ਖੋਲੇ ਕਪਾਟ॥
ਮੁਕਤੁ ਭਏ ਬਿਨਸੇ ਭ੍ਰਮ ਥਾਟ॥

Nanak says, "When the Guru (God) opened my mind to the Reality, my false perceptions were removed and I was liberated from ignorance."
AGGS, M 5, p. 188.

This may come as a rude surprise to Jakobsh: Nanak launched a campaign to awaken the masses to fight the tyranny of rulers and the dehumanizing caste system:

ਰਤੁ ਪੀਣੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਸਿਰੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਰਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਪੈ ਭਾਉ ॥
ਭੀ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਸਾਲਾਹਣਾ ਆਖਣ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਚਾਉ ॥

Even if I were to live under blood-sucking rulers, I will love and glorify God and would never get tired of

doing so. In other words I would never deviate from the righteous path.

AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

Guru Nanak gave a clarion call to the people to follow him with an explicit caution that it requires sacrifices:

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ॥
ਸਿਰ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ॥

If you want to play the game of love (follow the righteous path) then follow me and be prepared to make supreme sacrifice. Once you step on this path, do not hesitate to offer your head.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1412.

This proclamation is central to the Sikh movement—the basis of *Miri-Piri* (temporal and spiritual sovereignty) and the evolution of the noble Khalsa Order. Only a moral person (*gurmukh*) can be a *mir-pir*/Khalsa. Does Jakobsh know that once inspired by Nanakian philosophy, the Khalsa forces forged mostly from the downtrodden stock of Hindu Society--Sudras and Untouchables--fought against three formidable foes--the mighty Mughals, the proponents of Caste System and, the foreign invaders? And then established a Khalsa Kingdom over a vast tract in the Northwest of Indian sub-continent about which Baron Hugel, an Austrian traveler, wrote:

"The state established by Ranjit Singh was 'the most wonderful object in the whole world.'"⁹

All what the Gurus acted or said in favor of women, Jakobsh remains unconvinced and questions their sincerity:

Female infanticide was also condemned by the Gurus. Yet this may very well have stemmed directly from the highly esteemed guru lineage. According to Punjabi lore, Dharam Chand, a grandson of Guru Nanak, was humiliated at his daughter's marriage by the groom's family. Chand was so incensed that he ordered all Bedis to henceforth kill their daughters as soon as they were born rather than bear such humiliation. Dharam Chand, the story continues took on the burden of the crime of female infanticide from that day on, he moved as though bearing a heavy weight upon his shoulders. According to Ashu Malhotra (2002: 55-56), the latter part of the story may as well be interpreted as showing the permanent humiliation of daughters being born in the Bedi family (Browne

1857: 115-16). Guru Amar Das's condemnation of the practice may well have stemmed from a need to distance the Sikh panth under his leadership from the original guru lineage that was at the forefront of the practice of female infanticide.¹⁰

This is the very first time I came to know of this so-called "Punjabi lore" as in the above narrative. What do you make of Jakobsh? It seems she likes this absurd story to the point she mentioned it twice. Why is she so desperate to discredit Guru Amar Das? Let us examine her wild arguments; the narrative is cumbersome historically but crucial to determine Jakobsh's fallacy.

1. Sikhs did not hold Guru Nanak's descendents in "high esteem" either during Guru Amar Das's time or before or later because they worked against the Sikh movement. According to AGGS, Guru Nanak did not find his sons to be worthy to carry his message and movement forward, so he nominated one of his devotees, Bhai Lehna (Guru Angad) to succeed him:

ਸਚੁ ਜਿ ਗੁਰਿ ਫੁਰਮਾਇਆ ਕਿਉ ਏਦੁ ਬੋਲਹੁ ਹਟੀਐ ॥
ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਕਉਲੁ ਨ ਪਾਲਿਓ ਕਰਿ ਪੀਰਹੁ ਕੰਨ ਮੁਰਟੀਐ॥
ਦਿਲਿ ਖੋਟੈ ਆਕੀ ਫਿਰਨਿ ਬੰਨਿ ਭਾਰੁ ਉਚਾਇਨਿ ਛੁਟੀਐ ॥
ਜਿਨਿ ਆਖੀ ਸੋਏ ਕਰੇ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਤੀ ਤਿਨੈ ਥਟੀਐ ॥
ਕਉਣੁ ਹਾਰੇ ਕਿਨਿ ਉਵਟੀਐ ॥

If the Guru gives an order, why not accept it as truth and carry it out? But the sons refused to follow his order and turned their back on him. They were dishonest, disobedient and self-conceited. The one (Bhai Lehna) who obeyed the order and carried it out was placed on the throne. Who won and who lost?
AGGS, Balvand and Satta, p. 967.

ਗੁਰਿ ਬਾਬੈ ਫਿਟਕੇ ਸੇ ਫਿਟੇ ਗੁਰਿ ਅੰਗਦਿ ਕੀਤੇ ਕੂੜਿਆਰੇ॥
ਗੁਰਿ ਤੀਜੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਵੀਚਾਰਿਆ ਕਿਆ ਹਥਿ ਏਨਾ ਵੇਚਾਰੇ॥
ਗੁਰੂ ਚਉਥੀ ਪੀੜੀ ਟਿਕਿਆ ਤਿਨਿ ਨਿੰਦਕ ਦੁਸਟ ਸਭਿ ਤਾਰੇ॥

Guru Nanak censured them (his sons) and, Guru Angad regarded these arrogant ones as liars. The third Guru felt pity for these wretched fellows. It was the fourth Guru who forgave all the slanderers and wicked.
AGGS, M 4, p. 308.

Bhai Gurdas, who was Guru Amar Das's nephew and contemporary of five Gurus from second to sixth, was an erudite, a distinguished poet and a great Sikh theologian.

Guru Arjan chose him as the scribe for Adi Granth. In his composition, Bhai Gurdas has listed the names of prominent Sikhs from Guru Nanak to Guru Hargobind (sixth Guru). Surprisingly, there is no Bedi in that list. Furthermore, he also says that Guru Nanak's sons refused to follow his path. His elder son Sri Chand tried to hijack Guru Nanak's movement in the opposite direction by starting his own ascetic order. His other son Lakhmi Chand and his grandson Dharam Chand were vain persons:

ਪੁਤੀਂ ਕੋਲ ਨ ਪਾਲਿਆ ਮਨ ਖੋਟੇ ਆਕੀ ਨਸਿਆਰਾ।

The sons did not accept Guru Nanak's message, as they were disobedient, self-conceited and misguided.

Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bahi Gurdas*, 1, p. 16.

ਬਾਲ ਜਤੀ ਹੈ ਸਿਰੀਚੰਦ ਬਾਬਾਣਾ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਬਣਾਇਆ।

ਲਖਮੀ ਦਾਸਹੁੰ ਧਰਮ ਚੰਦ ਪੋਤਾ ਹੋਇਕੈ ਆਪ ਗਣਾਇਆ।

Sri Chand (elder son) adopted celibate and ascetic life as a young man. After Guru Nanak's death, he built a *dehura* (shrine, temple) in the name of Guru Nanak to set up his own Udasi (ascetic) sect. Guru Nanak's grandson, Dharam Chand son of Lakhmi Chand, turned out to be vainglorious.

Varan Bahi Gurdas, 26, p. 214.

Jakobsh herself has stated (pp. 85, 175, 183, 213-14) that Baba Khem Singh Bedi was a British toady, who opposed the Singh Sabha movement led by Tat Khalsa, liberation of Gurdwaras from the control mahants, and the Anand Marriage Act. Bedi along with his sons and supporters used to proclaim that Sikhs are Hindus.¹¹ He wanted to be accepted as Guru¹² with the help of the British, as they had taken control of the Gurdwaras and handed them to Hindu *mahants* and *pujaris* (priests). Khem Singh Bedi's son, Kartar Singh Bedi supported Mahant Narain Das who murdered more than 150 Sikhs in cold blood at Nankana Sahib in 1921. Sikhs remember Kartar Singh Bedi as *Kartaru Bedin* (Kartaru the apostate).¹³ Further, the population of Bedis is unknown; so it is difficult to say how many of them are Sikhs or Hindus? Most of the Bedis I have come across in my lifetime are Hindus.

2. It defies reason and common sense that all the Bedis obeyed Dharam Chand's order so promptly and started killing their newly born daughters. Perhaps not out of place to state that not even Guru Nanak's own sons followed him, not

to speak of other members of the Bedi community. Besides, if all the Bedis followed Dharam Chand's order then who in their right mind would have given their own daughters to such monsters? People who killed their daughters were ostracized as *kurimar* or "daughter slayers"¹⁴ or worse *kanjar*, (a man of the class whose women are prostitutes, man of no respect).

3. The British Imperialist used sati, female infanticide and other reprehensible customs and practices of the Indian people to claim moral superiority over them; hence their justification for ruling over them to "civilize the uncivilized."¹⁵ Being Euro-centric, Jakobsh does not see any problem with this chimerical story recorded in 1857 in *Indian Infanticide: Its origin, Progress and Suppression* by a British official, John C. Browne. Female infanticide was practiced in India, but not to the wide extent Jakobsh expects us readers to believe! If female infanticide had been that widespread as she claims, India's population figures would have presented the facts.

After condemning Guru Amar Das, Jakobsh goes after Guru Gobind Singh:

Guru Gobind Singh's harsh prohibition of killing of female babies pointed to a practice which had mostly gone on largely unchecked since the guruship of Amar Das, the first Sikh guru known to have proscribed female infanticide (Grewal 1990: 51). The practice had evidently not ended with Guru Amar Das' injunction. In fact, according to Ashu Malhotra (2000: 56) it became a central feature of both Bedi and Sondhi guru lineages. Female infanticide became the means by which these lineages rose above traditional caste biases among the Khatris.¹⁶

Here again she goes off a wild goose chase! Guru Gobind Singh being a descendent of Guru Ram Das was born in a Sodhi family, not Sondhi, a name of another community among the Punjabi Khatris. Moreover, Guru Gobind Singh's blood lineage had unfriendly relations with the Sikhs as they tried to hijack the Sikh movement and aligned themselves with the enemies of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh issued instructions to the Khalsa not to have any social connections with his Sodhi relatives: Minas, the descendants of Guru Ram Das's elder son Prithi Chand; descendants of Dhir Mal, grandson of Guru Hargobind; and Ram Rai, elder son of Guru Har Rai.¹⁷ Besides, there are many Sodhis who are Hindus. Moreover, the Gurus rejected and denounced both caste and lineage. For them lineage was not through blood, rather it was a spiritual lineage from

Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh to Sikhs who follow the Nanakian philosophy faithfully.

Further, it is preposterous on Jakobsh's part to claim without evidence that the Bedis or Sodhis used female infanticide as means for upward mobility within the "Khatrig caste hierarchy." This implies that other Khatrig groups, who were higher in caste status than Bedis and Sodhis must have been practising female infanticide on a much larger scale than Bedis or Sodhis! Had Jakobsh entertained the idea that people who practiced female infanticide were not held high, she would have taken a step towards the truth! She would have found that the persons practicing female infanticide were rather ostracized. They were stigmatized as *kurimars*¹⁴ or worse *kanjars*. I remember a family in a village whose ancestors had killed a baby girl going five generations back, was still taunted as *kurimar* (girl killers), *khuni* (murderers) and *hatiare* (murderers). Additionally, female infanticide was not confined to any particular caste or sub-caste within a caste; some families without regard to religion or caste carried it out and the numbers of such incidences were rather small. For example, let us examine female to male ratio in the 1910 census of Punjab undertaken by the British. It was 780 women for 1000 men, when Sikhs were about 10% of the population of Punjab, the majority being Muslims (50%), the rest being Hindus (35%) and others (5%).¹⁸ Therefore this huge gap of 220 between male and female could not possibly be due to female infanticide in Hindus and Sikhs alone. Muslims too were responsible for it. The effect of female infanticide on the female to male population ratio was rather small in comparison to two other major causes: discrimination against female child in general and ill health of the married women. Due to inherent discrimination against female in patriarchal culture milieu, there was relatively higher mortality rate of young girls than boys due to malnutrition in poor families. Death of young women during childbirth and heavy toll on women's health due to many rapid pregnancies was the other factor. Recent widely publicized startling studies on female feticide in India through sex selection have revealed that this evil practice is prevalent more among the economically well off and educated than among poor and less educated Indians without regard to religion or caste.

Finally, she seems so desperate to malign the Gurus that she can't even think straight; she does not know what she

is talking about. For example in the next chapter she says the British classified the Khattris as Vaisyas. If that is true then to whom were the Bedis and Sodhis trying to impress by practicing female infanticide in order to move up the caste ladder?

The Khattris of Punjab, originally classified as Vaisyas in the Census of 1901, held great protest meetings, and claimed instead to be direct descendents of the Kshatriyas of ancient Hindu mythology, the great warrior-caste lineage. Census superintendents were accordingly instructed to include Khatri under Kshatriya warrior caste in their classification project.¹⁹

After accusing the Guru of being insensitive to women's issues, Jakobsh accuses the Gurus of following the caste system in their marriages:

"Moreover, while insisting that caste was no bar to enlightenment, Guru Nanak and the gurus who followed married within Khatri caste regulations."²⁰

This is a false statement, an echo of what McLeod has been saying since the 1960s. Guru Nanak rejected *janeu* (sacred thread) that was mandatory for a Khatri to wear. He dined in the homes of Sudras, Untouchables and Muslims. His closest friend was a Muslim minstrel. He went to mosques and Muslim countries. **I would like Jakobsh or McLeod to cite a single example of a Khatri who was considered a Khatri Hindu after doing what Guru Nanak did?** Besides, Guru Nanak rejected all the essentials of Hinduism and denounced the Khatri community for its cowardice and hypocrisy:

ਖੜੀਆ ਤ ਧਰਮੁ ਛੋਡਿਆ ਮਲੇਛ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਗਹੀ ॥
ਸਿ੍ਰਸਟਿ ਸਬ ਇਕ ਵਰਨ ਹੋਈ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਗਤਿ ਰਹੀ ॥

The Khattris have abdicated their duties. Instead they have adopted the language and manners of their masters (Muslims) whom they regard as *malesh* (unclean, polluted). The whole society has degenerated abdicating moral obligations.

AGGS, M 1, p. 663.

Guru Nanak's parents arranged his marriage, but according to Sikh tradition he refused to be married by a Brahman according to Vedic ceremony. The next two Gurus, Angad and

Amar Das became Sikhs when they were already married and had grown up children. The fourth Guru Ram Das, who was also born to Hindu parents, married a Sikh woman, Guru Amar Das's daughter. All the successors after Guru Ram Das were his descendants and all of them except Guru Har Krishan, who died young, were married to Sikh women. So it is preposterous for Jakobsh to assert that Guru Nanak and the Gurus who followed him married within the Khatri caste regulations.

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Chapter 5

Maligning Jats

Unfortunately Jakobsh doesn't know when to stop. Nor does she reflect for a moment on what she is writing! First, she has pointed out that the British colonists used the low status of Indian women as an excuse to assert their moral superiority over Indians: "Higher morality of the imperialists and superiority of Western ideology was sought to be effectively established by accentuating the low status of Indian women."¹ Later her Eurocentric mind uses this "imperialist argument" to malign the Sikh Jats. So much so that she pursues the question of female infanticide further by bringing the entire Jat community under purview of her discussion. Using an interpolated passage in the revised edition of Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs* and the *Kissa* (poetic narration of love story) of *Hir* and *Ranjha* as evidence, she declares Jats as "daughter killers,"² while earlier she has described Jats as egalitarian people who practised gender equality:³

The ensuing association between Jats and female infanticide can be clearly seen in the famous Punjabi saga *Hir and Ranjha*. In its most illustrious version associated with bard Waris Shah (1978:44), the various methods utilized in the killing of infant daughters were spelled out. They included strangulation, poisoning, drowning and suffocation.²

Shah (quoted by Garret in Cunningham 1990: viii) goes on to lament the usurpation of prestige and power by this socially insignificant caste group:

Thieves have become the leaders of men.
Harlots have become mistresses of the household.
The company of devil has multiplied exceedingly.
The state of the noble is pitiable.
Men of menial birth flourish and the peasants are in great prosperity.
The Jats have become masters of our country.
Everywhere there is a new Government.⁴

Jakobsh has used the *Kissa* of *Hir* and *Ranjha* to malign the Sikh Jats. One wonders if Jakobsh knows that Waris Shah, the author of *Kissa*, was a Muslim just like the hero (*Ranjha*) and heroine (*Hir*) of the folktale. Besides, she is ignorant of the context in which Shah has described the homicidal methods: There is an argument back and forth

between Hir and her parents about her love affair with Ranjha, family's cattle herder. They try to persuade Hir to forget about Ranjha and marry Saida, the son of a well-to-do landlord. But Hir refuses to budge from her love for Ranjha. Having failed to persuade her, her father takes out his frustration by telling his wife (on page 45 of author's copy of *Hir Waris Shah*), "Why didn't you kill this girl when she was born by strangulation or poisoning or drowning?" Now, such methods of killing are not specific for female infanticide; any criminal can utilize these methods to commit murder. Moreover, Shah does not say anywhere in the *Kissa* that these methods were used by Jats to commit infanticide or kill women.

Why would Jakobsh take on such a folktale to go after the Sikh Jats?

There is another serious problem here: Jakobsh has concealed the reason why in 1915, Garrett inserted a passage under the name of Waris Shah in the revised edition of *History of the Sikhs* by J. D. Cunningham, which was first published in 1849. Cunningham had spent eight years (1838-1846) in close contact with Sikhs as an official of the East India Company and he held high opinion of the Sikhs and their religion. He divulged in the first edition that the British were insincere in their dealings with the Sikhs and usurped the Sikh kingdom through treacherous means. This is how his younger brother Peter Cunningham described the treatment meted out to his brother by his superiors for telling the truth:

"The author fell victim to the truth related in this book. He wrote history in advance of his time, and suffered for it; but posterity will, I feel assured, do justice to his memory."⁵

In the 1915 edition of *History of the Sikhs*, H.L.O. Garrett plucked out the passages that British authorities found objectionable and instead inserted another one under the name of Waris Shah to depict Sikhs as depraved people, thereby justifying the British actions against the Sikhs:

The author gives a somewhat turgid description of battles of war—indeed, the language in the account of the battle of Sobraon reminds one of the story of the battle in poems of Mr. Robert Montgomery—and he concludes his narrative by some general remarks upon English policy in India. From the latter I have removed some

passages which are not only injudicious but which have been stultified by the march of events.⁶

Here are some other facts to consider about the passage under Shah's name inserted by Garrett in the 1915 edition of Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*:

1. I have in my possession *Hir Waris Shah* in Gurmukhi script with 335 pages published in the 1950s by Bhai Jawahar Singh Kirpal Singh and Co. Upon comparing the questionable paragraph in *Hir Waris Shah* (p.332) with the passage inserted by Garrett in the revised edition of Cunningham's *History of the Sikhs*, I find major differences between the two. For example: There is no mention of "Peasants are in great prosperity. The Jats have become masters of our country. Everywhere there is a new Government." Moreover, in the entire passage there is no mention of the word "Jat."

2. Most probably, Waris Shah (1730 or 1738-1790?) talks of the lawlessness and anarchy that had taken hold over Punjab, not about Sikhs. In 1739, Nadir Shah's conquest of the province of Lahore shattered government administrative machinery and ravaged the countryside bringing destruction, desolation and disorder all around.⁷ This was followed by seven invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali from 1748 to 1769 playing havoc on the countryside and rendering the Mughal government ineffective.⁸ On the top of this were lightning attacks by the Sikhs on government headquarters all over Punjab.

3. It is well known that there have been deletions as well as interpolations in Punjabi *kissas* including *Hir Waris Shah*. Moreover, here we are dealing with people (colonists) who had justified slavery, colonization, and genocide of native populations on the pretext of saving the "soul of heathens" and "civilizing the savages," thus turning the meaning of civilized "upside down." Most probably the lines about Jats were interpolated in *Hir Waris Shah* at the behest of the British to malign the Sikhs. It is also intriguing that Shah Mohammed (1780-1862) who wrote *Anglo-Sikh War (Angraijan Te Singhan Di Larai, ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ਾਂ ਤੇ ਸਿੰਘਾਂ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ)* in 1847 soon after the 1845-46 Anglo-Sikh War, does not blame the British or make mention of the treachery of Lal Singh, Tej Singh and Gulab Singh. Instead, he lays the entire blame for the war on Rani Jindan.⁹ The British had also implanted other stories (*sakhis*) in hagiographic literature that Guru Teg Bahadur and Guru Gobind Singh had prophesied about the British conquest of India:

One day, as Guru Teg Bahadur was in the top story of his prison, the Emperor Aurangzeb thought he saw him looking towards the south in the direction of Imperial zenana. He was sent for the next day, and charged with grave breach of Oriental etiquette and propriety. The Guru replied, 'Emperor Aurangzeb, I was on the top story of my prison, but I was not looking at thy private apartments or any queens. I was looking in the direction of the Europeans who are coming from beyond the sea to tear down thy pardas and destroy thine empire.' Sikh writers state that these words became the battle-cry of the Sikhs in the assault on the mutineers in Dihli (Delhi) in 1857, under General John Nicholson, and thus the prophesy of the ninth Guru was gloriously fulfilled.

When it was represented to Guru Gobind Singh that a Muhammadan army would eventually come to overpower his Sikhs, he replied, 'What God willeth shall take place. When the army of the Muhammadans cometh, my Sikhs shall strike steel on steel. The Khalsa shall then awake, and know the play of battle. Amid the clash of arms the Khalsa shall be partners in present and future bliss, tranquillity, meditation, and divine knowledge. Then shall the English come, and, joined by the Khalsa, rule as well in the East as in the West. The holy Baba Nanak will bestow wealth on them. The English shall possess great power and by force of arms take possession of many principalities. The combined armies of the English and the Sikhs shall be very powerful, as long as they rule with united councils. The empire of the British shall vastly increase, and they shall in every way obtain prosperity. Wherever they take their armies they shall conquer and bestow thrones on their vassals. Then in every house shall be wealth, in every house religion, in every house learning, and in every house happiness.'¹⁰

4. When Shah wrote his work in 1768 C.E. (Hijri 1180), the population of Sikhs was minuscule in comparison to the population of Muslims and Hindus. Even after the Sikhs had ruled Punjab for roughly 90 years, in the 1868 Punjab census conducted by the British, the Sikh population constituted only 6.5%.¹¹ Therefore one must ask: If Sikhs were so bad, as portrayed in the passage attributed to Shah by Garrett, how then could such a small community was able to defeat three formidable foes--the Afghan invaders, Mughal government and the "defenders of the caste system?"

5. Besides, if Shah did write this passage against Sikhs then it isn't difficult to understand why he was so upset over defeat of Mughal government! Indian Muslims have two main social divisions: Ashraf, or noble that includes descendants of foreign born Muslims and converts from higher Hindu castes and, Ajlaf, or common people, converts from lower Hindu castes.¹² Shah was a Syed Muslim who had nothing but contempt for women and lower castes, particularly Jats. In his *Kissa*, he never misses the

opportunity to downgrade Jats by putting down Ranjha who is a Jat. He used all kind of stereotypes to malign Jats, women, and the people of lower castes. Most probably he himself was the descendant of a Brahman or Khatri who had converted to Islam. Brahmans and Khatri who converted to Islam were accommodated among Ashraf Muslims by giving them titles like Syed or Khan. There is a clue in his writing about his possible Hindu ancestry:

ਨਾਹੀਂ ਚੂੜੇ ਦਾ ਪੁਤਰ ਹੋਵੇ ਸੱਯਦ ਘੋੜੇ ਹੋਣ ਨਾਹੀਂ ਪੁਤਰ ਲੇਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ।
ਵਾਰਸ ਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਕੀਰ ਨ ਹੋਣ ਹਰਗਿਜ਼ ਪੁਤਰ ਨਾਈਆਂ ਤੇ ਮੋਚੀਆਂ ਤੇਲੀਆਂ ਦੇ।

The son of a sweeper (*chuhra*) cannot become a Syed like the son of a sheep cannot become a horse. O Waris Shah, the sons of barbers, shoemakers and millers never become *fakirs* (hermits).

Waris Shah, *Hir Waris Shah*, p. 36.

ਨਾਲ ਚੂੜੇ ਦੇ ਖਤਰੀ ਘੁਲਨ ਲਗਾ ਵਾਰਸਸ਼ਾਹ ਫਿਰ ਮੁਲਕ ਨੇ ਹਸਣਾ ਈਂ।

Waris Shah, people would laugh if a *chuhra* (sweeper) wrestles with a Khatri (Kshatriya).

Waris Shah, *Hir Waris Shah*, p. 239.

Cursory reading of *Hir Waris Shah* reveals that it is replete with derogatory remarks and stereotypes against women (pp. 31, 239, 258-259), lower castes (pp. 181, 239) and Jats (pp. 107, 185, 197, 316). In the entire work, Shah mentions Sikhs only twice, once in a derogatory manner and, the other indirectly when he grieves over the conquest of Kasur by Sikhs. While describing various gurus, he says *kesadharis* (who keep unshorn hair on head) have ten Gurus.

ਜਿਵੇਂ ਗੁਰੂ ਦਸੇ ਕੇਸਾਧਾਰੀਆਂ ਦੇ ਕੈਦੇ ਸਾਂਗੀਆਂ ਵਗਰ ਲਬਾਸੀਆਂ ਦਾ।

Kesadharis have ten Gurus, as Kado (Hir's uncle) is the guru of impostors who disguise themselves in unusual modes of clothing.

Waris Shah, *Hir Waris Shah*, p. 187.

6. In the first half of the eighteenth century, we see the Mughal authorities and their collaborators—the “defenders of the caste system” unleash a reign of systematic murder of the Sikhs. There were frequent bloody battles between the Sikhs and their opponents resulting in two major massacres of the Sikhs better known as big and small *ghalugharas* (holocausts), and Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali's hideous and devastating invasions of India. Given all this bloodshed, Shah is silent about it. However, he

grieves over the conquest of the city Kasur, the birthplace of his *murshid* (spiritual guide) by the Sikhs.

ਸਾਰੇ ਮੁਲਕ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਜ਼ਰਆਬ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਮੈਨੂੰ ਬੜਾ ਅਫਸੋਸ ਕਸੂਰ ਦਾ ਏ ।

Out of the whole of Punjab, the land of waters, I am very sorry about Kasur.

Waris Shah, *Hir Waris Shah*, p. 332.

Notwithstanding what Waris Shah said in the passage (p.332), which may or may not be about Sikhs, other Muslim writers paid tribute to the "Sikh character." In contrast to Waris Shah, Bulleh Shah (1680-1758 C.E.)¹³ deeply felt the pain of the carnage in Punjab. He condemned the bigotry of Muslims, tyranny of the caste system and atrocities of the Mughal rulers. He applauded the martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadur by calling him *gazi* (p. 9).

He echoes Guru Gobind Singh's proclamation that his one Sikh will fight a legion and his sparrow will tear apart the hawk:

ਬਾਜਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਰਗੋਸ਼ਾਂ ਖਾਧਾ, ਜੁੱਰੇ ਚਿੜੀਆਂ ਮਾਰ ਗਵਾਏ,

ਭੂਰਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਤੇ, ਰਾਜੇ ਭੀਖ ਮੰਗਾਏ।

The rabbits ate the hawks and the sparrows tore apart the goshawks. The ones clad in coarse blankets became the rulers and the rulers became beggars.

Bulleh Shah, p. 9.

ਨਾਂ ਕਹੂੰ ਜਬ ਕੀ, ਨਾ ਕਹੂੰ ਤਬ ਕੀ,

ਬਾਤ ਕਹੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਅਬ ਕੀ।

ਅਗਰ ਨ ਹੋਤੇ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ,

ਸੁੰਨਤ ਹੋਤੀ ਸਭ ਕੀ।

I am not talking about the past or future, I am talking about the present. Had there been no Guru Gobind Singh, everyone would have been circumcised.

Bulleh Shah, pp. 9-10.

ਮੁਗਲਾਂ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਪਿਆਲੇ ਪੀਤੇ,

ਭੂਰਿਆਂ ਵਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਕੀਤੇ।

ਸਭ ਅਸ਼ਰਫ ਫਿਰਨ ਚੁਪੀਤੇ,

ਭਲਾ ਉਹਨਾ ਨੂੰ ਝਾੜਿਆ ਈ।

The Mughals got intoxicated with poison (political power and immorality). The ones clad in coarse blankets became rajas. All the *Ashrafs* (noble Muslim)

are now silent. Why did not they protest what the Mughal rulers were doing?
Bulleh Shah, p. 12.

I grew up hearing the following couplet attributed to Bulleh Shah. When a price was fixed on the head of a Sikh in the early eighteenth century, Sikhs took shelters in jungles and in the desert of Rajasthan. After his meeting with Sikhs in the jungle, Bulleh Shah wrote:

ਇੱਟ ਖੜਕੇ ਦੁੱਕੜ ਬੱਜੇ ਨਾਲੇ ਚਲੇ ਚੁਲਾ।
ਐਸੀ ਥਾਂ ਤੇ ਰੱਬ ਭੀ ਰਾਜੀ ਨਾਲੇ ਰਾਜੀ ਬੁਲਾ।

They fight battles, sing praises of God and have free Langar (community kitchen). Bullah is pleased with them and so is God.

When Nadir Shah's army looted Punjab from Peshawar to Ravi, pillaging village after village, Bulleh Shah recoiled with pain:

ਦਰ ਖੁਲ੍ਹਾ ਹਸਰ ਅਜਾਬ ਦਾ,
ਬੁਰਾ ਹਾਲ ਹੋਇਆ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦਾ।

The door of hell is open to let out loud weeping and wailing. Punjab has been ruined utterly.
Bulleh Shah, p. 13.

Similarly, Qazi Nur Mohammed who witnessed the battle between Ahmad Shah Abdali and the Sikhs in 1764 C.E. observed that Sikhs were the "beau ideal of a human being and were popular among the people of Punjab." It is noteworthy that he mentioned "people of Punjab," not Hindus or Muslims. Further on he made telling remarks about the character of Sikhs in his testimony:

- a. Sikhism is distinct from Hinduism.
- b. The Sikhs never kill a coward and do not obstruct one who flees from the field. They seldom resort to cold-blooded murder even of their enemies.
- c. They respect the chastity of woman as a part of their faith and honour, and adultery does not exist among them. They do not rob a woman of her gold and ornaments, may she be a queen or a slave girl.
- d. They never resort to stealing and no thief exists among them and they do not keep company with an adulterer or a thief.
- e. When in festivities, they surpass Hatim in

generosity.¹⁴

Additionally, Professor Mohammed Iqbal, twentieth century renowned poet and Islamic scholar attributed the victory of Khalsa forces (Sikhs) over Muslim rulers, to the Sikh character and spirit:

*Khalsa shamsheero Quran ra burd,
Andrin Kishwar Mussakmani namurd.*¹⁵

The Khalsa took away the sword and Quran from the Muslims and shattered the dreams of Muslim conquest.

In other words, it was their faith, the very Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) that inspired the Sikhs to fight with dogged determination.

7. It was the plundering of India by Nadir Shah of Persia and repeated invasions by Ahmad Shah Abdali of Afghanistan that increased the prestige and popularity of Sikhs among the people of Punjab. After defeating the Mughals at Karnal, Nadir Shah ravaged Delhi and collected huge booty, including the bejeweled Peacock Throne, the famous Koh-i-Noor diamond (the mountain of light) and thousands of men and women as slaves. For his return journey in 1739, he chose to travel via the foot of Himalayas to avoid the scorching heat in the plains. That suited the Khalsa very well to deprive him part of the haul including Indian artisans and women. The Khalsa started harassing Nadir Shah's booty-laden forces right from their entry into Punjab down to Indus. They deprived him of a large part of plunder including men and women, without facing Nadir Shah's army in an open combat. When apprised of the character of the Khalsa whose "houses were their saddles," Nadir Shah perceptibly told Zakaria Khan, "The day is not distant when these rebels will take possession of the country." The exploits of the Khalsa against Nadir Shah endeared them to the people and greatly added to their prestige and influence, especially when they restored to Hindus and Muslims their womenfolk taken by Nadir Shah's forces as spoils of war.¹⁶

Repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali created unparalleled chaos and anarchy, high degree of economic and public insecurity and personal tragedy for the population, irrespective of caste, creed or religion. An adage coined during that period is still remembered in Punjab:

ਖਾਧਾ ਪੀਤਾ ਲਾਹੇ ਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਅਹਿਮਦ ਸ਼ਾਹੇ ਦਾ (*khada pita lahe da, rehnda Ahmad Shahe da*).

Whatever one can eat or drink is profitable; the rest belongs to Ahmad Shah.¹⁷

In the face of such horrible conditions the Khalsa rose to challenge the invaders and rescue men and women from their clutches, which rightly so won the hearts of the people giving birth to a popular lore:

ਛਾਈਏ ਕਿ ਰੱਨ ਗਈ ਬਸਰੇ ਨੂੰ, ਕਿ ਮੋੜੀ ਬਾਬਾ ਡਾਂਗ ਵਾਲਿਆ ਸਰਦਾਰਾ (*chaie ke run gae Basre nun, ke mori baba dang walia Sardara*).
O dear Sardar brother with a *daang* (strong wooden club), please bring back my woman from Basra— alluding to the abduction and sale of Indian women at Basra market, and appealing to the Sikh armed brother to retrieve them.¹⁸

8. This chapter will be incomplete if I fail to highlight the contradictory statements Jakobsh wrote about the Jats. Read it for yourself:

The earliest sources depicting the pastoral Jats made specific mention of a disposition of equality between men and women. The traveller Hiuen Tsang noted in the seventh century:

By the side of river Sindh, along the flat marshy lowlands for some thousand *li*, there are several hundreds of thousands (a very great many) families settled. ... They give themselves to tending cattle and from this drive their livelihood. ... *They have no masters, and whether men or women, have neither rich nor poor* [*italics mine*].³

Then later on in the same chapter she says that Jats are "daughter killers:"

The ensuing association between Jats and female infanticide can be clearly seen in the famous Punjabi saga of Hir Ranjha. In its most illustrious version associated with bard Waris Shah (1978:44), the various methods utilised in the killing of infant daughters were spelled out. They included strangulation, poisoning, drowning and suffocation.²

How is it possible that egalitarian Jats who believed in the equality of men and women also practiced female infanticide on a large scale as claimed by Jakobsh? Is it a fabrication of her scheming mind?

Similarly, as discussed earlier, she says that the Sikh Gurus did not do any thing to ameliorate the problems of women, or they were ambivalent about their situation, or they were biased against them or critical of them:

"Significantly, the fourth Guru was highly critical of women in his writings."¹⁹

A few paragraphs before the above remark about the fourth Guru, Jakobsh argues:

Given the egalitarian nature of the Jats in the early Indo-Islamic period, it is possible that it was the women in particular who were attracted to the message of emancipation of the Sikh gurus and, consequently, to full participation in the developing Sikh Community. A number of factors point to this development.

One, the message of the Sikh gurus with regard to salvation was accessible to both women and men; two, there are strains within sources (though typically barely audible) which point to women as having been active participants in the developing community; three, Guru Amar Das' criticism of society with regard to the situation of women; four, the plausibility of missionary activities by women also during the time of Guru Amar Das, resulting most certainly in active outreach towards women; and five; scriptural indications of an influx of women into the Sikh panth during the time of fourth guru.²⁰

I wonder whether Professor Jakobsh habitually writes with a habit of imbedded contradictions! Her mentors at the UBC failed to correct her. Is it a case of mentors showing off their ignorance of the subject matter in competition against Jakobsh? One may ask why the egalitarian Jats, especially their women folk would join the Sikh movement, which according to Jakobsh discriminated against them and, especially at the time of fourth Guru who was highly critical of women?

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Chapter 6

Spurious Anti-Sikh Writings

Today we hear some individuals with a revisionist mindset claiming that the Jewish holocaust is a myth. Jakobsh might as well join them. But here Jakobsh is up for something entirely different: earn her doctorate while at the same time malign the Sikhs and the Sikh Gurus in the process. Also she is thrusting upon Sikhs spurious writings that don't belong to them. Commenting on janam-sakhis (biographies) she says:

"While the historical elements of this literature must be questioned, it does point to later understandings of the guru, and indeed, of the role of women in the ensuing society."¹

Yet she has no qualms using such writings to malign the Gurus. For example, she uses Bala Janam-Sakhi to depict Guru Nanak's relationship with his wife and other women of the family.² She has quoted McLeod frequently, but here she ignores his observation that Bala Janam-Sakhi is the work of Hindalis, a heretical sect³ who were the bitter enemies of the Sikhs.⁴

Bala Janam-Sakhi denigrates Guru Nanak and his family and friends. In his analysis of this janam-sakhi, Professor Surjit Hans writes:

Guru Nanak is a lesser bhagat than Kabir. He [Guru Nanak] prophesies a greater bhagat, Handal to come.⁵
The first clue to grasping the true character of the Bala Janamsakhi is the fact that the persons related most closely to Guru Nanak are presented in uncomplimentary light. His father, Kalu, for instance, is a cruel man; he is greedy and ill spoken; he blames Mardana for spoiling his son; and Guru Nanak is rather chary of meeting him. Guru Nanak's wife regrets marrying him, she is hot-tempered and full of anger. His mother-in-law is quarrelsome and hardhearted. His father-in-law curses his fate to have a son-in-law like Guru Nanak. The Guru's constant companion,

Mardana, is pleased with counterfeit coins and cast off clothes; he is all the time hungry. The image of Guru Nanak in Bala Janamsakhi is hopelessly tarnished. ... The climax comes when he is placed almost at par with Bala and Mardana, his old familiar friends (yar).⁶

Speaking about Dasam Granth, Jakobsh says:

Many historians and theologians have downplayed the importance of this work; its actual authorship has been a point of heated controversy. By and large it has been posited as unlikely to have stemmed from the tenth guru. This perspective must be traced to the early twentieth century. According to Macauliffe (1990, vol. V: 260), several intelligent Sikhs were of the opinion that the tales and translations in the volume, as at present found, ought not to have been included in it, for many of them are of Hindu origin, others not fit for perusal and none comparable with hymns contained in Adi Granth. The Sikhs, therefore, maintained that the *Hikayats* or Persian Tales, and whole of the *Triya Charitra* or stories illustrating the deceits of women, should be omitted and included in a separate volume which may not be read for religious purposes but for entertainment and delectation of the public. ...

Thus regardless of whether its authorship can be attributed to Guru Gobind Singh or not, the work is of considerable importance in understanding gender construction in the immediate post-guru period; remnants of these attitudes towards women can be traced directly to the *Chaupa Singh Rahit-nama*.⁷

And she goes on to say, "If we look to the writings of Guru Gobind Singh, which have been incorporated into the *Dasam Granth*, the *Pakhyan Charitra*, also known as the *Triya Charitra*, forms a bulk of the volume."⁸

First, she says that it is unlikely that Dasam Granth "stemmed from the tenth guru," but she sees no problem using it to malign him. Many historians and theologians have pointed out that Guru Gobind Singh is not the author of Dasam Granth. Recently, Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann has pointed out that Dasam Granth was written/compiled at the behest of the East India Company by the *mahants* (monks/priests) of Takhat Patna (Sikh religious centre in the State of Bihar) for the purposes of subverting Sikh theology and history. According to Mann, there is no evidence that Dasam Granth was found in Punjab or Delhi in the eighteenth century. There is also no evidence that in the eighteenth century Aad Guru Granth Sahib was not given exclusive preference over the bani (composition) attributed to Guru Gobind Singh. Prior to Malcolm's mention of Dasam Granth (1810 C.E.), there is no reference to it either in Sikh or non-Sikh sources (Muslim and European).⁹

However, there were 32 Dasam Granths circulating around Amritsar area by 1890. The present-day published Dasam Granth (1902) is the work of the Sodhak Committee made-up of British cronies (1895-1897). This was done to bring it into closer conformity with the Granth floated by the British in the late eighteenth century prepared by *mahants* (Nawal Singh, Dayal Singh and Sukha Singh) of Takhat Patna. The Patna copy of the granth was implanted in the East India Company Library by Colebrook and Charles Wilkins and used by John Malcolm to write his *Sketch of the Sikhs* in 1810. Devanagari version of this granth was written in February 1847 after the Sikhs lost the first Anglo-Sikh War (Second treaty with Lahore, December 16, 1846 at Bhairowal when the British became virtual masters of Punjab). Treacherous Sardar Tej Singh was the chief of the regency council when this Devanagari Dasam Granth was created. In recognition of his services, the title of Raja was conferred on him on August 7, 1847.⁹

Takhat Patna came under the control of East India Company in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. The revenue records of Patna treasury show that *mahants* of Takhat Patna were provided with pension and opium from 1814 onwards by the East India Company.⁹

Often I have wondered why the author of *Bachittar Natak*, (part of Dasam Granth) portrayed the relationship between the Sikh Guru and Mughal rulers as cordial when in reality the Mughal rulers executed Guru Arjan and Guru Teg Bahadur. Moreover, the Mughals committed unspeakable atrocities on the Sikhs and there was a bloody struggle between the Mughals and Sikhs that lasted for almost half century until the establishment of Sikh rule/Khalsa Raj. Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann's discovery of the relationship between the East India Company and the *mahants* of Takhat Patna goes a long way in solving this riddle. Most probably, before the East India Company took control of Takhat Patna, the *mahants* were on the payroll of the Mughal rulers.

In chapter 13 of *Bachittar Natak*¹⁰ the writer implies that the Gurus approved of the Mughal rulers and *as quid-pro-quo*, the latter respected and supported the former:

ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਦੋਊ ॥
ਆਪ ਕਰੇ ਪਰਮੇਸਰ ਸੋਊ ॥
ਦੀਨਸਾਹ ਇਨ ਕੋ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੋ ॥
ਦੁਨੀਪੱਤਿ ਉਨ ਕੋ ਅਨੁਮਾਨੋ ॥

ਜੋ ਬਾਬੇ ਕੇ ਦਾਮ ਨ ਦੇ ਹੈ ॥
 ਤਿਨ ਤੇ ਗਹਿ ਬਾਬਰ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਹੈ ॥
 ਦੇ ਦੇ ਤਿਨ ਕੇ ਬਡੀ ਸਜਾਇ ॥
 ਪੁਨਿ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਗੁਹਿ ਲੂਟ ਬਨਾਇ ॥
 ਜਬ ਹੂੰ ਹੈ ਬੇਮੁਖ ਬਿਨਾ ਧਨ॥
 ਤਬਿ ਚੜਿ ਹੇ ਸਿੱਖਨ ਕਹ ਮਾਂਗਨ॥
 ਜੇ ਜੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਤਿਨੈ ਧਨ ਦੇ ਹੈਂ॥
 ਲੂਟਿ ਮਲੇਛ ਤਿਨੁ ਕੇ ਲੈ ਹੈਂ॥

God Himself created the successors of Baba Nanak and Babur. Recognize the former as spiritual and the latter as temporal sovereign. The successors of Babur punished and looted the property of those who failed to tithe the house of Nanak. When the penniless wretched ones who deserted the Guru, begged Sikhs for help, the Mughals looted the Sikhs who helped them. J. P. Sangat Singh, *Bachittar Natak Steek*, pp. 199-200.

After declaring Guru Gobind Singh the author of Dasam Granth, Jakobsh dwells upon the practice of polygamy by Guru Gobind Singh. While discussing the role of women in "Khande Di Pahul," the initiation ceremony for the Khalsa, she writes:

While accounts vary as to the central participants of this event, tradition maintains that Guru Gobind Singh's wives played an important role in the proceedings; a feminine element thus came to be added to this decisively male-dominated rite of initiation. According to most popular accounts, Mata Jito, the Guru's second wife, came to the gathering out of curiosity, carrying sweets. The Guru instructed her to add the sweets to the water while he stirred the mixture with a two-edged sword. McAuliffe (1990, Vol. V: 95) relying on popular account notes: 'He had begun, he said to beget the Khalsa as his sons, and without a woman no son could be produced. Now that the sweets were poured into the nectar, the Sikhs would be at peace with one another, otherwise they could be at continual variance.' In a different rahitinama, it was the third wife of Guru Gobind Singh, Mata Sahib Devi, who was responsible for the sweetened water (Padam 1974, cited in McLeod 1987: 230-1). An account from the early twentieth century, however, insists that it was Mata Sundri, the first wife of the Guru who added sweets to the water (Singh, B. C. 1903: 280). The Chaupa Singh Rahit-nama emerging about fifty years after Guru Gobind Singh's death added an entirely new perspective. It maintained that a man named Dharam Chand suggested to the Guru that the water be sweetened, but it was Chaupa Singh himself who prepared the mixture (McLeod 1987: 169-70). As these variances indicate, historical sources are not at all clear as to who actually took part in this pivotal event.¹¹

In an attempt to come to terms with the tenth guru's practice of polygamy, tradition notes that while Sahib Devan was offered to the Guru in marriage, she was rejected by Gobind Singh on the ground of his having relinquished family life. Her father, however, agreed to a life of service to the guru for his daughter without conjugal privileges, it was thus that a marriage took place between them .¹²

This absurd narrative doesn't deserve any comment except for Guru Gobind Singh's alleged polygamy. Before discussing this issue we must remember that Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) categorically rejects ascetic and celibate life and it advocates and emphasizes householder life being the right way to realize God and to contribute to human society. Furthermore, Gurmat condemns polygamy and approves only of monogamy:

ਮਾਣੈ ਰੰਗ ਭੋਗ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ॥

A *manmukh* (degenerate man) seeks sexual pleasures with multiple women.

AGGS, M 5, p. 176.

ਕਾਮਵੰਤ ਕਾਮੀ ਬਹੁ ਨਾਰੀ ਪਰ ਗ੍ਰਿਹ ਜੋਹ ਨ ਚੁਕੈ॥

A *manmukh* driven by *Kam* (lust) who has sex with many women always lusts for other's women.

AGGS, M 5, p. 672.

On the other hand, fidelity between the couple is the core of marriage according to Nanakian philosophy. For example, Guru Amar Das describes marriage as a spiritual bond between the couple:

ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਿਨ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ॥

ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਹੀਆਂ ਸੋਇ॥

Mere performance of worldly duties does not make a couple wife and husband rather it is the spiritual union between the two, which makes them wife and husband.

AGGS, M 3, p. 788.

Bhai Gurdas, who was Guru Amar Das' nephew and an amanuensis for Adi Granth, confirms a Sikh being a monogamous while describing the attributes of a Sikh:

ਏਕਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ॥

A Sikh/*gurmukh* practices monogamy and remains faithful to his wife and respects other women as daughter and sister.

Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 6, p. 53.

Bhai Gurdas exerted a strong influence on young Guru Hargobind after the execution of his father, Guru Arjan. In the next two verses Bhai Gurdas confirms that Guru Hargobind was spiritually one with his predecessors:

ਪੰਜ ਪਿਆਲੇ ਪੰਜ ਪੀਰ ਛੁਟਮ ਪੀਰ ਬੈਠਾ ਗੁਰ ਭਾਰੀ॥
ਅਰਜਨ ਕਾਇਆ ਪਲਟ ਕੈ ਮੂਰਤਿ ਹਰਿਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਵਾਰੀ॥

In contrast to the first five Gurus, the sixth Guru, Hargobind Sahib (openly proclaimed spiritual and temporal sovereignty by donning two swords and royal dress). However, his message was the same as if his predecessor Guru Arjan was speaking through him.

Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 1, p. 19.

Guru Hargobind imbibed the teaching of Guru Nanak and he instructed his successor, Guru Har Rai to do the same:¹³

ਜੋ ਸਿਖਿਯਾ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਕੇਰੀ।
ਸੋ ਦੀਨੀ ਸੁਖਸਿੰਧੁ ਘਨੇਰੀ।

...

ਏ ਬਿਧਿ ਸਿਖਿਯਾ ਦਈ ਅਪਾਰ।
ਗੁਰ ਹਰਿ ਰਾਇ ਹੀਏ ਸਭ ਧਾਰ।

The teaching of Guru Nanak is immensely blissful. Guru Har Rai was instructed to imbibe this teaching in his heart, as it is the Word of the Infinite Being.

Gur Bilas Patshahi 6, p. 796.

ਗੁਰਸਿਖਨ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ਕਰੀਯੋ॥
ਏਕ ਟੇਕ ਗੁਰ ਨਾਨਕ ਧਰੀਯੋ॥

Accept only Guru Nanak's guidance and serve his Sikhs.
Gur Bilas Patshahi 6, p. 796.

Furthermore, it is to be noted that when referring to marriage in the AGGS, the Gurus used the word "wife" not "wives" like ਧਨ (*dhan*), ਦਾਰਾ (*dara*), ਬਨਿਤਾ (*banita*), ਕਲਤ੍ਰ (*klatr*), ਸੁਹਾਗਾਣ (*suhgan*), ਸੁਲਖਣੀ (*sulakhani*), ਨਾਰੀ (*nari*), ਕਾਮਣਿ (*kaman*), ਮੁੰਧ (*mund*); all these words are singular. Hardly a surprise, for a Sikh, monogamous lifestyle is not only a social requirement but also a spiritual one.

The Gurus lived in a culture where polygamy was prevalent but the Gurus were monogamous. However, in the spurious writings about Gurus, three of the Gurus, Hargobind, Har Rai, and Gobind Singh are mentioned to be polygamous. How and why polygamy came to be associated with these three Gurus? Who is responsible for these writings? What is the truth? To find the answers to these questions we have to examine what happened to Sikhs and Sikhism after the death of Guru Gobind Singh in 1708.^{14, 15} All the sacred writings of the Gurus are enshrined in the AGGS. And there are no additional historical documents or manuals of moral instructions written by Gurus. According to the Sikh tradition, the entire collection of literature in the possession of Guru Gobind Singh at Anandpur Sahib was lost during transportation or destroyed and looted by the enemies. Detractors and opponents of Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) were instrumental for writing the *janam-sakhis* and other spurious literature. In addition, we suspect interpolations were injected into the writings of the Sikhs with anti-Sikh materials.

After Guru Gobind Singh's death, the enemies launched an all out assault to destroy Sikhs and the Sikh philosophy. There were two major massacres of Sikhs as pointed out earlier and then there was a systematic extermination of the Sikh population under Farrukh Siyar and Zakariya Khan and his Diwan Lakhpart Rai.^{14, 16} A price was fixed on the heads of Sikhs; rewards bestowed on the informers and bounty hunters, and hunting parties organized for searching the Sikhs. While being looted wholesale, the government confiscated their homes and lands. The utterance of the words, Guru or Granth and the keeping of Guru Granth Sahib or Gurbani in any form were proscribed. As a consequence of this campaign only a few thousand Sikhs survived by taking shelter in the desert of Rajasthan and the forests of Shivalik hills, and among their ranks only a few could read and write. Among the heads of twelve Sikh Misl (confederacies) only Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (1718-1783) could read or write. In the meantime, an ascetic Hindu order, *Udasis* (*pujaries, mahants*) had taken control of Sikh religious places and they played havoc with Gurmat using anti-Gurmat literature that was created during this period.^{17, 18} How and who could have saved Sikh literature under such circumstances? Whatever little was left was further subverted through interpolation. It is through writings like *janam-sakhis*, *Gur Bilas Patshahi 6*, *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10* and *Dasam Granth* that Nanakian philosophy is

being subverted and made a part part of the elusive Hinduism. Recently, Joginder Singh Vedanti and Amarjit Singh have edited *Gur Bilas Patshahi 6*,¹³ from a dozen different versions of this manuscript and there are quite a few more. It is full of absurd, chimerical, fantastic and miraculous anecdotes, and Puranic tales and Brahmanical beliefs and rituals that are contrary to the Nanakian philosophy. Further, it portrays Guru Hargobind in the image of Guru Gobind Singh. He is depicted as the twenty-fourth incarnation; the idea is an echo of the *Chaubis Avtar* (twenty-four incarnations) attributed to Guru Gobind Singh (Dasam Granth). Incidentally, the question of not writing bani (sacred hymns) by the Gurus after canonisation of Adi Granth was also there in both the cases.¹⁹ Moreover, in the spurious literature, both Gurus Hargobind and Gobind Singh are depicted more like Lord Krishna who had 16,108 wives and numerous girl friends in his harem. Thus Guru Hargobind is made to have three wives and a mistress, a Muslim girl named Kaulan, and Guru Gobind Singh three wives.

About a century back, when Macauliffe wrote about the marriages of Gurus Hargobind, Har Rai, and Gobind Singh, he consulted about the various absurd and illogical accounts to make some sense. Here is what he has narrated: Guru Arjan had refused to marry Hargobind to Chandu's daughter. The reason for the second and third marriages is ludicrous. Hargobind was already married to Damodri when Hari Chand offered to marry his daughter to the Guru.²⁰ Later on Dwara whose daughter Marwahi has taken a vow of celibacy, beseeched Guru Hargobind to marry her. In case the Guru had refused the marriages, their daughters would have remained unmarried all their lives and that would have been a great sin and shame for their families.²¹ So Guru Hargobind (1595-1644 C.E.) was forced to marry. This may have been the custom among Hindus, but the Gurus rejected all the essentials of Hinduism and their customs and rituals. He and his wife Damodri had four sons and a daughter. Guru Hargobind's three sons, Baba Gurdita, Baba Suraj Mal and Guru Teg Bahadur were married only once.

The story about Guru Har Rai's seven or eight wives is rather bizarre and defies common sense: One day Daya Ram, a Sikh from Anupshahar on the bank of Ganges, appeared before Guru Hargobind. He had come with people of his country and some members of his family to pay homage to the Guru. His daughters had previously heard of Har Rai (1630-1661 C.E.) and conceived a desire to wed him collectively. On seeing

Har Rai the Guru's grandson, Daya Ram betrothed his daughters to him.²² Guru Har Rai had two sons, Ram Rai and Har Krishan.

Professor Surjit Hans' analysis of *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10*—Brahmanical version of Sikhism is startling and an eye opener, which McLeod and Jakobsh should have consulted instead of *Chaupa Singh Rahit-nama* before accusing the Gurus of practicing polygamy or caste consideration in the marriages of their children and selection of successors. It is legitimate to ask why McLeod and Jakobsh did not consult Hans's work, which was published in 1988. Is it because it does not support their manipulation, deception and lies? It should also be noted that Chaupa Singh was a Brahman just like another Brahman, Kesar Singh Chibbar who wrote *Bansavali-nama Dasan Patsahian Da* (1769), which is also a Brahmanical version of Sikhism. Here are some highlights from Hans' analysis of *Gur Bilas Patshahi 10*:

Guru Gobind Singh does not consider himself to be Guru. It was Goddess (Devi) who asked for the creation of Khalsa. Guru Gobind Singh arranged an elaborate ritual to make the Goddess appear at the Ganges. A sixteen years old girl was sacrificed. The Goddess appeared before the Guru. She liked her eulogy and blessed the Guru with the power to rule the world and to destroy the Turks. The Guru was detached from the world. He left the heavy burden of responsibility of creating the Khala to the Goddess. The Khalsa Panth was placed at the feet of the Goddess. The number of Sikhs who were sacrificed to make the Goddess appear was a lakh and a quarter [one hundred and twenty five thousand]. The Goddess told Guru Gobind that he 'was her son like Shiva' and she gave him a khanda. All the gods appeared to give Guru Gobind Singh their individual 'powers': Hanuman gave him his briefs; hair were given by Vishnu; and weapons, by the Goddess.²³ [parenthesis by the author]

Besides, doctrinal heterodoxy, Guru Gobind Singh is portrayed paradigmatically as a Hindu incarnation. Guru Gobind Singh's departure from Patna echoes the sentimentalities of Ram leaving Ayodhia for banishment. Rama killed the demon Ravana with the help of monkeys. In the same way the Guru gave rulership to the Jats. The Guru takes after Hindu incarnations. He is Vishnu. Makhowal (Anadpur Sahib) is like Brindaban. Guru Gobind Singh is Krishna. The climax of the Hinduized portrayal of Guru Gobind Singh is reached when his mother Mata Gujri vanishes at the time of her death like Sita into the earth.²⁴

This account leaves no doubt about who is behind generating false stories about the polygamy of Gurus -- Hargobind, Har Rai, and Gobind Singh. Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708 C. E.) was married to Mata Jito Ji in 1677 and they had four sons.

The other two marriages are facetious, created by those who saw him as incarnation of Krishna:

One day as he was seated in darbar some new converts to the Sikh faith came to do him homage. Among them was a Sikh, who had a daughter, called Sundri, of marriageable age. He proposed to the Guru to wed her and make her the slave of his feet. The Guru did not desire the alliance, but it was pressed on him by his mother and not long afterwards the Guru's nuptials were solemnised.²⁵

However, in the footnote Macauliffe remarks:

A learned Sikh informs us that Sundri, a word which means the beautiful, frequently applied to the heroines of Indian history, was an epithet of Jito and not a second wife of the Guru. The same learned Sikh thinks that Jito who was generally known Sundri, did not die in Anandpur, but lived in Delhi after the demise of Guru Gobind Singh.²⁶

I may add further that in Punjab it was once a common practice to change the unmarried name of a woman to another one after her marriage by her in-laws. All of my cousin sisters born and raised in the twentieth century experienced the same ritual. Mata Jito Ji and Mata Sundri Ji happened to be same person. The story about the third marriage is rather bizarre like the marriages of Guru Hargobind and Guru Har Rai:

Several Sikhs from the north of the Punjab came to visit the Guru and present their offerings. A Sikh residing in Rohtas in the present district of Jihlam thought the most suitable offering he could make the Guru was his daughter Sahib Devi. He accordingly took her to him in a palki. The Guru, in response to this offer, said he had relinquished family life. The girl's father on hearing this became much disappointed and distressed. He pointed out that he had long since dedicated her to the Guru, that in consequence every one called her mother, and now no one would wed her after rejection. On the other hand if she remained single, great sin would in the estimation of pious persons attach to her parents. He accordingly pressed the Guru to reconsider his decision. The Guru then told him to ask her if she would consent to serve him. She replied in the affirmative. The Guru upon this baptized her, gave the name Sahib Kaur, and consigned her to his mother's apartments.²⁷

However, again, in the footnote, Macauliffe says, "Bhai Sukha Singh makes this event occur when Guru was on his way to South India. In that case the father of the girl might have come from Rohtas in Bihar."²⁸
In either case carrying a young woman in a planquin from the North in Punjab to Anandpur or from Bihar to Guru

Gobind Singh who was travelling to South India via misplaced route seems like a tale from Hindu mythology.

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12. Ibid., p. 225.
13. Joginder Singh and Amarjit Singh (Eds.). *Gur Bilas Patshahi 6* (Punjabi). Amritsar: Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC), 1998. There are certain

elements inscribed in this book that are compatible with the Nanakian philosophy. However, most of it is a distortion of Gurmat.

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19. Ibid., pp. 270-272.

20. Max A. Macauliffe. *The Sikh Religion* (Vols. III & IV). New Delhi: Low Price Publications, reprint, 1993, Vol. IV, p. 50.

21. Ibid., Vol. IV, p. 65.

22. Ibid., Vol. IV, pp. 224-225.

23. Surjit Hans. *A Reconstruction Of Sikh History From Sikh Literature*. Jalandhar: ABS Publications, 1988, p. 267.

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27. Ibid., Vol. V, pp. 143-144.

28. Ibid., Vol. V, p. 143.

Chapter 7

Questioning the Martyrdom of Guru Arjan & the Bravery of Sikhs

Walking in the footsteps of McLeod, Jakobsh plunges ahead and questions both Guru Arjan's martyrdom and the bravery of Sikhs. While it is clear to me that her motives are to distort Sikhism at every opportunity she gets, she fails to explain the relevance of Guru Arjan's martyrdom to her thesis. Without doubt she talks about "martyrdom" of which she has minimal understanding. Reading her book leaves no doubt in my mind that she has very little understanding of AGGS, Sikh history, Sikh traditions and the Punjabi folklore:

According to Sikh traditional sources, this culminated in Emperor Jahangir's order to kill Guru Arjan in 1606 while he was in custody in Lahore. McLeod has questioned the element of martyrdom that has been attached to Arjan's death, given its obscurity within the available sources. According to McLeod, all that is known for certain is that Guru Arjan died while imprisoned by the Mughals.¹

Does Jakobsh understand the meaning of "martyrdom" as enunciated in the AGGS? Does she know why the Mughals arrested Guru Arjan? Does she know what crime he was charged with? At least, she admits that the Mughals killed Guru Arjan. It is well-known that during the Muslim rule,

non-Muslims who received the capital punishment, were given the choice of escaping death by embracing Islam, which Guru Arjan spurned and willingly died for his faith. So Guru Arjan died the death of a martyr because his example fits the simplest definition of a martyr: "anyone who dies for his/her faith."

We know that from the very beginning, the Sikh movement was opposed to the tyranny imposed by both the caste system and the Muslim rulers. Therefore, the concept of martyrdom is inherent in the Nanakian philosophy, as opposition to tyranny requires extreme sacrifices. Guru Nanak exhorted people to join his movement with a clear message that his path requires supreme sacrifices:

ਜਉ ਤਉ ਪ੍ਰੇਮ ਖੇਲਣ ਕਾ ਚਾਉ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਧਰਿ ਤਲੀ ਗਲੀ ਮੇਰੀ ਆਉ॥
ਇਤੁ ਮਾਰਗਿ ਪੈਰੁ ਧਰੀਜੈ॥
ਸਿਰੁ ਦੀਜੈ ਕਾਣਿ ਨ ਕੀਜੈ॥

If you want to play the game of love (follow the righteous path) then follow me and be prepared to make supreme sacrifices. Once you step on this path, do not hesitate to offer your head.

AGGS, M, 1, p. 1412.

The above proclamation is central to the Sikh Movement—the basis of Miri-Piri (temporal and spiritual sovereignty) and the evolution the noble Khalsa Order. Only a moral person, a *gurmukh* can be a *mir-pir*/Khalsa.

Guru Nanak denounced the oppression of bigoted Muslim rulers and their administrators in no uncertain terms and declared his allegiance only to God:

ਰਾਜੇ ਸੀਹ ਮੁਕਦਮ ਕੁਤੇ॥
ਜਾਇ ਜਗਾਇਨਿ ਬੈਠੇ ਸੁਤੇ॥

The rulers are like hungry lions and their officials as wild dogs, who harass and persecute the innocent subjects.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1288.

ਮਾਣਸ ਖਾਣੇ ਕਰਹਿ ਨਿਵਾਜ ॥
ਫੁਰੀ ਵਗਾਇਨਿ ਤਿਨ ਗਲਿ ਤਾਗ ॥
ਤਿਨ ਘਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮਣ ਪੂਰਹਿ ਨਾਦ ॥

ਉਨਾ ਭਿ ਆਵਹਿ ਓਈ ਸਾਦ ॥

The man-eater (Muslim ruler) performs *Namaz* (Muslim prayer). The one who carves out the flesh for him wears the sacred thread around his neck (*Khatri*). The Brahman blows the conch in the *Khatri's* house to sanctify his doings. The Brahman also shares the ill-gotten bread of the *Khatri*.

AGGS, M 1, p. 471.

ਤਿਸੁ ਬਿਨੁ ਰਾਜਾ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਕੋਈ ॥

There is no other king except the Almighty.

AGGS, M 1, p. 936.

ਏਕੋ ਤਖਤੁ ਏਕੋ ਪਾਤਸਾਹੁ ॥

There is one Throne and one King.

AGGS, M 1, p. 1188.

Guru Nanak also makes the distinction between physical death, which is inevitable and spiritual death, which is avoidable. One should not mourn physical death rather one should mourn the spiritual death:

ਜੰਮਣੁ ਮਰਣਾ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੈ ਭਾਣੈ ਆਵੈ ਜਾਇ ॥

It is *Hukam* (Cosmic Law, Divine Law) which causes birth and death, or birth and death occur according to *Hukam*.

AGGS, M 1, p. 472.

Further it is *Haumai* that causes spiritual death. *Haumai* and its progeny of five drives/instincts: *Kam* (lust, sexual drive), *Kroadh* (anger), *Lobh* (covetousness, economic drive), *Moh* (attachment) and *Ahankar* (pride with arrogance) are responsible for the corruption of morals and the development of criminal behavior. Behind all human problems and sufferings—from individual problems to bloody international conflicts is the invisible hand of *Haumai* and the five elements. That is why the Gurus warn us again and again not to yield to the pressure/temptations of *Kam*, *Kroadh*, *Lobh*, *Moh* and *Ahankar*. The Gurus advise us to live a life of restraint and modesty. One who fights against the deleterious influence of *Haumai* and the five passions and keeps them under control is a *gurmukh*, a real warrior, and a hero according to Nanakian philosophy. A *gurmukh* does not waiver from the path of righteousness as he/she has conquered the fear of physical death. Guru Nanak has elaborated on this theme in his hymns:

ਰਤੁ ਪੀਣੇ ਰਾਜੇ ਸਿਰੈ ਉਪਰਿ ਰਖੀਅਹਿ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਪੈ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਭੀ ਤੂੰ ਹੈ ਸਾਲਾਹਣਾ ਆਖਣ ਲਹੈ ਨ ਚਾਉ ॥

Even if I were to live under blood-sucking rulers, I will love and glorify God and would never get tired of doing so.

AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

In other words a *gurmukh* never deviates from the path of righteousness under any circumstances. Such a person is a true warrior and his/her death is celebrated:

ਮਰਣੁ ਨ ਮੰਦਾ ਲੋਕਾ ਆਖੀਐ ਜੇ ਕੋਈ ਮਰਿ ਜਾਣੈ।

ਮਰਣੁ ਮੁਣਸਾ ਸੂਰਿਆ ਹਕੁ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਹੋਇ ਮਰਨਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੈ॥

ਸੂਰੇ ਸੇਈ ਆਗੈ ਆਖੀਅਹਿ ਦਰਗਾਹ ਪਾਵਹਿ ਸਾਚੀ ਮਾਣੈ॥

Hey people! Do not regard death as bad if it is the death of "self"—subdual of *Haumain*. It is justified to call a person a warrior/martyr who accepts such a death. Those are warriors/martyrs, who earn respect in the court of Truth.

AGGS, M 1, pp. 579-580.

ਮਰਣੈ ਕੀ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਨਹੀ ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਨਹੀ ਆਸ ॥

Neither a *gurmukh* worries about death nor longs for wordly life.

AGGS, M 1, p. 20.

ਜੇ ਜੀਵੈ ਪਤਿ ਲਥੀ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਸਭੁ ਹਰਾਮੁ ਜੇਤਾ ਕਿਛੁ ਖਾਇ ॥

If one accepts dishonourable life then all efforts to subsist are inconsequential.

AGGS, M 1, p. 142.

Guru Nanak defied the restrictions that the Muslim rulers imposed on the demoralized Hindus and his successors echoed and amplified what Nanak has said earlier by calling for the establishment of just and benevolent rule:

ਪਹਿਲਾ ਮਰਣੁ ਕਬੁਲਿ ਜੀਵਣ ਕੀ ਛਡਿ ਆਸ ॥

ਹੋਹੁ ਸਭਨਾ ਕੀ ਰੇਣੁਕਾ ਤਉ ਆਉ ਹਮਾਰੈ ਪਾਸਿ ॥

First die to self (subdue *Haumai*), do not long for worldly life, treat all with utmost humility and, then follow me (righteous path).

AGGS, M 5, p. 1102.

ਕਿਆ ਏ ਭੂਪਤਿ ਬਪੁਰੇ ਕਹੀਅਹਿ ਕਹੁ ਏ ਕਿਸ ਨੋ ਮਾਰਹਿ।

ਰਾਖੁ ਰਾਖੁ ਰਾਖੁ ਸੁਖਦਾਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗਤੁ ਤੁਮਾਰਹਿ।

What could these helpless kings do, whom could they harm? "O the Giver of comforts, please protect us all, as the world belongs to You," prays Nanak.

AGGS, M 5, p. 1211.

ਹਰਿ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਜਾ ਕਉ ਗੁਰਿ ਦੀਆ।

ਨਾਨਕ ਤਾ ਕਾ ਭਉ ਗਇਆ।

"Whom the Guru puts on the path of righteousness becomes fearless," says Nanak.

AGGS M 5, p. 211.

ਤਤੀ ਵਾਉ ਨ ਲਗਈ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਰਖੇ ਆਪਿ।

Not the slightest harm comes to those whom God protects.

AGGS, M 5, p. 218.

ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤ ਆਨ॥

ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕੁ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ॥

"Listen! O my mind," says Nanak, "A wise person neither frightens anyone, nor is afraid of anyone."

AGGS, M 9, p. 1427.

ਸਭੇ ਸਾਝੀਵਾਲ ਸਦਾਇਨਿ ਤੂੰ ਕਿਸੈ ਨ ਦਿਸਹਿ ਬਾਹਰਾ ਜੀਉ ॥

All are partners in God's commonwealth and God does not look at anyone as a stranger.
AGGS, M 5, p. 97.

ਨਾ ਕੋ ਬੈਰੀ ਨਹੀ ਬਿਗਾਨਾ ਸਗਲ ਸੰਗਿ ਹਮ ਕਉ ਬਨਿ ਆਈ ॥

Enmity to none, nor we consider anyone stranger, getting along with all is our creed.
AGGS, M 5, p. 1299.

ਹੁਣਿ ਹੁਕਮੁ ਹੋਆ ਮਿਹਰਵਾਣ ਦਾ ॥

ਪੈ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਕਿਸੈ ਰਵਾਣਦਾ ॥

ਸਭ ਸੁਖਾਲੀ ਵੁਠੀਆ ਇਹੁ ਹਲੇਮੀ ਰਾਜੁ ਜੀਉ ॥

Now the Benevolent One has decreed that no one would be persecuted. All would live happily in peace under the *Halemi Raj* (rule of benevolence).
AGGS, M 5, p. 74.

After in depth study of Guru Ram Das' hymns, Professor Hans² makes a keen and remarkable observation when he says: "Thus, even in the times of Guru Ram Das the **martyrdom** of the Sikh Guru was in the air" and Professor Grewal³ elaborates on it further:

The Sikh Panth was a state within the Mughal empire at the death of Akbar, but a state that had its opponents and enemies whose presence was continuously felt by the successors of Guru Nanak. The enemies were becoming more numerous, and their intrigues were on the increase. ... Akbar's catholicity could protect the Gurus and their followers against open violence, but it could not obviate the nefarious designs of their enemies. ... Within eight months of Akbar's death in October 1605, Guru Arjan died the death of a **martyr** at the end of May 1606, tortured by the new emperor's underlings at Lahore.³

It seems, while commenting on the bravery of "Mai Bhago" Jakobsh suffers from a bout of delusion:

"As a woman, it could only be upon the suppression of her sexuality, in her exchange of female for male attire that Mai Bhago could continue as an acceptable member of Guru's retinue."⁴

What an absurd and ludicrous statement! Don't men and women in modern armed forces have similar uniforms? Do these women suppress their femininity or become lesser of women in Jakobsh's estimation? What about women who wear trousers like men? Are they hiding/suppressing their femininity to

survive in male dominated world? In Mai Bhago's time the attire of the Khalsa was the most practical military uniform, so how did she suppress her sexuality by wearing the Khalsa attire? Jakobsh! Does dress really determine a person's sexuality?

Further on she says:

Another fascinating aspect of this incident is the understanding that Mai Bhago taunted the deserting males. As Louis Fenech has pointed out in his study of the taunt in Sikh tales of heroism and martyrdom, women's taunt was often accompanied or replaced by the giving of a glass bangle to a male, *churian paunian*. The purpose of the bangle or taunt was to present that particular male as effeminate. According to Fenech (1996: 183):

In essence such displays demonstrate that male has been deprived of the force and vigour with which he is characteristically associated in Punjabi culture. He is in other words emasculated. ... Within Punjabi culture referring to men as women, particularly by women, is a grave insult and is meant to persuade the male to demonstrate the contrary.⁵

Now, in which patriarchal culture are men not taunted as effeminate when they fail to perform their tasks? In the West, the taunt is "wear skirts" whereas in India it is "wear bangles." But what "taunts" have to do with Sikh martyrdom or heroism? **Sikhs inherited these taunts from their Hindu, Muslim and Sultani-Hindu ancestors.**

Furthermore, most of the Sikhs about whom Jakobsh and Fenech are talking were either first or second generation Sikhs, who were barely one percent of the Punjab population during the period of 1680s to 1780s. The other remarkable thing about them is that the overwhelming majority of them exited the Sudra or untouchable ranks. There is no evidence in the Indian history that these taunts inspired either Hindus or Muslims to take up arms against the tyrannical Muslim rulers or the invaders from Afghanistan, Iran and Central Asia or the dehumanizing caste system. Small bands of invaders from central Asia and Afghanistan carved out fiefdoms throughout the Indian landscape culminating in the Mughal Empire. And later on Europeans who came as traders colonized the Indian subcontinent and put up signs: "Indians and dogs are not allowed." It seems these taunts did not stir the virility of Indians? Only scholars like Fenech nurtured in the hare-brained environment of McLeodian "Western methodology of historical research" could dig up the "historical truth" that Sikh heroes and martyrs were inspired by "feminine taunts"! How irrational one can be!

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1. Doris R. Jakobsh. *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 36.
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3. J. S. Grewal. *The Sikh Of The Punjab*. New Delhi: Cambridge University Press, 1994, pp. 60-61.
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5. Ibid., p. 49.

Chapter 8

Guru Gobind Singh's Tenets

I am not privy to Prof. Jakobsh's early education. However, if her Ph.D. thesis is any indication of her past, then I can draw a picture: she had been a weak student all along. Either her teachers missed the obvious flaws or simply let it go hoping someone else down the education echelon will end up catching her. Now it seems nobody caught her and the weaknesses magnified beyond proportions and they reflect in her thesis under analysis here. Let's start with something so profoundly basic to Sikhism: the meanings of simple words:

1. "The term 'Sikh,' meaning disciple was replaced by 'Khalsa,' which in the seventeenth century reflected its usage by the Mughals for revenue collection on lands that were directly supervised by the government (Grewal 1967: 113-15)."¹

It seems she understands neither the meaning of "Sikh," nor of "Khalsa." A "Sikh" means learner of truth and Khalsa means pure. Truth means pure (without blemish)—*khalis*. So Sikh and Khalsa are synonymous terms. That is why Bhai Gurdas says that Guru Nanak became prominent in the world by establishing a Panth of the pure:

ਮਾਰਿਆ ਸਿੱਕਾ ਜਗਤ ਵਿਚ ਨਾਨਕ ਨਿਰਮਲ ਪੰਥ ਚਲਾਇਆ।

Nanak became prominent/renowned in the world by establishing a *nirmal* (pure) Panth—Khalsa.
Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 1, p. 18.

ਸਚਹੁ ਓਰੈ ਸਭੁ ਕੋ ਉਪਰਿ ਸਚੁ ਆਚਾਰੁ ॥

Truth is higher than every thing but higher still is truthful living.
AGGS, M 1, p. 62.

However, when Guru Gobind Singh created a "uniformed military force"—the Khalsa Order, every initiate was required to take "Khande Di Pahul" and keep five Ks: Kesh (uncut hair), Kangha (small comb tucked in the hair), Kirpan (small sword in a baldric), Kara (a steel bracelet

on a wrist) and Kashera (a specially designed knee length breeches). Thus a Khalsa is a Sikh who keeps five Ks.

2. "The British administration, which admired the martial resonance of Khalsa ideology, turned to the tenets of Guru Gobind Singh for guidance and took it upon themselves to stem the tide of the Hinduization of Sikhism through their recruitment tactics."²

Guru Gobind Singh's tenets were the same as that of Guru Nanak, enshrined in AGGS. That is why Guru Gobind Singh conferred Guruship on AGGS. All the Gurus were one and the same spiritually. Guru Nanak's successors enriched and strengthened Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat); they added innovative practices in the Sikh movement from time to time to meet the threat from ever-pernicious caste ideology and the Mughal rulers.

Al-Beruni who spent many years in northern India in the eleventh century observed that Hindus did not cut body hair.³ Devout Sikhs too have kept uncut hair from the time of Guru Nanak. It is also known that Sikhs started learning the art of warfare from the time of Guru Angad and there were sizeable number of Sikhs during the time Guru Arjan, being the finest horsemen and expert in wielding arms. Guru Hargobind's victory in several skirmishes with Mughals and Khattris is a strong proof of that. Before coming into military conflict with the Mughals, Guru Gobind Singh fought and won several battles with the Rajput chiefs of Shivalik Hills. He knew that sooner or later, the Mughal Emperor would come to the aid of his vassals, the Rajput chiefs. To meet that challenge he needed a well-disciplined and well-trained army firmly committed to the cause of the Sikh Panth. Therefore, he sent invitations to Sikhs throughout India to attend the Baisakhi of 1699. On this historic day he created the Khalsa Order on the line of a disciplined army with a unique dress and code of conduct. The initiate was required to take "Khande Di Pahul" and wear five Ks to embody the spirit of a "saint soldier."

3. Jakobsh has made absurd and false statements about "Khande Di Pahul," an initiation ceremony for Khalsa and the appellations of Singh and Kaur.⁴

Let me just cite two examples to show her lack of understanding of "Khande Di Pahul." According to her, Khalsa has an aversion to saffron colour⁵ because this

colour is associated with Brahmans. How ridiculous! Saffron and blue are the colours of the Khalsa attire. Moreover, the Nishan Sahibs (religious flags) in Gurdwaras, Sikh parades or meetings are adorned in saffron. She goes on to say that women were not allowed to wear blue,⁶ which is also false. She is impervious to the understanding that "Khande Di Pahul" marks the "rebirth" of an initiate as he/she makes a clean break from the past. Maybe Jakobsh is ignorant of the "Nash Doctrine"⁷—total rejection of the caste ideology by Nanakian philosophy—Guru Gobind Singh enunciated on the Baisakhi day of 1699 upon choosing the Panj Piaras (five beloved ones). Khalsa is free from:

- a. *Varanasrarm Dharam* (caste based religion),
- b. *karam kand* (Hindu rituals and ceremonies),
- c. *bharam* (superstition),
- d. *kul* (family lineage),
- e. *krit* (caste based occupation restrictions).

If Jakobsh were really interested in understanding the meaning of Khalsa and the significance of "Khande Di Pahul," she could have consulted contemporary Muslim accounts. Mughals were watching the activities of the Sikhs very closely as they saw in the growing Sikh movement not only a political threat but also an impediment to Islamize India. Ghulam Mohyiuddin who witnessed the creation of the Khalsa Order on the Baisakhi of 1699 reported to Emperor Aurangzeb that in spite of opposition from orthodox men, thousands of men and women have taken the baptism of steel (Khande Di Pahul):

He has abolished caste and customs, old rituals, beliefs and the superstitions of Hindus and banded them into a single brotherhood. No one will be superior or inferior to another. Men of all castes have been made to eat from the same bowl. Though orthodox men have opposed him, about twenty thousand men and women have taken baptism of steel at his hand on the first day. The Guru has also told the gathering: '*I' ll call myself Gobind Singh only if I can make the meek sparrows pounce upon the hawks and tear them; only if one combatant of my force faces a legion of the enemy.*'⁸

Being voluntary, Khalsa Order was/is open to both men and women without regard to caste, creed and color.

4. Jakobsh goes on unimpeded by making an odious statement that the appellation "Singh" and "Kaur" were used to "Rajputanize"⁹ Sikh identity. In support of her argument she

cites Jeevan Deol's article: "Rajputising the Guru? The Construction of Early Sikh Political Discourse."¹⁰

First of all Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) and the "Nash Doctrine" reject and denounce the caste system. Second, Sikhs do not look "high" on the Rajputs; instead they look down upon them. Why? The following few reasons should suffice: Like Mughals, Rajputs were also the bitter enemies of Sikhs. They were responsible for the execution of Guru Arjan as Emperor Jahangir who ordered the execution of Guru Arjan, was the son of a Rajput princess, whose brother, Man Singh was the commander of Mughal army at that time. The Rajput chiefs of Shivalik hills declared war on Guru Gobind Singh and later on collaborated with Mughal rulers until the Sikhs defeated both parties. It was Massa Ranghar, a Muslim Rajput who desecrated Darbar Sahib and there are other instances of Rajput perfidy. That is why there are not many Sikhs of Rajput ancestry and those Sikhs who are of Rajput ancestry, generally, call themselves Jat, not Rajput. Besides, Rajputs may have honorable position in Hindu society but Sikhs regarded them "degenerates" because they violated "Sikh notions of honor"—not submitting to tyranny--by submitting to Muslim rule and offering their daughters by wholesale numbers to Mughals from the time of Emperor Akbar until the end of Mughal empire. The hypocrisy of Rajputs knew no bounds. While on one hand they regarded the Muslims as *malesh* (unclean, polluted) and wouldn't even drink water from the Muslim's house, but on the other hand to win favors they offered their precious daughters to fill the *harems* (concubine quarters) of the Muslim rulers. Even today it is unthinkable for an ordinary Rajput to marry his daughter to a non-Rajput Hindu, not to speak of non-Hindus. Incidentally, most of Punjab's Rajputs converted to Islam.

Whenever Rajputs asserted their superiority in Sikh villages, Jats retaliated by addressing them with derogatory terms. Jats called the Chandel Rajput as *gireve* (degenerate) and now they call themselves Jat, not Chandel. Those who insisted on their Rajput-ness were called "mahto," a derogatory term. It is not my purpose here to slight anyone or to project the superiority of Jats, but to expose the absurdities put out by McLeod, Deol, and Jakobsh:

Al-Beruni (1030 CE), whose direct experience of India was confined to the Lahore area, took the Jats to be 'cattle-owners, low Shudra people.' The author of *Debistan-i-Mazahib* (1655 CE) in his account of Sikhism describes Jats as the 'lowest caste of the

Vaishyas.' In contrast to this position, 'under the Sikhs the Rajput was over-shadowed by the Jat, who resented his assumption of superiority and his refusal to join him on equal terms in the ranks of the Khalsa, deliberately persecuted him wherever and whenever he had the power, and preferred his title of Jat Sikh to that of the proudest Rajput.' That this was all due to the Sikh movement becomes clear if status of Sikh Jat of Sikh tract is compared with other Jats who are his immediate neighbors. About the non-Sikh Jats in the eastern submontane tract, Ibtson writes in his census report (1881): 'In character and position there is nothing to distinguish the tribes I am about to notice, save that they have never enjoyed the political importance which distinguished the Sikh Jats under the Khalsa. ... In the Sikh tract, the political position of the Jat was so high that he had no wish to be called Rajput; under the hills the status of the Rajput is so superior that Jat has no hope of being called Rajput.' Similarly, although the Jats of southeastern districts of the Punjab differ 'in little save religion from the great Sikh Jat tribes of Malwa', they remained subservient to the Rajputs up to recent period of British Raj. There, 'in the old days of Rajput ascendancy, the Rajputs would not allow Jats to cover their heads with a turban', and 'even to this day Rajputs will not allow inferior castes to wear red clothes or ample lion cloths in their village.' In the predominantly Mohammedan Western Punjab, the Jat is 'naturally looked upon as of inferior race, and the position he occupies is very different from that which he [Sikh Jat] holds in the centre and east of Punjab.'¹¹

Furthermore, the appellations, Singh and Kaur were not that common among the Rajputs. For example, among the four historically well known Rajputs only one was Singh: Prithvi Raj Chauhan, Jai Chand Rathore, Maharana Partap and Man Singh. Similarly, most of the Shivalik Hill Rajput Chiefs, who were contemporary of Guru Gobind Singh, did not use Singh as their last name: Fateh Shah, Medni Parkash, Kirpal Chand, Bhim Chand, Sukh Deo, Ajmer Chand, Salehi Chand and so on. Besides, Khattris, Jats, Gujjars and other agriculturist communities of Northern India also used the appellations, Singh and Kaur. The uniformity of naming Singh and Kaur for "Khalsa/Sikh" males and females respectively signifies equality and nothing else.

The idea to "Rajputanize" Sikh names most probably did not originate in Jeevan Deol's "still mind," it seems more likely the product of McLeod's "churning mind."

5. Commenting on the do's and don'ts for the Khalsa, Jakobsh remarks:

Further, a number of customs, some associated with the non-Sikh communities, others prevalent among them, were firmly prohibited. These included the killing of female infants, hookah smoking,

intercourse with Muslim women, and the eating of the meat of animals slaughtered in the Muslim fashion known as *halal*. The anti-Muslim proscriptions would understandably have stemmed from the increasing troublesome relations between Sikhs and Mughals; moreover, the now religiously mandated Sikh warriors would certainly have been viewed as irritations by the Mughal rulers.¹²

The statement "Muslim proscriptions would understandably have stemmed from increasing troublesome relations between Sikhs and Mughals" would appeal to someone ignorant of the relationship between Sikh Gurus and Muslim populace and the teachings of Aad Guru Granth Sahib. Jakobsh should know that Pir Budhu Shah, a Muslim divine came to the aid of Guru Gobind Singh in the battle of Bhangani against Hindu Rajput chiefs of Shivalak hills. Many of Budhu Shah's followers and his two sons were killed.^{13, 14}

Guru Gobind Singh's edict against the slaughter of animals in a *Halal* fashion stems from both theological and political reasons, and has nothing whatsoever to do with the troublesome relations between Sikhs and Mughal rulers. Let us first look at the theological aspect. According to Nanakian philosophy, God is the creator as well as the sustainer of all living beings. People keep asking for more and more and the Giver keeps giving more and more. Whatever human beings possess is God's gift. Thus it is sheer ignorance when people make material offerings including animal sacrifice to earn God's favor. Guru Nanak rejected the Semitic and Hindu practices of sacrificing animals in the name of God. The idea that one's sins being expiated through the ritual of animal sacrifice is abhorrent to the Sikh theology:

ਦੇਦਾ ਦੇ ਲੈਦੇ ਥਕਿ ਪਾਹਿ॥

ਜੁਗਾ ਜੁਗੰਤਰਿ ਖਾਹੀ ਖਾਹਿ॥

The Giver (Bounteous) keeps giving but the recipients get weary of receiving. Throughout the ages they subsist on Its bounties.

AGGS, Jap 3, p. 2.

ਸਾਚਾ ਸਾਹਿਬੁ ਸਾਚੁ ਨਾਇ ਭਾਖਿਆ ਭਾਉ ਅਪਾਰੁ॥

ਆਖਹਿ ਮੰਗਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦੇਹਿ ਦਾਤਿ ਕਰੇ ਦਾਤਾਰੁ॥

ਫੇਰਿ ਕਿ ਅਗੈ ਰਖੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਦਿਸੈ ਦਰਬਾਰੁ॥

ਮੁਹੈ ਕਿ ਬੋਲਣੁ ਬੋਲੀਐ ਜਿਤੁ ਸੁਣ ਧਰੇ ਪਿਆਰੁ॥

ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤ ਵੇਲਾ ਸਚੁ ਨਾਉ ਵਡਿਆਈ ਵੀਚਾਰੁ॥

ਕਰਮੀ ਆਵੈ ਕਪੜਾ ਨਦਰੀ ਮੋਖੁ ਦੁਆਰੁ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਏਵੈ ਜਾਣੀਐ ਸਭੁ ਆਪੇ ਸਚਿਆਰੁ ॥

Eternal is the Lord, Immutable is Its justice, love is Its communication, and It is infinite. People pray and beg: "Give us, give us" and the Giver keep giving.

Then what can we offer whereby we may realize It? What words shall we utter with our lips, on hearing which It would love us? "Always meditate on Its excellences and greatness. The Kind One will then give a robe of honour (love), and open the door for salvation."

Nanak, "Thus we shall understand that the Lord Itself enlightens all."

AGGS, Jap 4, p. 2.

Here Guru Nanak advises the devotee to keep the mind focussed on God's attributes to earn Its blessing. In a passage directed at a pious Muslim, Guru Nanak explains what kind of *Halal* (lawful act) a Muslim should perform to please God:

ਸਚ ਕੀ ਕਾਤੀ ਸਚੁ ਸਭੁ ਸਾਰੁ ॥

ਘਾਤਤ ਤਿਸ ਕੀ ਅਪਰ ਅਪਾਰ॥

ਸਬਦੇ ਸਾਣ ਰਖਾਈ ਲਾਇ॥

ਗੁਣ ਕੀ ਥੇਕੈ ਵਿਚਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

ਤਿਸ ਦਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਹੋਵੈ ਸੇਖੁ ॥

ਲੋਹੁ ਲਬੁ ਨਿਕਥਾ ਵੇਖੁ ॥

ਹੋਇ ਹਲਾਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਹਕਿ ਜਾਇ ॥

ਨਾਨਕ ਦਰਿ ਦੀਦਾਰਿ ਸਮਾਇ ॥

O, *Sheikh* (Muslim divine) let truthful living be the knife forged from truth. The craftsmanship of such knife is ineffable. Sharpen it on the whetstone of Word and keep it in the sheath made out of virtues. Kill "yourself"—your *Haumai* with this knife and witness avarice bleeding out. Such a sacrifice will be accepted by God as *Halal* and you will become one with God.

AGGS, M 1, p. 956.

The second reason for the proscription of *Halal* for Sikhs is political. The Muslim rulers banned the slaughter of animals for food by any method other than *Halal*. This is confirmed in Guru Nanak's composition about the hypocrisy of *Khatris*. The *Khatris* were very fastidious about ceremonial sanctity of their kitchen, but they were cooking and eating meat of he-goat slaughtered in a *Halal* fashion with the chanting of Quranic verses:

ਮਥੈ ਟਿਕਾ ਤੇੜਿ ਧੋਤੀ ਕਖਾਈ
 ਹਥਿ ਛੁਰੀ ਜਗਤ ਕਾਸਾਈ।
 ਨੀਲ ਵਸਤ੍ਰ ਪਹਿਰਿ ਹੋਵਹਿ ਪਰਵਾਣੁ॥
 ਮਲੇਛ ਧਾਨੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਪੁਰਾਣੁ॥
 ਅਭਾਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਕੁਠਾ ਬਕਰਾ ਖਾਣਾ ॥
 ਚਉਕੇ ਉਪਰਿ ਕਿਸੇ ਨਾ ਜਾਣਾ ॥
 ਦੇ ਕੈ ਚਉਕਾ ਕਢੀ ਕਾਰ॥
 ਉਪਰਿ ਆਇ ਬੈਠੇ ਕੁੜਿਆਰ॥

The Khatri officials wear mark on their forehead and ochre cloth around the waist (*dhoti*) at home, but they commit atrocities on the Hindu masses. They wear blue clothes on the job to please their Muslim masters. They worship *Puran* but depend on Muslims whom they regard *malesh*, for their livelihood. They eat the meat of a he-goat slaughtered in a *halal* fashion with the chanting of Quranic verses. They mark their cooking square with a line to keep others out to avoid pollution. But the "liars themselves" sit in it. AGGS, M 1, p. 472.

Now it should be clear why Guru Gobind Singh issued an injunction to the Khalsa to slaughter animals for food only in *Jhatka*, not in *hahal* fashion. *Jhatka*—severing animal's neck with one stroke with a sharp sword is Sikh innovation. According to Al-Beruni, Hindus used to kill animals for food by strangulation.¹⁵

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Chapter 9

Echo of British Anti-Sikh Propaganda

The British imperialists who saw themselves as "new Romans" with the mandate to "civilise and enlighten" the newly conquered people kept changing their views of Indian people in order to justify their subjugation and exploitation of them:

What Thomas Trautman describes as 'Indomania' began in the eighteenth century with educated European gentlemen unreservedly enthused by the study of Sanskrit; in the similarities of Sanskrit, Greek, and Latin, they saw intimate kinship between British and Indian civilizations. The earliest Orientlist, most notably Freidrich Max Muller looked to the ancient Vedas to understand the origin of this kinship. Through their analysis of Vedic sources, the Orientalists concluded that Indian civilization was older and more original than that of Greece; the authority of the scripture stemmed from its independence and antiquity in comparison to the Bible. ... Still Hinduism in its contemporary context was the enigmatic link to the wisdom of Vedic antiquity and was thus a domain worthy of dutiful attention. ... With the nineteenth century came the radically diverging Evangelical and Unitarian movements. ... In conjugation the two movements constituted the prevailing Anglicist policy of the nineteenth century. Trautman characterizes the profound change in British attitudes in the early nineteenth century as a move from 'Indomania' to 'Indophobia'.¹

The British imperialists accomplished their objectives by dividing the Indian people into various groups in order to play one group against the other. Noble Aryans of the North versus the loathsome, morally corrupt and effete race of Dravidians of the South, the martial versus non-martial races,² the "brave, active and cheerful, without polish, but neither destitute of sincerity nor attachment" Khalsa Sikhs versus "full of intrigue, pliant, versatile and insinuating" non-Khalsa Sikhs;³ agriculturists versus non-agriculturists; the effeminate Bengali *babus* versus the unpolished though manly frontiersman in the newly annexed British colony of Punjab; Hindus versus Muslims; Hindus

versus Sikhs; Sikhs versus Muslims, Sikhs versus Sanatan Sikhs (Hindus disguised as Sikhs), Arya Samajists versus Sanatan Hindus and so on.⁴

Even after recognizing the modus operandi of the British, Jakobsh has no compunction in using the writing of the same imperialists to malign the Sikhs:

Somewhat hesitantly, given the tenuous politics of similarity between the British and the Sikhs, the latter were often portrayed by the British as intrinsically immoral, most particularly with regard to their sexual mores. British administrators, steeped in a Victorian ethos with its exaggerated oppositions of masculinity and femininity and corresponding puritanical sexual codes, were troubled by what they perceived as sexual depravity among Sikhs. Cunningham⁵ in the mid-nineteenth century explained this sexual depravity thus:

[T]he sense of personal honour and the female purity is less high among the rude and ignorant of every age than among the informed and the civilised; and when the whole peasantry of a country suddenly attain to power and wealth, and are freed from many of the restraints of society, an unusual proportion will necessarily resign themselves to seduction of pleasure, and freely give way to their most depraved appetites (1990: 159).⁶

Besides commenting on the absence of honour among Sikhs in relation to their womenfolk, Cunningham was presumably referring to homosexual practices observed among the Sikhs, especially in the court of Maharajah Ranjit Singh. Princep (1834: 85) had earlier commented on the prevalence of homosexual activities in the court, and among Sikhs in general.⁷

Jakobsh has no problem putting words in Cunningham's mouth. Cunningham made absolutely *no reference* to homosexuality among Sikhs anywhere. It is disingenuous on Jakobsh's part to conceal the main thrust of Cunningham's observation about Sikhs' sexual morals, which is contrary to what she has stated. After discussing Maharaja Ranjit Singh's marriages, Cunningham says:

Such were the domestic relations of Ranjit Singh, but he shared largely in the opprobrium heaped upon his countrymen as the practitioners of every immorality, and he is not only represented to have frequently indulged in strong drink, but to have occasionally outraged decency by appearing in public inebriated, and surrounded with courtesans. In his earlier days one of these women named Mohra, obtained great ascendancy over him and, in 1811, he caused coins or medal to be struck bearing her name; **but it would be idle to regard Ranjit Singh a habitual drunkard or as one greatly devoted to sensual pleasers; and it would be equally unreasonable to believe the mass of the Sikh people as wholly lost to shame and as revellers in every vice which disgraces humanity.**

Doubtless the sense of personal honour and the female purity is less high among the rude and ignorant of every age than among the informed and the civilised; and when the whole peasantry of a country suddenly attain to power and wealth, and are freed from many of the restraints of society, an unusual proportion will necessarily resign themselves to seduction of pleasure, and freely give way to their most depraved appetites. But such excesses are nevertheless exceptional to the general usage, and those who vilify the Sikhs at one time, and describe their long and rapid marches at another, should remember the contradiction, and reflect that what common-sense and the better feelings of our nature have always condemned, can never be the ordinary practice of a nation. The armed defenders of a country cannot be kept under the same degree of moral restraint as ordinary citizens, with quiet habits, fixed abodes, and watchful pastures, and it is illogical to apply the character of a few dissolute chiefs and licentious soldiers to thousands of hardy peasants and industrious mechanics, and even generally to that body of brave and banded men which furnishes the most obvious examples of degradation. The husband-man of the Punjab, as of other provinces in Upper India, is confined to his cake of millet or wheat and a draught of water from the well; the solid fare does not much matter, and neither indulge in strong liquors, except upon occasions of rejoicing. The indolent man of wealth or station, or the more idle religious fanatic, may seek excitement, or a refuge from the vacancy of his mind, in drugs and drink; but expensiveness of diet is rather a Muhammadan than an Indian characteristic, and the Europeans carry their potations and the pleasures of the table to an excess unknown to the Turk and Persian, and which greatly scandalize the frugal Hindu.⁸

From the above narrative it is abundantly clear that Cunningham's description of Sikh sexual ethos is contrary to what Jakobsh says and he makes no mention of homosexuality among Sikhs. Besides, homosexuality is "universal" and Sikhs are no more prone compared with any other religious, racial or ethnic group. However, Indian homosexuals like heterosexuals keep their sexual mores private. Even in the 21st century, Indian movies do not show simple lip kissing not to speak of more serious romantic overtures. We know that Maharaja Ranjit Singh employed a number of European officers. We have on record that Europeans and non-Europeans had written about Ranjit Singh and the Sikhs. However, except for Princep, none has mentioned the "prevalence of homosexual activities in the court, and among Sikhs in general." Could it be simply a part of British campaign to defame and malign the Sikhs before declaring war on them or that Princep himself was a homosexual (effeminate) who came to Punjab looking for "hypermasculine Khalsa"⁹ but was utterly disappointed and frustrated when he did not find what he was looking for and, had to be content with his fantasy? Besides, Jakobsh herself is following the tactics of leading the words in

Cunningham's mouth: "Cunningham was presumably referring to homosexual practices observed among Sikhs, especially in the court of Maharajah Ranjit Singh." Would it be okay to comment that it is Jakobsh's preoccupation with her own "unmet sexual needs" which has created "hypermasculine Khalsa" or "homosexual Sikh" in her psyche?

The British may have thought of themselves as pinnacle of "morality and masculinity" but in Sikhs' eyes, a "clean-shaven pink face" was the ultimate effeminate, sexually enervated man. Punjabis in general considered the British colonists as unbeliever, immoral and dishonest to the core. Sikhs and other Punjabis, who worked with the British in the army and civilian assignments, had plenty to say about the sexual habits of their masters:

ਗੋਰੇ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਲੇ ਬੋਂਡੀ ਆ, ਤੇ ਇਹਨਾ ਦੀਆਂ ਤੀਵੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਤੇ ਚਦਵਾਈ ਤੋਂ ਸਬਰ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ (*gore tan sale bondi aa, te ehna dian tivian nu te chadvaae ton sabar nahee aunda*).

The Englishmen (wife's brothers) are effeminate and habituated to anal sex and their women have insatiable sexual appetite.

Some British men who were effeminate or bisexuals were also married. Such men as well as their wives suffered from sexual deprivation. They used to bribe soldiers to have sex with them and sometimes asked them to have sex with their wives too. Often the wives would offer gifts and other allurements to soldiers who worked at their bungalows for sexual favours. These juicy anecdotes and tales found their way into Punjabi lore. I still remember some of them I heard from cattle herders in the pastures of my village:

ਰਾਜ ਫਰਾਂਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਚਲਪੇ ਗਿਲਟ ਦੇ ਆਨੇ। (*raj frangian da chalpe gilt de ane*).

Under the British rule even the coins are made of false metal.

ਗੱਡੀ ਮੇਮਾਂ ਦੀ ਵਲੈਤੋਂ ਆਈ ਛੜਿਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਖਬਰ ਕਰੋ। (*gudi meman di vlaton aae sharian nun khabar karo*).

A trainload of English women has arrived, tell the lonely bachelors to get ready.

ਨਾਲੇ ਮੇਮ ਵੱਡੇ ਦੰਦੀਆਂ ਨਾਲੇ ਸ਼ਾਬਾਸ ਸ਼ਾਬਾਸ ਕਹੀ ਜਾਵੇ। (*nale mem vude dandian nale shabas shabas kahi jave*).

The English lady (*mem*) was biting as well as moaning "good job", "good job".

ਮੈਨੂੰ ਦਿਨ ਨੂੰ ਦਖਾ ਦੇ ਤਾਰੇ ਰਾਸ਼ਨ ਡਬਲ ਕਰੂੰ॥ (*manun din nun dikha de tare rashan dabal krun*).

Take me to the climax, I will double your ration.

ਇਕ ਮੇਰੀ ਸੱਸ ਚੰਦਰੀ ਦੂਜਾ ਮੇਮ ਨੇ ਚੂਸ ਲਿਆ ਫੌਜੀ। (*ik meri sus chandri duja mem ne choos lia fauji*).

My one problem is my mean mother-in-law and my second problem is the English lady (*mem*), who has sexually drained my soldier-husband.

ਅੜੀਓ ਨੀਂ ਮੈਂ ਕੀ ਕਰਾਂ ਹੌਲਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਮੇਮਾਂ ਦਾ ਭੁਸ ਪੈਗਿਆ। (*ario nee main ki kran hauldar nu memen da bhus pai gia*).

My dear what should I do, my *hauldar* (non-commissioned military man) has developed taste for *meman* (British women).

ਨਾਲੇ ਸਾਬ ਡਮਜੂ ਕਹੇ ਨਾਲੇ ਪੀਲੇ ਪੀਲੇ ਚਿਤੜ ਦਿਖਾਵੇ। (*nale sab damju kahe nale pile pile chittar dikhave*).

Sahib (British officer) was cursing (damn you) while exposing his pale white buttocks.

ਫਤੂਈ ਪਰ੍ਹੇ ਸਿਟਕੇ ਲਾਟ ਪੈਗਿਆ ਗੋਡਿਆਂ ਪਰਨੇ (*fatooee preh sitke lat paigia godian parne*).

Lord threw away his pants and knelt down.

Was this behaviour widespread among the British? Of course, not! There were some isolated cases that were exaggerated. But if I were of Jakobsh's mind, I could have transformed the isolated cases to look as widespread. I hope some Punjabi folklorist would collect these tales and couplets for the sake of history about colonial Punjab under the British.

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Chapter 10

British Victorian Sexual Ethos versus Sikh Sexual Ethos

After describing Sikhs as "sexually depraved," Jakobsh finds similarity between Sikh and British sexual ethos:

1. "Significantly, construction of gender in Britain played a central role in policies developed by the British in India. Deeply ingrained assumptions of gender in India, especially the hypermasculine ethos that undergirded the institution of Khalsa, corresponded well with the prevailing Victorian sexual ethos. As we shall see, these constructions furthered both British and Sikh causes admirably."¹

This is purely a false way of stating some facts. The presence of thousands of Anglo-Indians in India is a testimony to British "Victorian sexual ethos." The keeping of an Indian bibi or mistress, was common occurrence with most British until late 1700s.² On the other hand Khalsa/Sikh "sexual ethos" are rooted in Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat).

Qazi Nur Mohammed who participated in Ahmad Shah Abdali's expedition to India observed that Sikhs respect the chastity of women as part of their faith and adultery does not exist among them.³ The rescue of hundreds of Hindu and Muslim women from the clutches of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali and restoring them to their families, speaks itself for the "sexual ethos" of the Khalsa whom Jakobsh has described as "sexually depraved."⁴

Further Nanakian philosophy lays utmost importance on sexual morality of man/woman:

ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਏਹਿ ਨ ਆਖੀਅਨਿ ਬਹਿਨ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋਇ।
ਏਕ ਜੋਤਿ ਦੁਇ ਮੂਰਤੀ ਧਨ ਪਿਰੁ ਕਰੀਐ ਸੋਇ।

They are not wife and husband, who perform merely worldly duties together, but when the two are spiritually one, are wife and husband.

AGGS, M 3, p. 788.

ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਪਰ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਇਨ ਸਿਉ ਪ੍ਰੀਤ ਨਿਵਾਰਿ॥

Renounce slander and coveting other's wife and wealth.

AGGS, M 5, p. 379.

ਪਰ ਧਨ ਪਰ ਦਾਰਾ ਸਿਉ ਰਚਿਓ ਬਿਰਥਾ ਜਨਮੁ ਸਿਰਾਵੈ॥

A *manmukh* (degenerate man) wastes his life devouring others wealth and in sexual indulgence with other women.

AGGS, M 9, p. 633.

ਬਨਿਤਾ ਛੋਡਿ ਬਦ ਨਦਿਰ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ।

ਵੇਸਿ ਨ ਪਾਈਐ ਮਹਾ ਦੁਖਿਆਰੀ।

A mere garb won't bring salvation to the one who leaves his wife and then covets another's. Such a person faces much suffering.

AGGS, M 5, p. 1348.

Here Guru Arjan criticises a person who gives up household life to become a yogi:

ਏਕਾ ਨਾਰੀ ਜਤੀ ਹੋਇ ਪਰ ਨਾਰੀ ਧੀ ਭੈਣ ਵਖਾਣੈ॥

A *gurmukh*/Sikh (God-centred being) remains faithful to his wife and respects other women as daughter and sister.

Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bhai Gurdas*, 6, p. 53.

ਦੇਖਿ ਪਰਾਈਆਂ ਚੰਗੀਆਂ ਮਾਵਾਂ ਭੈਣਾਂ ਧੀਆਂ ਜਾਣੈ॥

A *gurmukh*/Sikh considers other women as good and respects them as his mother, daughter and sister.

Bhai Gurdas, *Varan Bahi Gurdas*, 29, p. 233.

2. Jakobsh goes on to fabricate another lie:

"British attitudes towards female jurisdiction were closely aligned with the already prevalent ethos of hypermasculinity reigning supreme among the Sikhs, as well as the Sikh apprehensions towards female rule."⁵

This statement contradicts her earlier statement on the previous page that Sikhs had able female ruler like Rani Sahib Kaur:

The British were well aware of the record of successful female rule in Punjab. Upon the death of a husband or son during *misl* (confederacy) period of earlier Sikh rule, women had often taken over the leadership. George Thomas had written appreciably of Bibi Sahib Kaur, a 'woman of masculine and intrepid spirit', who bravely defended the capital city of Patiala during his expedition of 1798. He was sufficiently impressed by Sahib Kaur to assert that she was 'a better man than her brother', Raja Sahib Singh, who had fled the city during the siege (cited in Gupta 1980). Rani Askour and Rani Rajinder Kaur were other noteworthy Sikh women rulers and, according to Lepel Griffin, 'it would appear that the Phulkian chiefs excluded by direct enactment all women from any share of power, from the suspicion that they were able to use it more wisely than themselves' (Griffin, Introduction, in Poole 1892: viii).⁶

Besides, if "hypermasculinity was reigning supreme among the Sikhs and they had apprehensions towards female rule" then why did they accept women as leaders and rulers?

The Phulkian chiefs excluded by direct enactment all women from any power not due to "their hypermasculinity," but because they had lost their "manliness" under the British boots as vassals. The Phulkian chiefs were neither Sikh nor men; they were cowards and debauchers. The evil genius behind the enactment of a law for "excluding women from power" was the British imperialists—the "apex of human civilization." They knew very well that the conquest of Punjab (*Sarkar-i-Khalsa*) cost them more men and material than the conquest of the rest of India. They also knew that the Khalsa lost due to the treachery of their leaders, and not due to lack of valour. They did not want to face the Khalsa forces led by the likes of Rani Sahib Kaur or Rani Jindan as is evident from the letter Lord Dalhousie wrote on January 31, 1849 to Brigadier Mountain in response to a plea the Sikhs made for the release of Rani Jindan from Jail:

The pretences of the Sikhs of their anxiety to get back the Rani ... are preposterous. And the more sincere they are, the stronger are the grounds for not acceding to them. She has the only manly understanding in the Punjab, and her restoration would furnish the only thing which is wanting to render the present movement truly formidable, namely an object and a head. Trust me this is no time for going back or giving back or winking an eyelid.⁷

Moreover, when Bhagwan Kaur, the widow of Dyal Singh Majithia contested his will on the ground that he was a Sikh not a Hindu; it was the **British Privy Council** that ruled against her. This is what Jakobsh herself wrote about this incidence:

A few short years earlier the highly publicized Majithia Will case, after years before the courts, had proved to be a massive blow to the efforts of reformers to distinguish Sikhs from Hindus. The

philanthropist Dyal Singh Majithia of the Brahmo Samaj had willed the majority of his wealth to the Samaj. ... His wife, Bhagwan Kaur, and his closest agnatic relative had challenged Dyal Singh's last testament on the ground of Majithia's Sikh background; as such, they believed, Hindu inheritance laws could not apply to his estate. Yet the Privy Council disagreed, thus ensuring that Hindu law continued to cover the sikhs.⁸

There is nothing in the Sikh masculinity or ethos against accepting women as leaders, which is amply demonstrated by Sikh-women rulers or leaders. Like McLeod's "sant tradition" and Oberoi's "Sanatan Sikhs,"⁹ Jakobsh has coined the term "hypermusculine Khalsa." While McLeod and Oberoi fabricated their terms under external compulsions, Jakobsh's construction of "hypermusculine Khalsa" seems to be the result of her doubts about her own sexuality. For example, she calls Sikh males as hypermusculine while she relishes the British description of Sikh women as of "masculine disposition, want of modesty, and of delicate feeling,"¹⁰ "woman of masculine and intrepid spirit,"¹¹ and "better man than her brother."¹² Her own adrenal gland gets titillated when she thinks of "manly Jati" (Jat female).¹³ Professor Jakobsh may not like me saying bluntly that from her writings one can infer as if she herself is suffering from "missing testicle syndrome."

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Chapter 11

Manipulation of Population Census to Malign Sikhs

Prof. Jakobsh unhesitatingly points out:

The positive evaluation of Sikhs and their treatment of women was particularly striking, given the consistent census reports depicting conspicuously fewer females than males in Punjabi Sikh society. Female infanticide has long been associated with Jat and Sikh Khattris. The census report of 1881 tabulated the number of females per thousand males for each religious community. For girl children under the age of five, the Sikhs enumerated 839, Hindus 941, Muslims 962. The numbers decreased significantly for all the three when females of all ages were compared to males: Sikhs 765, Hindus 834 and Muslims 864 (ibid.). In the Census report of 1901, the proportion of girls to boys among children under the age of five ranged from 96 per cent among Muslims and 92 per cent among Hindus, to 76 percent among Sikhs, with some Sikh-populated tracts falling as low as 62 percent (Strachey 1911:446).¹

Before responding to this ongoing malicious propaganda, I must alert the readers to not construe that I am denying discrimination against women within the Sikh community. For me one female infanticide or mistreatment of even one woman is far too many. But what Jakobsh has brought out is hardly a scholarly or academic work, rather a calculated move against Sikhs and Sikhism. Jakobsh depicts Sikhs as "female killers" by manipulating the census figures to fit into her agenda. There are several problems with the census and census data.

a. The British authorities manipulated the censuses just as post-1947 Indian governments have done. For example, Jakobsh herself says:

Harjot Oberoi has questioned the oft-touted decline in the number of Sikhs in the nineteenth century. The 1868 census suffered severe limitations, as not all districts in the Province of Punjab were included in British numeration effort. Further, there was no indication as to what was meant by the classification 'Sikh'. Punjabis in the first Census, of 1855, were delineated as either Hindus or Muslims. By 1868, Sikhs were included in the enumeration, but the definition of 'Sikh' remained unclear. By 1881, only true Sikhs who maintained the external indicators of the Khalsa identity were classified under the rubric 'Sikh'. All others, including Sikhs who cut hair, as well as numerous Sikh sects, Nanakpanthis, Ramdasis, Nirmalas, Udasis, and other groups were classified as Hindus (Oberoi 1994: 208-13).²

Is it not strange that the British imperialists who fought bloody wars (1845-1849) against the Sikhs did not notice any Sikh in Punjab in the 1855 census? However, in 1868 they found 1,144,090 Sikhs among 17,611,498 Punjabis, making Sikhs 6.5 percent of the total population.² So what were the imperialists trying to accomplish through the manipulation of census? Instead of questioning the motives of imperialists, Jakobsh had no compunction in using their census data to malign the Sikhs!

In the 1950s, the Indian government reorganised the provinces of the colonial period on the basis of language creating the states of Tamil Nadu, Kerala, Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, Maharashtra and Gujarat but refused to apply the same principle to the bilingual state of Punjab by making it a communal issue. The central government led by Jawaharlal Nehru in collaboration with Hindu organisations like Arya Samaj, Hindu Maha Sabha and Brahma Samaj exhorted Punjabi Hindus to declare Hindi as their mother tongue. It was surprising that illiterate Aad Dharmis (chamars, leather workers) and Valmikiis (chuharas, sweepers) who could not speak a word of Hindi declared "in chaste Punjabi" that Hindi is their mother tongue. It is unbelievable that about 80% of the Punjabi speaking Hindus returned Hindi as their mother tongue in the 1961 Census. Moreover, Sikhs have always been undercounted in the censuses since 1950. After a long struggle on the part of Sikhs, in 1966, Punjab was vivisected into a Punjabi speaking state of Punjab and a Hindi speaking state of Haryana. Sikhs formed about 65% of the population of the newly created Punjab. However, under Indira Gandhi, the 1981 Census reduced Sikh population of Punjab to 52%. In contrast, twenty years later, in spite of large emigration of Sikhs out of Punjab, and large influx of Hindu labourers from outside into Punjab, the 2001 census records 14,592,387 Sikhs out of a total of 24,265,174, thus making Sikhs 60% of Punjab's population.³

The Bhartiya Janta Party (BJP) after assuming power created a "Muslim phobia" by manipulating the 2001 Census to show 36%

Muslim population growth against 20.3% for Hindus from 1991-2001. These statistics raised alarm bells of the coming danger to Hindu India. As it turned out, the examination of earlier censuses revealed that due to ongoing insurgency in Assam and Kashmir, the censuses of 1981 and 1991 failed to include the Muslim population of these two states, whereas the 2001 Census did. After making an adjustment to the Muslim population, their growth rate from 1991 to 2001 ranked slightly lower than that of Hindus.

There is a lesson here for Jakobsh. For her to *use unreliable census figures to argue her point against Sikhs is unconscionable!*

b. The lower ratio of girls to boys among Sikhs in comparison to Muslims and Hindus in the 1868 and 1881 Censuses pointed above by Jakobsh is not due to high female infanticide. Jakobsh has herself quoted Heuin Tsang's observation about the egalitarian nature of Jats believing in male/female equality. The majority of Sikhs in 1881 or in 1901 were no more than one to four generations apart from their Hindu, Muslim and Sultani-Hindu ancestors. So it is difficult to imagine that the egalitarian Jats became daughter killers in such a short period after joining Sikh faith. And the percentage of Khatri may not have been more than two percent of the Sikh population during that period, as even today 95% of the Sikhs are descendants of Sudras and untouchables.⁴ There are valid reasons for the lower female to male ratio in Sikhs during that period. First, according to 1881 Census of Punjab quoted by Jakobsh, Sikh community was the most illiterate.⁵ Second, much higher percentage of Sikhs were agriculturists than their counterparts: Sikhs 66%, Hindus 34% and Muslims 59%.⁶ And the Sikh urban population during that period was insignificant, overwhelming majority of their population was rural in comparison to Hindus and Muslims. In the rural area relatively there were far few education or health facilities. These factors resulted in lower female to male ratio among Sikhs vis-à-vis Hindus and Muslims. Had the census analysts compared female to male ratio of rural Muslims or Hindus as against the Sikhs, they would not have found significant differences, and in all likelihood Jakobsh might have spared the Sikhs at least of one assault. The lower female to male ratio among Sikhs was not due to female infanticide, but due to ill health of married women, especially peasant women who made up about 80-85% of the Sikh female population. In a patriarchal agriculturist society there is preference for sons over daughters, thus resulting in an inherent bias against women. But that does not mean that it leads to female

infanticide. Let me share my experience of growing up in a Punjab village (1939-1962). It was not uncommon to see couples with more daughters than sons; couples with five and six daughters with one or no son; couples with only daughters or sons or couples with no children. There were two factors that influenced the high mortality rate among married peasant women. The extremely hard life, the back breaking daily chores had devastating effect on the health of pregnant and nursing mothers. Added to this burden were too many pregnancies occurring rapidly without allowing the woman to recuperate and the dreadful childbirths. In the twenty-five families on our street there were six widowers with four to six grown-up children and only one young widow with two children. One of the widowers, a policeman was married three times. Women, who had four or five surviving children, probably had seven to ten pregnancies. My aunt (my father's elder brother's wife) had three sons and five daughters and my mother used to tell me that her five other children died as infants.

c. In the last several years we have seen a lot written on female feticide in India and the declining female to male ratio among children below ten years of age. In Delhi, Haryana, Chandigarh, and Punjab there is an alarming decline in the number of female children according to various social organisations. In Haryana and Delhi the population of the Sikhs is below 10% and in Chandigarh it is less than 20%. **But the headlines in *The Tribune* from Chandigarh say "alarming decrease in female child population among Sikhs due to female feticide."** Why this newspaper chooses to make it only a Sikh problem? Is it because the Hindu media looks for every opportunity to defame Sikhs?

Let us examine this lopsided female to male ratio in Punjab going back to the colonial period. There has always been a lower female to male ratio in Punjab than the national ratio since the colonial government started conducting census in Punjab. For example, though the 1911-2001 Censuses show consistent lower female to male ratio in Punjab than the national ratio, but there has been a consistent improvement in Punjab vis-à-vis the national situation.

Year	Number of women per 1000 men	
	Punjab	India
1911	780	963
1921	799	956

1931	815	950
1941	836	945
1951	844	947
1961	854	941
1971	865	930
1981	879	934
1991	882	929
2001	874	933

For the last several years the **Hindu media** has been slandering Sikhs for female feticide whereas the district-by-district analysis of the 2001 census shows that female feticide is far more prevalent among Hindus than Sikhs in Punjab. The reader should also take into account that in Punjab about 75% of the Sikh population is rural whereas 80% of the Hindu population is urban where far better education and health facilities are located. Besides, in Punjab, Hindus are relatively much more well off economically than the Sikhs.

District	Number of women per 1000 of men	
	Sikhs	Hindus
Gurdaspur	906	877
Amritsar	888	831
Kapurthala	922	840
Jalandhar	929	863
Hoshiarpur	960	922
Nawanshahr	942	898
Ropar	888	850
Fategarh Sahib	881	774
Ludhiana	896	737
Moga	893	851
Ferozepur	903	866
Mukatsar	897	873
Faridkot	896	837
Bathinda	886	825
Mansa	880	875
Sangrur	876	842
Patiala	883	850

The Spokesman, October 2004, pp. 13-16.⁷

d. If female infanticide would have been widespread among Sikhs as implied by Jakobsh then can she explain how the percentage of Sikh population in Punjab increased from 6.5% in 1868 to about 13% in 1931?⁸ This is the period marked by Christian missionaries, Arya Samajists, Hindu Mahasabha, Brahma Samaj, so-

called Sanatan Sikhs (Hindus disguised as Sikhs) and Ahmadiya Muslims increasingly denigrating Sikhs and Sikhism and, trying to convert them. The British authorities encouraged and nurtured the above-mentioned non-Sikh groups. The British set up these anti-Sikh organizations after the Kuka Sikhs (Namdharis) launched their agitation against the British under the leadership of Baba Ram Singh. The British went berserk and they indulged in devious means to discredit the leader and the movement.

e. In the 2001 census, Sikhs had the highest female to male ratio in Punjab. For 1000 men the numbers of female were Sikhs 897, Hindu 846, Muslims 793 and Christians 893.³

f. An Indo-Canadian team of Prabhat Jha and Rajesh Kumar launched the first scientific study on female feticide in India and their findings present a shocking picture. Every year, about 500,000 unborn girls, one in 25 are aborted. The figure adds up to 1 crore (10 million) over the past two decades – almost equal to the population of Delhi. The researchers attribute this to the rampant misuse of ultrasound technology--the pre-natal sex determination test, which the Central government banned in 1994. **Interestingly, families educated to the level of grade X reported double the number of missing girls as compared to illiterate families. To the researchers' surprise, the data collected showed that religion is immaterial where female feticide is concerned.**⁹ Simply for the sake of information, readers would benefit knowing the infanticide promulgated in the Bible.¹⁰

I think Jakobsh would benefit with the description detailing the harsh realities on daily account of life of a typical Sikh peasant wife in the 1950s. Keep in mind that life was much harder during the 19th century when there were no machines to make flour, gin cotton or water hand-pumps in homes (water was drawn from common water wells located far away from homes). A peasant wife worked as hard if not harder than her husband did. She was the last in the family to go to bed and the first to rise to churn buttermilk, prepare breakfast, feed and milk cattle. After cleaning the house and the cattle quarters, she prepared dung cakes for fuel. Then it was time for lunch preparation and supplying food to the farm workers, routinely. In Punjab, the peasants lived in villages, not on their farms. Depending on the size of village, some farmers' fields were more than two miles away. Now imagine carrying a basket of food and pitchers of water and buttermilk on head and a jug of hot tea in hand in scorching heat under blazing sun with temperatures

hovering over 110⁰ Fahrenheit day after day. Imagine a pregnant woman doing these gruelling tasks to the last week of pregnancy or while suffering from morning sickness! There was help in these situations from sister-in-laws in a joint family, but when the joint family was split into single units, generally, there was little or no help: she did herself. She performed every farm task except ploughing fields. But in every village there were examples of solitary hardy souls who did that too. She helped in harvesting crops, plucking cotton, cutting fodder, bringing fuel and vegetables home, preparing special feed of grain and wheat straw for milch cattle and oxens. Quite often she made flour of corn, wheat and millet or *dals* (split grains of lentils) on a manual grinding mill (*chuki*) and ginned cotton. Then there was the routine of washing and mending of clothes, milking the cattle, preparing supper for the family, taking care of the little ones, bathing them or cleaning them, putting them to bed and finally going to bed after every one had settled for the night. This was the routine. Prof. Jakobsh can you imagine this? Then there were more chores: spinning of yarn and display of her artistry—embroidery work on pillowcases, bed sheets, scarves, shirts, trousers, blankets and shawls. The most intricate and artistic work was silk embroidery on deep red heavy cotton blankets to make a *Fulkari* or *Baag*. Not to mention of the weaving of *daris* (bed carpets) with all kinds of geometrical patterns or landscapes, birds and animals. Any leisure time was used in teaching this art to her daughters or young girls from the neighbourhood. Amidst this hectic schedule she found time to sing comforting, soothing and melodious lullabies and love songs of Punjabi legends--Hir Ranjha, Mirza Sahiban, Sasi Punnu and Sohni Mahipal--while making yarn on a spinning wheel. On festive occasions like marriages, her rhythmic and vigorous gidda and dance shook the floor and folk tunes filled the whole village with excitement and exhilaration. The artist in her was evident in the style of mud plastering of the exterior walls of her home with borders of coloured clay mixed with dung and fine straw and the interior mud-coated, whitewashed and decorated with murals. However, in joint families there was always the shadow of the mean mother-in-law hovering over:

ਛੱਡਦੇ ਚਰਖਾ ਫੜਲਾ ਚੱਕੀ, ਨੂਹੇਂ ਨਾ ਤੂੰ ਹਾਰੀ ਨਾ ਤੂੰ ਥੱਕੀ (*shade the charkha farla chuki nuhen na tun hari na tun thuki*).

O my daughter-in-law, leave the spinning wheel, operate the grinding mill, as you are neither helpless (lacking strength) nor tired.

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6. Harjot Oberoi. *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*. New Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 366.
7. Joginder Singh. "Census Report 2001: Sikh can learn a lot from it, if they wish to." *Spokesman*, October 2004, pp. 13-16.
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9. Indian Express, January 9, 2006.
10. According to C. Dennis McKinsey, killing babies is another method Biblical God uses to express his anger. Babies were drowned in the worldwide Flood, first-born Egyptian babies were among the killed at the Passover, and babies were killed in the wars of extermination. This divine punishment was also used after King David succeeded in having a loyal Israeli soldier, Uriah, killed in battle. David selfishly took this action in order to steal Uriah's wife, Bathsheba. Although David was the one who committed premeditated murder, the son Bathsheba bore to him received the brunt of Biblical God's punishment. This God, in his infinite wisdom and justice, punished David by killing the baby. Isaiah says a similar punishment would be used against

the Babylonians. He quotes the Lord as vowing, "Infants will be dashed to the ground before their eyes... I will stir up against them the Medes, ... who have no pity on little children and spare no mother's son..." The book of Psalms indicates that those inflicting this punishment can enjoy it. The book says about Babylon: "Happy is he who shall seize your children and dash them against the rock." Hosea prophesies that Samaria will receive the same treatment. He explains: "Samaria will become desolate because she has rebelled against her God; her babes will fall by the sword and be dashed to the ground, her women with child shall be ripped up." The Bible also teaches that God is willing to test people by having their offspring slaughtered. The Lord allowed Satan to kill Job's sons and daughters to see if Job would then curse God. Additionally, the New Testament contains a murderous attitude toward the young. The book of Hebrews attests to the Lord's horrible acts at the time of the Passover, but does not disapprove of them. And the book of Revelation indicates that Christ will behave similarly. As for a certain false prophetess who will lead his servants astray, the book quotes Jesus as promising to throw her on a bed of pain and strike dead her children. Jesus explains his actions: "This will teach all the churches that I am the searcher of men's hearts and thoughts, and that I will reward each one of you according to his deeds."

Chapter 12

British and the Singh Sabha Reform Movement: Did British Try to Hinduize Sikh?

Professor Jakobsh tells us:

For the British as the self-defined 'keepers of the Sikh faith', Sikh womanhood steeped in Hinduized practices, constituted an unwelcome impediment to the purification project of Sikhism. ... The Sikh intelligentsia, carefully moulded and educated to conform to British political designs, benefited greatly from the politics of similarity that had progressed under the tutelage of the Raj. ... Enthused by the Victorian customs and ethos of the British, these reformers also adopted, and in some cases modified, the prevailing gender constructions of the Raj. The ramifications of the melding of Victorian gender constructs with hypermasculine Sikh ethos of the nineteenth and the early twentieth centuries through the newly forged Sikh elite were profound and far-reaching.¹

British influence on the Singh Sabha movement is undeniable, particularly in light of the preferential treatment given the Sikhs by the Raj. Correspondingly, the Singh Sabha leaders exhibited admiration and unequivocal support towards their rulers.²

These statements had their beginnings in the 1870s from the pages of Hindu propaganda against the Sikhs and, this nefarious propaganda is in full force these days. In addition we find similar statements on other pages of her book. One of the prominent features of Jakobsh's work is her consistent and persistent self-contradiction. She uses the same information to argue contradictory views. First, let me point out her statements that contradict the above outlined malicious propaganda:

The members of the Amritsar Sabha tended to be conservative, holding fast to assumptions and privileges of the upper and respected religious classes. This group was representative of what Harjot Oberoi has

labelled Sanatan Sikhs. Sanatan Sikhs had little use for a monolithic and closed understanding of what it meant to be Sikh; the Khalsa ideal initiated by Guru Gobind Singh was for them simply one of many Sikh identities. ... This fluid understanding of Sikh identity was challenged by the Lahore Singh Sabha, which was composed of what Bruce Lawrence calls the 'elite consumers of new knowledge'. The new knowledge was based on Western enlightenment ideals and incorporated into the teachings of their British educators (Lawrence 1889: 98). The consumers of these ideals were professionals, many from lower castes, who had risen in status due to opportunities offered by the British educational system. ... Dit Singh, who though a Mazhbi (low) caste, had become a potent force in Sikh reformative circles due to his education. As a result he became a veritable force in the castigation of the Amritsar Singh Sabha and of Sanatan Sikhs in general. Another powerful Lahore leader was Gurmukh Singh, who had risen to prominence as the first professor of Punjabi at Oriental College.³

In other words, the Sikh intelligentsia "carefully moulded and educated to conform to British political designs," who ran the Lahore Singh Sabha, did not "admire or gave unequivocal support to the rulers" because they relentlessly exposed the hypocrisy and un-Sikh practices of the Amritsar Singh Sabha, which was made up of British toadies—aristocrats and so-called Sanatan Sikhs. Further she contradicts herself again when she says:

Whereas the *pujaris* of Golden temple had issued *hukamnama* (letter of command) in 1879 urging all Sikhs to join the Singh Sabha, by 1883 an official *hukamnama* from Akal Takhat decried the activities of the Lahore leadres as being injurious to Sikh interests (Bhatia 1987:153). Nonetheless, given the wider appeal of the Lahore Sabha's initiatives, most other Singh Sabhas too severed their ties with the Amritsar group.⁴

Here again she is saying that the Lahore Sabha exposed and discredited the Amritsar Sabha in the eyes of the Sikh masses. Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, the leader of the Amritsar group made up of British "toadies"—aristocrats and "Sanatan Sikhs"⁵—families of guru lineages, mahants, *pujaris* and other heterodox groups, found himself isolated and humiliated in the eyes of Sikh masses. He had supported the British in the 1857 mutiny by raising troops for them.⁶ He was aspiring to become the thirteenth Nanak with the help of his British masters.⁷ On the other hand, despite the formidable obstacles created by the British through toddies and parasites—families of guru lineages, mahants, *pujaris* and other heterodox groups, the leaders of Lahore Singh Sabha (Tat Khalsa) awakened the Sikh masses about their "real heritage"—the teachings of Gurus enshrined in the Aad Guru Garanth Sahib. Furthermore, they turned the tide against the designs of Christian missionaries, Arya Samajists, "Sanatan Sikhs," and Ahmadiyahs. Most importantly, the Lahore Singh Sabha through its tireless campaign of preaching

and writings awakened the Sikh masses. Thus it provided a platform to rally and foster resistance against the British. This account, which Jakobsh has completely ignored intentionally, is discussed later in this chapter.

On the other hand, like her supervisor Oberoi, Jakobsh laments at the success of Lahore Singh Sabha over the Amritsar Sabha and belittles its achievements. Her Eurocentric mind is unwilling to give it credit for its glorious success in the face of formidable obstacles. According to her, Lahore Singh Sabha's success is due to the tactics it learned from Christian missionaries:

"The members of the Lahore group were certainly well-versed in tactics employed by the potent missionary machine in Panjab, especially its proclivity to spread Christian tenets through the written word, which initiated widespread Sikh participation in the prevalent print culture of the day."⁸

This is preposterous because in contrast to the financially strapped Lahore Sabha, Amritsar Sabha had the backing of the British and was flush with funds provided by aristocrats, Chiefs of Phulkian States, Kapurthala and Faridkot, and cash-rich Gurdwaras (Sikh places of worship) controlled by the British. Thus the Amritsar Sabha had much more powerful press to carry out its propaganda. So the victory of the Lahore Singh Sabha was mainly due its campaign based on "Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat)" whereas the Amritsar Sabha was fighting from a platform of "falsehood and distortion" of the Nanakian philosophy.

Now let us examine her other absurd and irrational assertion that the Sikh intelligentsia was enthused by "Victorian customs and the British ethos" and the Singh Sabha leaders exhibited "admiration and unequivocal support towards their rulers." Generally, some people in the subjugated community (conquered, colonised) do copy and imitate their subjugators, but that happens only after centuries of subjugation. In contrast, the Sikh reform movements started less than 25 years after the conquest of Punjab. Sure, the Sikh aristocracy and Oberoi's "Sanatan Sikh" danced to the tunes of their new masters but for the vast majority of Sikhs the colonists were devil incarnate. They regarded them as deceitful and morally depraved monkeys. Even when I was growing up in my village in the 1940s, people used the epithets, *bandar* (male monkey) and *bandri* (female monkey) for the British men and women, respectively. I still vividly remember an entertainer coming to our village with a

pair of red-faced male and female monkeys wearing pants, skirt and English hats. The male was called *sahib* and the female *mem*. They used to perform various tricks to entertain people, especially children.

Recounting the horrible situation under "martial law" imposed by the British after the cold-blooded and calculated murder of innocent Punjabis by General Dyer in Jallianwala Bagh (somewhat adjacent to the Golden Temple) in Amritsar on the Baisakhi day, April 13, 1919, Giani Kartar Singh⁹ says: "People used to refer to white people (British) as monkeys. Please be careful, there may be a monkey with a gun behind the bush." According to official report 379 unarmed people were killed and over 2,000 were wounded.¹⁰ Jakobsh makes no mention of this heinous crime as it belies her lies: The British were protector of Sikhs and Sikh faith and Sikhs were their most favoured subjects! Could it be that most of the victims of the massacre were Sikhs as Baisakhi is one of most sacred day for the Sikhs? Every year thousands of Sikhs come to Darbar Sahib (Golden temple) in Amritsar on this day to celebrate the creation of Khalsa on the Baisakhi day of 1699.

Moreover, the British were unable to pacify the Sikhs. Within ten years after the annexation of Punjab, Baba Ram singh launched a movement (Kuka movement) against everything the British stood for. The British authorities with the help of toadies and the clergy (*mahants* and *pujaris*) sabotaged the movement **and, ruthlessly suppressed it by bodily blowing 75 Kukas with cannons without trial**. Hundreds went to jails and, Baba Ram Singh was exiled in 1872 to Rangoon, Burma where he died in 1880.^{11, 12}

In spite of the allure of high recruitment in the army and land grants in the Canal Colonies in Western Punjab, the free spirited Sikhs felt the insults unbearable. For them the oppression of colonists, their control of gurdwaras and the desecration therein, their treachery and moral depravity was too much for them to keep silent. The yearning for freedom was like smouldering lava, which kept erupting again and again.

The deteriorating economic conditions, higher farm taxes and water charges coupled with oppressive regulations and Bills adopted by the Punjab Government, led to widespread peasant resentment against the government. Ajit Singh and his elder brother Kishen Singh and a trusted colleague Ghasita Ram led the agitation against the government and it received enthusiastic response from the people. Ajit Singh described the farmers as

"the real owners of the country" but at the same time the most exploited and deprived of the fruits of their blood and sweat. Singh exhorted them to take hold of the situation by his forceful oratory of Banke Bihari's famous and popular song: *Pargi Samal O'Jatta* (O farmer, take care of your turban—protect your honour). This became the rallying call of the farmers in Punjab. The authorities saw the growing dangers as the agitators were from the most educated section of the peasantry characterised by Jakobsh as the "Sikh intelligentsia, carefully moulded and educated to conform to British political designs." Most of the farmers were retired army men. The Government responded to the agitation with panic. Terrified Lord Kitchner, C-in-C of Royal Indian Army, wrote to the British Government at home, that he would not be responsible for the loyalty of native troops if the proposed legislation were not withdrawn.^{13, 14, 15} Also alarming to the authorities was the demonstration by students of Khalsa College in Amritsar, the strong hold of Sikh middle class.¹⁶

Oddly, in her convoluted reasoning, Doris Jakobsh gives the credit to Arya Samaj for the success of farmer's agitation:

Ultimately, the Arya Samaj was blamed for the political turmoil. Ibbetson had earlier warned his officials against the employment of Aryas because of their seditious nature and had urged them to dismiss Arya employees 'at the least sign of disloyalty'. ... Further, officials arrested leaders such as Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh, among others, some were subsequently deported to Burma. ... In the cities, members of Arya Samaj left with the full weight of government apprehension about them as the apparent organisers of the disturbances. ... Leaders of the Samaj hastened to make amends; the hostile world of British mistrust and discrimination was simply too problematical. A delegation met with Denzil Ibbetson acknowledging that while some 'extremists' had taken part in the agitation 'the Arya Samajists as a body had nothing to do with the later disturbances, that the Samaj was an organisation which had for its sole object the religious educational advancement of its members.'¹⁷

It is farfetched that Arya Samajists took part in the farmers' agitation to help the farmers, as generally, they were/are the worst enemy of the farming community. If they did participate then their motive must have been to harm the Sikh farmers by bringing about bloody conflicts between the Sikh farmers and the British authorities, as Sikh farmers were in the forefront of the agitation. The Arya Samajists were well aware of how their ancestors benefited from the bloody conflicts between Sikhs and Mughals. Although, she points out that Arya Samaj leaders went out of their way to placate and assure the British authorities of their loyalty, she makes no mention of what happened to Lala Lajpat Rai.

The government arrested Lala Lajpat Rai and Ajit Singh and deported them to Mandalay where they were locked separately. Understandably, Lala Lajpat Rai developed second thoughts about his role in the agitation. He asked for pardon in a memorandum to the Secretary of State on September 22, 1907, pleading his innocence.¹⁸ Later on Rai turned Gandhite and started receiving Rs. 5,000 per month from the munificent of Seth Jugal Kishore Birla for thwarting the conversion of untouchables to Christianity. In May 1914, he left the country to comply with his pardon commitments:¹⁹

Under the darkening shadow of World War First (1914-18) Lala Ji left for abroad in May 1914 on a self-chosen exile as per commitment given vide para 9 of his memorial submitted from Mandalay. He returned to India in February 1920. He passed those six years mostly in U. S. A., received generous donations from Indians settled there for cause of independence of motherland, but kept at a safe distance from the Ghadar Party and on return spent those huge collections for purposes other than the political, as accused by *Kirti* (Punjabi magazine) in its various issues.¹⁹

In November 1927, about two-dozen Punjabi revolutionaries led by Kedar Nath Sehgal criticised Lala Lajpat Rai for his anti-revolutionary activities and for aggravating Hindu-Muslim tension.²⁰ He died of heart disease on November 17, 1928.²¹ On the other hand, the British authorities charged Ajit Singh, his younger brother Swarn Singh and Sufi Amba Parsad for distributing seditious literature. Swarn Singh was arrested, prosecuted and sentenced to rigorous imprisonment. He was released on parole due to his deteriorating health. He died in the prime of life in 1910. The other two fled to Iran incognito.²² After spending many years in foreign jails, Ajit Singh was allowed to return to India shortly before the British left India, and he died in 1947.

The Ghadar Movement (1913-1915)

The Sikh migrants in Canada and America who faced enormous racial discrimination and immigration restrictions started the Ghadar movement to end the British rule in India. In February 1913, the United India League and the Khalsa Diwan Society sent a delegation to the Colonial Secretary and the Governor General of India to present the case of Indian emigrants against the legal disabilities and statutory discrimination imposed on them by the various governmental agencies in Canada. This delegation was well received by the Press in Punjab, but the Lieutenant Governor merely warned its members against inflammatory speeches; Lord Harding expressed his inability to help them, and the Colonial Secretary in London refused to meet them.

Across the border in United States, the Pacific Coast Khalsa Diwan built a Gurdwara in Stockton in 1912, which was the main centre of social activities of the Indian community. A sister political organisation, Hindi Association of Pacific Coast was also founded and most of its founding members were Sikhs--Baba Sohan Singh Bhakna being its first president. In its first weekly issue, *the Ghadar*, Har Dayal gave the association the popular name Ghadar Party.

In May 1914, the Japanese steamer Komagata Maru reached Vancouver in Canada with 376 emigrants, mostly Sikhs. New immigration laws barred their entry, forcing the Komagata Maru to return. The steamer was on high seas when the First World War broke out. Not one passenger was allowed to disembark before it reached Calcutta. There, at Budge Budge, the passengers refused to be shipped straight to Punjab and eighteen of them were killed when the troops opened fire. The first batch of Ghadriles had already left America. The Komagata Maru affair appeared to merge into the revolutionary programme of the Ghadar Party. Soon batches of Ghadarites started coming to India from Canada, America, Hong Kong and Shanghai, including their president Sohan Singh Bhakna. Of over 3,000 returning emigrants, 190 were interned and more than 700 were restricted to their villages. Those who escaped the British dragnet started exhorting the people to rise against the British. They addressed Sikh gatherings at various places. The leaders of Chief Khalsa Diwan (British toadies) looked upon them as dupes and Zaildars and Lambardars (touts) in the villages were ready to inform the police against them. There was no response to the Ghadriles from any national organisation except a few revolutionaries like Rash Bihari Bose who had any sympathy for them. Disillusioned, in 1915, the revolutionaries turned their attention to the army and they were able to contact a number of regiments, particularly, the 23rd Cavalry at Lahore, the 28th Punjabis at Ferozepur, 28th Pioneer and the 12th Cavalry at Meerut. They were optimistic about the response; February 21 was fixed as the date of general uprising but changed to February 19 in view of the suspected leakage. This date too was leaked to the authority. The disaffected regiments were disarmed; suspects were court-martialled and executed. Then attempts of the revolutionaries to capture arms from arsenals at Lahore and Ferozepur and the police station at Sirhali in Amritsar district proved abortive. The revolutionaries blamed the informers and the loyalist supporters of the administration for this fiasco and killed few of them. By the middle of 1915 the hope of a popular rising was dashed. All that was left of the Ghadar was a series of conspiracy trials in which forty-two of the accused were sentenced to death, 114 were transported for life and ninety-

three were given long or short imprisonment. A few of them left a legend behind like the young Kartar Singh Sarabha, who had gone about seducing the soldiers with astounding audacity and faced the trial with cool courage, ready to lay down his life in "the struggle for India's freedom." The Ghadriles were overwhelmingly Sikhs who were inspired and fired with zeal by the novels of Bhai Vir Singh and the Panth Parkash of Giani Gian Singh to live or die heroically.²³

A few of the Akalis and Ghadriles reacted sharply to the cold-blooded murder of a large number of Sikh reformers at Nankana Sahib in February 1921. A few militants decided to take revenge against persons who were seen as responsible for this massacre. Before the end of May 1921, an unsuccessful attempt was made on the life of G.M. Bowering, the Superintendent of police and Sunder Singh Majithia, leader of Chief Khalsa Diwan. Police arrested a few of the conspirators while others absconded, including Mota Singh and Kishan Singh popularly known as Gargaj. The Babar Akalis addressed the demobilised soldiers, as well as Sikh reformers and, they invited Hindus and Muslims too, for eliminating the British officials and their Indian and Punjabi supporters. They brought out fifteen issues of the *Babar Akali Doaba* from August 1922 to May 1923, from a press that moved from place to place to propagate their ideas in the districts of Jalandhar and Hoshiarpur. As a consequence the Babar Akali Jatha was declared an unlawful association. In less than a year then, almost all the important Babar Akalis were either eliminated or arrested. They were tried in courts and in the verdict given in February 1925, it was imputed that their aim was to gain independence in India and a Sikh rule in the Punjab. Six Babars were hanged a year later in February 1926. Many a poet glorified their martyrdom.²⁴

Bhagat Singh, a nephew of Ajit Singh, the legendary peasant leader, founded the Naujawan Bharat Sabha (Young Men Indian Association), which organised public meetings in Lahore from March 1926 to April 1927. The declared aim of the Sabha was to organize labourers and peasants for establishing an independent Republic of India with all its inhabitants forming a united Indian nation. Bhagat Singh and his associates subscribed to the idea that "a single deed makes more propaganda in a few days than thousands pamphlets." Their approach was militant as they regarded the civil disobedience movement as a failure. In their "philosophy of bomb," it was legitimate to make a "loud noise to make the deaf ear hear." The two best-known incidents in which the leaders of this association took part was the assassination of J.P. Saunders, a British official, and throwing of a bomb in the Legislative Assembly in New Delhi on April 8, 1929. The

execution of Bhagat Singh, Sukhdev and Rajguru on March 23, 1932, marked the end of this revolutionary national movement.²⁵

Gurdwara Reform Movement (1914-1925)

In the entire British Indian Empire, the British controlled not a single mosque or temple. However, after annexing Punjab, they immediately took control of major Sikh centres. They used *mahants*, *pujaris* and *bhais* (clergy), Sikh Sardars (aristocrats), rulers of Phulkian States and "Sanatan Sikhs" to maintain their effective control over Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) and the institutions in its precincts:

A committee headed by Raja Tej Singh was formed to advise Sardar Jodh Singh who was appointed as an Extra Assistant Commissioner at Amritsar to manage the affairs of Golden Temple complex. Through an administrative manual (*dastur al-aml*), signed by a large number of Sardars and the functionaries of the Golden temple in the presence of the Deputy Commissioner in 1859, its management was transformed into 'simple magisterial and political control' to maintain influence over the 'high spirited and excitable Khalsa'.²⁶

With the advent of the British Government in the Panjab a new source of danger arose to Sikhism. Many of the priests (*bhais*, *mahants*, *pujaris*) did not strictly observe the tenants of the faith and not a few of them led an unclean life. Unfortunately, the new laws made them the virtual proprietors of Gurdwaras with all their offerings and the landed endowments attached to them. The law courts did not provide sufficient protection to the Sangats (congregations) who had previously exercised effective control over the administration of their places of worship. Early in the present century a wave of purification agitation swept over the length and breadth of the province, which naturally brought the whole Sikh community into clash with the powerful British officialdom.²⁷

The priests allowed the display of Hindu idols inside the precincts of Golden Temple and other Gurdwaras. They denounced both the Sikh revolutionaries who fought against the British, and Tat Khalsa reformers who challenged the un-Sikh practices prevalent in Gurdwaras. The British control over Gurdwaras not only subverted Sikh theology and history but also played with the emotional sentiments of the Sikhs. Arur Singh, manager of Golden Temple and the head priests conferred a robe of honour on General Dyer, the butcher of Jallianwala Bagh, who had killed 379 and wounded over 2,000 unarmed persons, on the Baisakhi day of April 13, 1919. As a token of more humiliation, General Dyer and Captain Briggs were initiated into the Khalsa brotherhood without the requirement of five Ks, thus making a mockery of "Khande Di Pahul."²⁸

Professor Gurmukh Singh, one of the most erudite Sikh scholars, earned the hostility of *pujaris* (priests) by his writings in

July and August of 1886 against the idolatry and other Brahmanical practices at Golden Temple. In response, Baba Khem Singh Bedi and his other Bedi, Bawa, Bhalla and Sodhi proteges and pujaris launched a vicious campaign against him charging him and his close associates with:

1. That Gurmukh Singh showed disrespect towards *guru-ansh* (descendants of Gurus)- Bedis, Bhallas, Bawas and Sodhis.
2. That he showed disrespect towards the pictures of 24 Avatars of the Hindu pantheism in one of the Singh Sabha *diwans* (meetings) in Lahore.
3. That the Lahore Singh Sabha assimilated a Muslim into Sikh sangat (congregation) after "Khande Di Pahul" administration.
4. That the low caste sweepers, cobblers, and Muslims were made to sip *amrit* (consecrated water used during the "Khade Di Pahul" ceremony) from the same *bata* (steel bowl).
5. That they did not bow before the Guru Granth Sahib when there was no *sewadar* (a lay Sikh devotee) or *granthi* (reader of AGGS) in attendance.

A *hukamnama* (edict), obtained from the Akal Takhat, Amritsar, on March 18, 1887, excommunicated Gurmukh Singh from the Panth.²⁹ After studying the implications in the excommunication edict against Professor Gurmukh Singh, only Jakobsh in her "right mind" would say:

British administration, which admired the martial resonance of Khalsa ideology, turned to the tents of Guru Gobind Singh for guidance and took upon themselves to stem the tide of the Hinduization of Sikhism through the recruitment tactics. Sikhs who were not of the Khalsa faith were characterized as already desecrated by the menacing arm of Hinduism. ... Recruits into the army were required to undergo Sikh initiation rites before becoming members of the Indian army (Griffin et al. 1940). ... In insisting that recruits undergo initiation rites before entering the British military system, the British considered themselves to be the protector of the faith, alone responsible for the continuance of the true martial Sikh spirit in Punjab.³⁰

For the British as the self-defined 'keepers of the Sikh faith', Sikh womenhood, steeped in Hinduized practices, constituted an unwelcome impediment in the purification project of Sikhism.³¹

For the British, a 'purified' Sikh identity was pivotal in checking absorption of Sikhism into wider Hindu fold.³²

It is abundantly clear from the edict against Professor Gurmukh Singh that the British did everything they could do against the fundamental principles of Nanakian philosophy: They supported and strengthened the observance of Brahmanical practices at Darbar Sahib. They revived the caste system in the Sikh community. They distorted the "Khande Di Pahul" ceremony for the

Khalsa. They imposed on the Sikh community "parasites"—*guru-ansh* (descendants of Gurus)—Bedis, Bhallas, Bawas and Sodhis, who never played any positive role within the Sikh movement; as a matter of fact they sided with the enemies of the Sikhs. Guru Gobind Singh issued edicts to Sikhs against any social ties with such elements.³³ Moreover, the British authorities banned the singing of a popular couplet "ਰਾਜ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਖਾਲਸਾ ਆਕੀ ਰਹੇ ਨਾ ਕੋਇ (*raj krega khalsa aaki rahe na koe*): "Ultimately the Khalsa shall triumph and no one shall be able to defy" at Darbar Sahib. It was composed in the early eighteenth century when the Mughals put a price on the heads of Sikhs and, bounty hunter Hindus were bringing cart-loads of heads of Sikhs to Lahore. The exposition of the sacred hymns of Aad Guru Granth Sahib was also banned at Darbar Sahib, so that Sikhs may not learn that Guru Nanak's denunciation of Mughal rulers as "man eaters, or "hungry lions" and their administrators as "wild dogs," and Brahman priests, mullahs and qazis as (carrion eaters), is equally applicable to the British rulers and their henchmen and, the mahants and pujaris. Not satisfied with these restrictions, the British manipulated the clergy at the Golden Temple to recite Guru Nanak's composition, Asa Di Var, which is very critical of the rulers and the clergy, only very early in the morning hours when there are only a few people in the congregation and not attentive enough to understand the hymns. And they exploited the institution of Akal Takhat to denounce Sikhs who were against the British or their toadies.

The British colonists hired a German Indologist, Ernest Trumpp³⁴ to translate Aad Guru Granth Sahib with the purpose of distorting its teachings to conform to the British interest. His odious translation was published in 1877 and the Christian missionaries utilized it to the fullest extent thereby distorting Nanakian philosophy. David Petrie, the British intelligence officer, in a 1911 report remarked: The neo-Sikhs are the source of disaffection among Sikhs:

The neo-Sikhs were equated by him with the tat-Khalsa or Singh reformers. The activities even of Chief Khalsa Diwan and its leading light, Sunder Singh Majithia, appeared to him to be potentially subversive. In any case, he saw a political dimension in the program of suddhi because representations, and consequently power was expected to flow from numerical strength. Furthermore, he disliked the loose talk among Singh Sabha reformers about the fallen estate of the Sikhs because it carried the implication that it was due to their loss of power. Their wretched condition under the Mughals was obliquely suggestive of their miserable plight under the British. Finally the past was invoked to carry implications for the present; what the sword of Guru Gobind Singh did to the empire of Aurngjeb, the mighty Khalsa could do now to the British, empire. Seditious ideas were expressed

through quotations from Sikh scriptures: 'the brave is he who fights in the cause of religion; the rulers are lions and muqaddams (administrators) are dogs; the times are a dagger and the rulers are butchers. Petrie was inclined to attribute this new mood to the increasing number and influence of the Singh Sabha reformers.³⁵

It was the demeaning and humiliating conditions imposed by the colonists that forced the Sikhs to launch a campaign to liberate the Gurdwaras from their clutches. In 1913, the outer wall of the Rakabgunj Gurdwara in Delhi was dismantled to construct a road through its estate to the Viceregal Lodge. When the Sikhs came to know of this plan, they sent telegrams, petitions and memorandums to the Viceroy, the Lieutenant Governor of Punjab, the Commander-in-Chief and the commissioner.^{36, 37} This was the start of a long struggle, which brought out the true spirit of the Khalsa to face the depraved and ruthless foe. For sake of brevity, few of the episodes from this struggle are outlined below.

On February 20, 1921, a *jatha* (batch) of 150 reformers led by Bhai Lakshman Singh visited Gurdwara Janam Asthan for religious services. Mahant Narain Das and his men opened fire on them killing most of them. Their bodies were burnt. The Deputy Commissioner who was camping only 12 miles away was very slow to respond, most probably he was the real culprit because the British had informers in every village. Mahant Narain Das had been collecting weapons for some time and had hired 28 criminals and mercenary Pathans. The government first gave figures of dead as 20, then 67 and finally 130 on the bases of skulls collected. The actual figure could be another 20 or so.³⁸

Maharaja of Patiala, Bhupinder Singh, the grandfather of our current Captain Arminster Singh, and Sir Khem Singh Bedi's son Kartar Singh Bedi supported Mahant Narain Das in this dastardly and heinous act. While Maharaja was already known by so many derogatory epithets like "pig's penis," Kartar Singh Bedi earned the nickname *Kartaru Bedin* (Kartaru, the apostate).³⁹ The Mahant went scot-free as whatever he did was with the connivance of British authorities.

In this peaceful struggle to liberate Gurdwaras, Sikhs suffered unspeakable punishment at the hands of British administrators and their henchmen. C.F. Andrews (1871-1940), who visited Guru Ka Bagh in September 1922 was shocked by the brutality and inhumanity of the British administrators and their henchmen, but admired the Akalis for their patient suffering without any sign of fear. In his eyes the Guru Ka Bagh *morcha* (*morcha* means action or agitation) was a "new lesson in moral warfare."⁴⁰ His

description of the equipoise with which the Akali volunteers bore, what he termed, the most cowardly and foul blows needs to be recalled: "The vow of non-violence they had made to God was kept to the letter. I saw no act, no look, of defiance." As to the spirit of the suffering endured, he stated, "it was very rarely that I witnessed any Akali Sikh who went forward to suffer, flinch from blow when it was struck. ... The blows were received one by one without resistance and without a sign of fear."⁴¹

During the five years of the non-violent Akali movement 400 died, 2,000 were wounded and 30,000 men and women were jailed. The pensions and *jagirs* of many were withdrawn, fines were imposed and property was confiscated in the case of many others; many lost their jobs, soldiers were court-martialled for wearing kirpan or a black turban; printers, publishers and editors suffered for their sympathy with the movement. As one contemporary put it, the British authorities soon came to believe that the Gurdwara reform movement was a subversive movement aimed at overthrowing the British Raj and which therefore it was necessary to suppress.⁴²

When the British were forced to relinquish the control over Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple), Mahatma Gandhi sent a telegram to Akali leader, Baba Kharak Singh: "First battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations."⁴³ However, Jakobsh makes no mention of these movements in her entire work, except a passing reference to Gurdwara reform movement.

Further, the Sikhs constituted a small minority of the population of Punjab varying from 6.5% in 1868 to 13.5% in 1940; the majority were Muslims and Hindus. There is no evidence that either the Hindus or Muslims ever organised any resistance to the British occupation of Punjab. Even when in the 1920s and 1930s protests and demonstrations became common under the leadership of Congress Party, the Sikh contribution was far greater than that of Hindus and Muslims. For example, in the Civil Disobedience Movement, Sikh contribution was the largest proportionately, as testified by Duni Chand, a Congress leader from Punjab. According to Tara Singh, out of 7,000 volunteers convicted in Punjab, 3,000 were Sikhs.⁴⁴

Then on what basis Jakobsh claims:

"British influence on the Singh Sabha movement is undeniable, particularly in light of the preferential treatment given the Sikhs by the Raj. Correspondingly, the Singh Sabha leaders

exhibited admiration and unequivocal support towards their rulers."²

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Chapter 13

The Mutiny of 1857

Jakobsh takes another aim in a long series of swipes at the Sikhs:

The mutiny of 1857 clinched the British association with the Punjabis. ... Inflamed by rumours of East India Company's stipulation of use of pork and beef fat to grease cartridges, the sepoys of the Bengal Army throughout northern India revolted. Mutinous soldiers seizing Delhi and raising anew the standard of the Mughal empire were joined by other discontented groups throughout the country. Sikh royalty, on the other hand, sent troops to contain the uprisings. To the Sikhs the British now owed allegiance, for they stemmed the tide of insurrection and had thus allowed the imperial army to tighten its hold over mutinous natives.¹

Needless to say, the events of 1857 severely intensified the perceived chasm of difference between the Indian and the Briton. ... The Sikhs, through their propitious display of loyalty moved into a position of privilege and honour. ... The Sikhs, characterised as the pinnacle of the martial races, reaped the benefits of their propitious display of loyalty to the British for years to come. Punjab chiefs who had stood by the British during the uprising were given monetary and territorial rewards, and Indian honorary titles were meted out to loyal princes and officials (Latif 1994: 582-3).²

Leading religious families were also patronised, as were mahants, the custodians of Gurdwaras and shrines. The British patronage of Sikh religious elite remained advantageous to the political designs of both for many years to come. For example, Baba Khem Singh Bedi supported the British during the mutiny by raising troops to stem the tide of insurrection. He continued to support the British administration in many and varied forms. ... Further, in return for British patronage, the mahants of principal religious shrines issued *hukamnamas* [edicts] in support of the Raj in times of political crisis.³

She has echoed what the Hindu "propaganda machine" has been saying since the foundation of Arya Samaj in Punjab in the 1870s, about the role Sikhs played in the 1857 Mutiny. However, her Eurocentric mind does not allow her to call the mutiny as the "first war of independence" in accordance with the dictates of the Hindu propagandists. Let me first cite the views of well-known Hindu historians about the so-called "first war of Independence" before discussing her absurd statements point by point.

According to Sir J. N. Sarkar, "The Sepoy Mutiny was not a fight for freedom; it was in fact, King Cobra Superstition's last bite before his head was smashed." J. P. Kriplani says, "It was nothing but an attempt by the old order to get back their kingdoms and principalities." And R. C. Majumdar hits the nail on the head when he says, "It was neither 'first', nor 'national' nor 'a war of independence'." ⁴

First of all, only an ignorant, or mentally deranged or an intellectually dishonest or a paid propagandist would assert that the Sikhs benefited the most from British colonial rule. How could it be since the Sikhs lost their empire to the British? From rulers they became "victims of alien rule." The only real beneficiaries of British rule were the Hindus. Had the British not replaced Muslim rulers, the Hindus would still be under Muslim yoke and their majority might have been reduced to insignificant lifeless minority! The Muslims started ruling over Hindus from the early eighth century when Mohammed Bin Qasim conquered Sindh and, from there on they kept conquering more and more of the Indian territory. By the time European traders came most of India was under Muslim rule. Not even Shiva with his army of evil spirits, or Rama with his army of monkeys or Krishna who masterminded the victory of Pandvas over the Kaurvas, or the mighty Hanuman with his *gada* (mace) or Ganesh with his elephant head, or the mighty multi-armed Durga, or the blood-thirsty Kali Devi could deliver the Hindus from the yoke of Muslim rule, but the "white devil" did! Hindus celebrated the defeat of both the Muslim and Sikh rulers. The new set of circumstances pleased them as they shared their co-slaves status with Muslims and Sikhs under one British rule. Hindu intelligentsia extended wholehearted support to the British imperialists without any hesitation:

Raja Ram Mohan Roy extolled "the merits of the British Government in India" and suggested "India required many more years of English rule." Raja Rammohan Roy and his compatriots hated the Muslims so much that they considered the British as "deliverers". Their hatred towards the Muslim was so intense that the Bengali Hindus refused in 1831 to

support the revolt that took place in Nadia and Barasat, a few kilometres from Calcutta, under the inspiration of a Muslim called Titu-Meer. The Hindus feared that the revolt, if successful, would bring back the Mughal rule.⁴

"Nineteenth century leaders (comprising obviously the Bengali middle class intelligentsia) were proper Victorians, and their political and social advocacies better suited to English than to Indian audience," observed Charles Heisman.⁴

The 1831 revolt was caused by the "deindustrialized cotton-weavers" millions of whom were thrown out of work, because of the industrial policies adopted by the British. A large majority of these workers were Muslims. The Bengali Hindu intelligentsia, writes Abhijit Dutta, "failed to appreciate the socio-economic distress of the *moulvees* (Muslims) and show sympathy with them."⁴

"It is well-known that the Bengalee intelligentsia hailed the suppression of the Revolt of 1857," writes Tarasankar Bannerjee, "not so much because they did not have any patriotic feeling, but due to their conviction that the British rule in India was not inconsistent with the interest of Indians in general and Bengalees in particular."⁴

About five decades later, away from the Indian shores, Mahatma Gandhi, the twentieth century "Hindu Avatar" was also preaching the gospel that the British Empire is good for the world. In his sermons to Indian community during the Zulu rebellion (1906) Gandhi declared:

What is our duty during these calamitous times in the Colony? It is not for us to say whether the revolt of the Kaffirs is justified or not. We are in Natal by virtue of British power. Our very existence depends upon it. It is therefore our duty to render whatever help we can.⁵

Then, on May 29, 1906, he let the South African authorities know that he and the British Indian Association have always "admitted the principle of White predominance and has, therefore, no desire to press, on behalf of the community it represents, for any political rights for the sake of them."⁶

But I then believed that the British Empire existed for the welfare of the world.⁷

In Punjab, who benefited the most from the British Raj? Certainly not the Sikhs! It was the descendants of those who remained voiceless and lifeless from time of the defeat of last Hindu Shahi ruler in the tenth century to the conquest of Punjab by the British in 1849. In 1881 census of Punjab, Brahmans and Hindu traders—Khatris, Aroras and Baniyas who constituted only 10% of Punjab's total population dominated government posts and

urban professions.⁸ And Khattris who did not display any martial traits for centuries were elevated from Vaisyas to Kshatriyas.⁹

Second, who were those Sikhs who supported the British in the Mutiny of 1857? They were the Chiefs of Phulkian States. These were the same Chiefs who also supported the British in their war against *Sarkar-i-Khalsa (Khalsa Raj)*--the Punjab kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They supplied 8,000 men in total. But they were not alone; Raja Ranbir Singh of Jammu and Kashmir, whose father, Gulab Singh betrayed the Sikhs during Anglo-Sikh war and for which he received Kashmir as a reward, supported the British in suppressing the mutiny with 3,000 troops. A contingent of 10,000 Nepalese Gorkhas under the command of Jang Bahadur came to the assistance of the British and, in the words of Lord Canning acted as "breakwater of the storm, which would otherwise have swept over us in one great wave." (Nepal's population is mostly Hindu, ruled by Hindu kings for more than two thousand years; the king is regarded as the reincarnation of Vishnu). Head of other Hindu princely states - Scindia, Holkar, and Gaikwad too aided the British, as did the Nizam of Hyderabad, himself a Muslim. The appeal of Bahadur Shah (head of the Mutiny) went unheeded by Dost Muhamed of Kabul. "Leaders and chiefs of the Muhammadan Multan and Frontier tribes under the influence of Edwards and the frontier officers raised regiment after regiment of their Multani, Pathan, and other followers, who marched down to the seat of war, and aided the British in the conflict at Delhi," writes General Innes. Nor was there any response from the Amirs of Sindh!⁴

Besides, mercenaries like Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi, mahants and other religious leaders, who were made the custodians of Gurdwaras, were not Sikhs. They were Hindus disguised as Sikhs as they opposed every Sikh movement against the British or religious reform movement to purge Sikhism of Brahmanical practices and beliefs. They declared again and again that Sikhs are Hindus.

To say that no Sikh fought against the British during the mutiny is also not correct. According to Salah-ud-din, the first man to be hanged in Punjab for sedition was a Sikh civilian, Mohar Singh of Ropar.⁴

Third, was it a countrywide revolt as Jakobsh claims? Not according to the evidence recorded by observers and participants in the mutiny. At the time of 1857 Mutiny, the East India Company had about 260,000 sepoys in three different armies under its command: The Bengal Army the largest and the most powerful

of the three armies was mainly composed of Brahmans and Rajputs with 140,000 men comprising the regular cavalry and infantry regiments. The other two, the Madras Army and the Bombay Army were smaller. The Madras Army was mainly composed of South Indians and the Bombay Army was made up of several groups, notably Brahmans, Rajputs, Marhathas and others. Of these three armies, none of the Madras units took part in the Mutiny. On the other hand they were employed in suppressing the mutineers. The Madras Artillery, in particular, was of great help in dealing with the mutineers at Kanpur and in Oudh. Six native battalions of the Madras Army were deployed in Madhya Pradesh, and another fifty-two battalions stood fast throughout the mutiny period.⁴

Of the Bombay Army, only a portion of the two battalions (26th and 27th) took part in the revolt. About 8,000 Marhathas of the Bombay army stood firm with the British, in spite of Nana Sahib, the revolt leader, who was considered to be their Peshwa. "The Bombay Army supplied most men to subdue the mutiny, especially in the campaigns under Sir Huger Rose," wrote Masson. "The Madras and Bombay Armies" writes Lt-Gen MacMunn, "as well as the Hyderabad Contingent, took active part in suppressing the rebellion in various parts of India, notably in central India."⁴

As for the Bengal Army, it was only a portion of the caste-ridden men of the so-called high classes--that is, the U.P. Brahmans and Rajputs who revolted. Mutiny was thus an insubordination and, the revolt was limited to a part of the soldiery of one of the three Presidency Armies, which the Hindu propagandists call "first war of independence." The whole mutiny effort was an uncoordinated and aimless affair. If the Muslims had decided to attack on a particular day, it was considered inauspicious by the Hindu pundits. "Luckily," wrote General Wilson to Mr. Colvin in July 1857, "the enemy has no head and method, and we hear dissensions are breaking out among them."⁴

Fourth, the British annexed Punjab in 1849 only eight years before the 1857 Mutiny. The conquest of Punjab cost the East India Company more men and material than the conquest of the rest of India. In the battle of Chillianwala on January 13, 1849, the British suffered the worst defeat on the Indian subcontinent losing Brigadier Pennyuick and 3,000 British officers and men.¹⁰ In the three-year Anglo-Sikh war, British forces were mainly composed of native Indians, except Punjabis. There is no evidence that non-Punjabi Indians showed any sympathy for the Sikhs or even a single British Indian sepoy revolted or deserted in sympathy with the Sikhs. Moreover, Hindu Rajputs (Dogras) and Poorbia Brahmans who joined Maharaja Ranjit

Singh's administration in Khalsa form and became ministers and generals turned out to be saboteurs and traitors. While the Dogras (Dhian Singh, Hira Singh, Gulab Singh) engineered the destruction of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's family, Lal Singh and Tej Singh betrayed the Sikh armies at the battles of Ferozepur and Mudki. "With a little enterprise," writes Thorburn, "Tej Singh might have taken Ferozepur and Lal Singh Moodki, and thus captured the whole baggage and stores of the Anglo-Sepoy forces."⁴ The Poorbias who fought against the Sikhs also helped the British in the subjugation of Jats, Marhathas, Rajputs, Gorkhas and the Pathans.⁴ "Not only the Indian men," writes Bipan Chandra, "but even Indian revenues were used to conquer the rest of India and to consolidate British rule."⁴ "The Poorbia Sepoys," writes R.C. Majumdar, "had not the least scruple to fight the Sikhs."⁴

Fifth, after the annexation of Punjab, the British completely disarmed the Khalsa forces and disbanded them. Their non-government fortifications were razed to the ground, manufacture and sale of arms and ammunition was forbidden to them. Their leaders, who might have become the center of disaffection in 1857, were either killed during the Anglo-Sikh war or were deported away from Punjab. During the first year of the British administration, 8,000 thousand people, mostly Sikhs were arrested. Thus the Sikhs were left leaderless and rudderless. Virtually no capable person of any importance was left among them who could lead the Sikh masses. Richard Temple, the Secretary to the Chief Commissioner of Punjab, observed, "Upon these sturdy and courageous people the British victories seemed to have acted like a spell."⁴

To harass, humiliate and terrorise the Punjabis, especially the Sikhs, the East India Company posted 10,000 British troops and 36,000 regular Hindustani troops, mostly from the Bengal army consisting of Poorbias. During the 1857 Mutiny there was no uprising in this army and instead Subedar Sita Ram declared that if the people of Punjab should rebel and fight the "sirkar" (British government), there would be 100,000 Hindustanis ready and willing to fight against them.⁴

Sixth, the mutineers rallied around Mughal Emperor, Bahdur Shah. By that token it is unfair to expect of the Sikhs, who pay homage in their daily prayer (Ardas) to men, women and children who suffered unspeakable atrocities at the hand of Mughals, to spill their blood to crown the Mughals on the throne of Delhi! Does Jakobsh know that when Mughals rulers put price on the heads of Sikhs, Hindu booty-hunters made the most of it?

Given these circumstances, it is not difficult to understand that Sikhs responded to British overtures; of the 60,000 men recruited from Punjab during 1857-1858, nearly a third were Sikhs, the rest were Punjabi Hindus and Muslims.¹³

It is preposterous on Jakobsh part to assert: "Mutinous soldiers seizing Delhi and raising anew standard of the Mughal empire were joined by other discontented groups throughout the country. Sikh royalty, on the other hand, sent troops to contain the uprisings."

In 1857, Indians had no concept of "nationhood" or "nationalism" or "country" as we understand today. Even today Indians do not understand "what it means to be a nation or nationalist." For example, since 1947 India's massive army has been fighting insurgencies in the Northeast and Northwest relentlessly and, there are frequent violent religious conflicts between Hindus and minorities -- Muslims, Sikhs, Christians, aborigines and Dalits (untouchables). Then there is the Naxalite (communist) insurgency in Andhra, Orissa, Bihar and Maharashtra. Since 1947 the Indian government had killed more of its own citizens (95% minorities) than the British colonists did in three centuries. Joginder Sikand's thoughtful and provocative article "Kashmir Quake, Delhi Bombings and Our Response" sums up very well the fate of modern Indian nationhood:

Hussain, a teacher I met in Tangdhar on my visit there last week, remarked how Indian NGOs (non-governmental organizations) and corporate houses had responded generously in the wake of the quake in Kutch and the Tsunami in South India, and contrasted this with their reaction to the quake in Kashmir. He had a point when he noted that this indifference probably owed to the fact that victims of the quake in Kashmir were almost all Muslims, and Kashmiri Muslims at that.

A neighbor in Bangalore had virtually slammed the door on my face when I approached him for clothes that we were collecting for the victims of the Kashmir quake. 'They are all Muslims, so it is not our problem', he told me, shamelessly. I heard similar explanations from several other people I had approached, who all uniformly declined my appeal. The fact that most of the few people in my locality who sent me material for the victims happened to be Muslims saddened me, because it provided more evidence that the quake was seen by many in essentially communal terms. Yet, this was hardly surprising. For many people in my largely middle-class and 'upper' caste Hindu locality in Bangalore, the Kashmir quake was not a human tragedy but, rather, simply a Muslim affair. One of my neighbors was so brutally frank as to tell me that the quake victims deserved their fate for allegedly supporting terrorism and advocating secession from India.

Such deep-rooted prejudices also probably account, in no small measure, for the fact that few Indian NGOs have responded to the quake at all. While several Muslim organizations, from Kashmir as well as from other parts of India, in addition to some Christian groups and larger

international NGOs, are active in providing relief in the quake-affected parts of Kashmir, one gets the distinct impression that the victims of the quake are not a pressing priority for most Indian NGOs. This explains their virtual absence in the ongoing relief efforts in the region.¹⁴

I may point out that the city of Bangalore is touted in the Western as well as in the Indian media as "Silicon Valley" of India.

Finally, in her statements about the 1857 Mutiny, Jakobsh displays gross ignorance of Indian geography and history. Probably, she is not aware of the Sikh Empire "*Sarkar-i-Khalsa*" (1799-1839) that was annexed by the British in 1849. An Austrian traveller Baron Charles Hughel remarked that the state established by Ranjit Singh was the "most wonderful object in the whole world." Like a skilful architect the Maharaja raised a "majestic fabric" with the help of rather insignificant or unpromising fragments."¹⁵

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Chapter 14

Absurd, Misleading and Deceptive Statements

1. Jakobsh has used the term "Sanatan Sikhs" without explaining its meaning! This term is found neither in AGGS nor is there any reference to it in Sikh tradition. Harjot Oberoi coined this term in order to diffuse the "distinct Sikh identity" similar to the way W.H. McLeod, missionary from New Zealand, fabricated "sant tradition" to destroy the uniqueness of Nanakian philosophy. According to Oberoi, "The aristocrats and religious orthodoxy, the latter represented by families of guru lineages, mahants, pujaris, and other heterodox groups, are Sanatan Sikhs."¹

Such people are Sanatan Hindus, and calling them Sanatan Sikhs is misleading, as they have made no contribution to the Sikh movement. In fact they were invariably helping the enemies of Sikhs. Let us look at their leader Baba Sir Khem Singh Bedi and his proteges. His followers used to call him 13th Nanak² and he wanted to be recognized and worshiped as a Guru,³ but in the Sikh community there were no takers of this idea, except his underlings. He used to wear a Janeu. His son Kartar Singh—"Kartaru *Be-din*" advised and helped Mahant Narain Das who murdered 150 Sikhs in cold blood.⁴ His other son, Gurbakhsh Singh Bedi, made a public statement in 1910 that Sikhs were Hindus.⁵ Bhai Autar Singh, a protégé of Khem Singh Singh Bedi, maintained in his tracts published later that Sikh Gurus had worshiped gods and goddesses, accepted no Muslim as their follower and maintained the distinctions of caste.⁶ Bawa Chajju Singh contented that Sikh Gurus were "only Hindu reformers," or that Sikh scriptures were only "mutilated copies" of Hindu

scriptures.⁷ They were opposed to the Sikh reform movement, Gurdwara liberation movement and the Anand Marriage Act.^{8, 9}

Here is an example of a man who fits Oberoi's definition of a Sanatan Sikh. Up to 1905 when he started his law practice in Lahore, Lala Lajpat Rai had uncut hair and turban, when he became Arya Samajist he shaved off his beard (1907) and when he became a Gandhiite he replaced his turban with a Gandhi cap.¹⁰ How could any "scholar" in his right mind use the word "Sikh" in any manner or connotation for such persons?

Guru Nanak's composition is replete with denunciation of Yogis, Brahmans, mullahs and Qazis. He rejected unequivocally ascetic life and celibacy. So how could mahants, pujaris and udassis be considered as Sikhs? When the Udasis took control of Gurdwaras in the early eighteenth century they fabricated a story that Baba Sri Chand adopted Guru Hargobind's son Baba Gurdita to carry on his work. Baba Gurdita was a married man and an avid hunter and he died in a hunting accident. So how could he be an Udasi? Moreover, he was born after the death of Sri Chand. Udasis played havoc with Sikh theology and traditions and most of the mahants and pujaris came from this "degenerate and parasitic" order.¹¹

2. "MacMunn writing in the early twentieth century made an explicit connection between Britons and the Sikh Jat. He recounted the words of advice from a British officer to Dalip Singh, the son of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who was sent to England after Punjab's annexation: 'You will be among your own people there, for you are a Jat and the men from Kent, are Jats from Jutland' (MacMunn 1932: 14)."¹²

Jakobsh imparts an impression as if Dalip Singh was sent to England on a pleasure trip or for higher education. Her Eurocentric mind is unwilling to find out or divulge what truly happened. It is difficult for her to say that Maharaja Dalip Singh, a ten-year-old boy was kidnapped by the British and put in the custody of a missionary couple, Dr. and Mrs. Johan Logan. Bhajan Lal, a Brahman, convert to Christianity, was appointed his tutor. Dalip's mother was put in jail and Dalip was not allowed to have any contact with his relatives or other Sikhs. Being brainwashed he converted to Christianity and, finally exiled to England far away from his people. Upon conversion, his long hair was cut and presented as a trophy to Mrs Logan. Mr. Logan realised only after the death of his wife what he and his wife had done to young Dalip when he looked into the eyes of his own "motherless" children.¹³

3. "In insisting that recruits undergo initiation rites before entering the British military system, the British considered themselves to be the protector of the faith alone, responsible for the continuance of the true martial Sikh spirit in Punjab."¹⁴

This is a baseless and false assertion and an echo of the malicious Hindu propaganda that it was the British who created separate "Sikh identity." Does Jakobsh know that all the Sikhs in Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army and civilian administration were Khalsas? That is why his government was called *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* (*Khalsa Raj*). Even Hindus in Maharaja's administration kept uncut hair and some of them like the Dogra brothers and Brahmans like Lal Singh and Tej Singh took "Khande Di Pahul." It is a different matter that they were saboteurs in disguise. Similarly, all the Sikhs in the armies and civilian administrations of Phulkian States were Khalsa Sikhs. Even the Hindu employees - Brahmans, Khatris, Aroras and Baniyas kept the Sikh "external form"--they appeared "more Sikh" than ordinary Sikhs. In contrast, under the British rule, Sikh commissioned officers in the armed forces were exempt from "Khande Di Pahul" or Sikh "external form" and neither was it a requirement for civilian employees. Therefore how could Jakobsh or anyone say that the British were the protectors of the Sikh faith? Besides, the *granthis* (priests, chaplains) attached to the Sikh army were essentially Hindus disguised as Khalsa who were propagating Brahmanical version of Sikhism, which she says that the British were trying to purge to restore Sikhism to its pristine purity:

"The British administration, which admired the martial resonance of Khalsa ideology, turned to the tents of Guru Gobind Singh for guidance and took upon themselves to stem the tide of the Hinduization of Sikhism through the recruitment tactics. Sikhs who were not of the Khalsa faith were characterised as already desecrated by the menacing arm of Hinduism."¹⁵

It is not only that the British turned over Gurdwaras to Hindu mahants and pujaris, but also popularised spurious literature like "Bala Janamsakhi, Dasam Granth, Gurbilas Patshahi 6, Bansavlinamas and Rahitnamas" that were written for the purpose of distorting Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat) in order to make it a part of Hinduism.

4. "The 'higher' morality of the imperialist and superiority of the Western ideology was sought to be effectively established by accentuating the low status of Indian women."¹⁶ In the case of the

British, the image of the oppressed Hindu women served a political function as affirmation of European superiority and justification of the imperial enterprise."¹⁷

I agree with these statements, but they need elaboration to expose the hypocrisy and devious mind of the British imperialists. European historians/writers, particularly, the British have been repeating like a parrot that the British colonization was humane and beneficial since it eradicated many evil customs and practices prevalent among the "uncivilised heathens." And they never miss the opportunity to remind us of female infanticide and sati. I have already discussed the issue of female infanticide in detail. The custom of sati was limited only to Hindu rulers and aristocrats, but after the Muslim conquest of India, there were not many such Hindu families left. On the other hand, Sudras and Antyajias (untouchables), who constituted the vast majority (80-85%) of the Hindu population were not only economically destitute but were also deprived of their human dignity under the caste system. What did the British colonists do for them? Instead of ameliorating their situation, the British aggravated and amplified their situation. They made the caste and religious distinctions deeper and more pronounced by dividing Indian people into different groups as I have already pointed out. The share of Sudras or untouchables in the army or civilian administration was insignificant in comparison to their population. There was a reason why the British rulers instead of helping the Sudras and untouchables, became partners with the high castes, in the exploitation of Sudras and Untouchables! They looked upon the Sudras and untouchables as a "reservoir" for the missionaries to fish. The bigger the reservoir the larger the catch! The greater the persecution of this wretched class, the greater the incentive for them to convert to Christianity—"civilized religion"! I can't help asking why didn't the British outlaw untouchability?

Now, let us examine what the British did to the Sikhs after the annexation of Punjab. They took control of Gurdwaras and made Hindu mahants and pujaris their in-charge to revive the caste system among Sikhs. The mahants and pujaris (priests) of Golden Temple refused to accept *karah parshad* (sacramental food made from flour, butter, sugar and water) from newly converted Sikhs from low castes¹⁸ and they began to refuse the admission or accept the offerings of Sikh revivalists who were converting Muslims or low caste Hindus.¹⁹ This was done by the British controlled mahants and pujaris to prevent the conversion of low caste Hindus or Muslims to Sikhism leaving the field wide open for Christian missionaries. In order to divide the Sikhs,

British officials started glorifying Sikh Jats as the "pinnacle" of Sikh society:

"British considered a 'new' breed of men— 'handsome ... resembling Hindoos in general, but with a finer muscular development, and a more robust appearance' who were skilled in martial arts and unsurpassed as agriculturists (Steinbach 1846: 212)."²⁰

And they invented the "Aryan race theory" to justify Sikh Jats and Rajputs as the closest remnants of the great Aryans that invaded India. "Trump (cited in Beames 1869: 137) had unequivocally noted that there is no doubt that these Jats, who appear to be the original race in the country, belong to the real Aryan Stock."²¹

But at the same time they were denigrating and ridiculing other Sikhs as inferior:

"Full of intrigue, pliant, versatile, and insinuating, they have all the art of lower classes of Hindus, who are usually employed in transacting business: from whom, indeed, as they have no distinction of dress, it is very difficult to distinguish them."²²

So, what were the imperialist and missionaries really up to? There is no doubt that their goal was to convert Sikh population en-masse, as is evident from the writings Fitzpatrick and Clark:

Though the Brahman religion still sways the minds of a large portion of the population of Punjab, and the Mohammedan of another, the dominant religion and power for the last century has been the Sikh religion, a species of pure theism, formed in the first instance by a dissenting sect from Hinduism. *A few hopeful instances lead us to believe that the Sikhs may prove more accessible to scriptural truths than Hindus and Mohammedans* [italics by B. Singh].²³

5. While ridiculing Nikki-Guninder Kaur Singh's analysis of Bhai Vir Singh's work, *Sundri*, Jakobsh says:

"Needless to say, Sikh women during Mughal or for that matter during the time of Vir Singh, did not 'gallop freely with men'; neither did women 'choose' between living at home and roving the countryside along their male companions."²⁴

First of all *Sundri* is a heroine, a role model for Sikh women, in a novel. Heroes and heroines can perform tasks and feats that ordinary people often can't even think of. Bhai Vir Singh

nowhere urges Sikh women to be equestrian champions; he urges them to emulate Sundri's character. Further, ordinary people cannot acquire all the attributes of heroes and heroines; they do only those they are capable of.

Second, this novel is set in a period when Sikhs were locked in life and death struggle against the Mughlas and their collaborators, the caste ideologues. Sundri represents a woman from that period when women did ride horses and fought side by side with men. During the two *ghaloogharas* (holocausts) most of the causalities were old men, women and children.

Third, Jakobsh herself has cited evidence that there were female leaders and rulers during the *misl* period:

The British were well aware of the record of successful female rule in Punjab. Upon the death of a husband or son during *misl* (confederacy) period of earlier Sikh rule, women had often taken over the leadership. George Thomas had written appreciably of Bibi Sahib Kaur, a 'woman of masculine and intrepid spirit', who bravely defended the capital city of Patiala during his expedition of 1798. He was sufficiently impressed by Sahib Kaur to assert that she was 'a better man than her brother', Raja Sahib Singh, who had fled the city during the siege (cited in Gupta 1980).²⁵

How does Jakobsh think these women became rulers or leaders? Does she think Sahib Kaur took charge of troops leaving behind bread on the hot plate (*tave te roti*) or cotton roll on the spinning wheel (*charkhe te puni*)?

6. Jakobsh endorses McLeod and Oberoi's mischaracterization of Namdharis (Kukas) as a millenarian movement.²⁶ Like them she also does not say anything of who sabotaged this glorious movement in the annals of Sikh history. Both McLeod and Oberoi have only scratched the periphery of Namdhari (Kuka) movement. It is understandable why McLeod is not willing to face the truth about Namdharis because being a missionary it is too much for him to face the immorality and heinous crimes of the British! But what is Oberoi's excuse? Perhaps it has something to do with his "Indic culture" and "Sanatan Sikh" heritage! Before the annexation of Punjab by the British, there was already religious ferment among the Sikhs due to the licentiousness of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, his sons and Sikh Sardars, and the overwhelming influence of Brahmans, Bedis, Sodhis, pujaris and mahants over them. The infiltration of Dogras (Rajputs) and Brahmans into high positions in government and the introduction of Brahmanical rituals and ceremonies in the precincts of Darbar Sahib and other Sikh centres raised alarm bells about the coming calamity. Reacting to degradation of Sikh values all around in the Khalsa

Raj, Baba Dayal and Baba Balak Singh were telling Sikhs that *Piri* (spiritual sovereignty) is the foundation of *Miri* (temporal sovereignty). Without *Piri*, *Miri* is futile and unsustainable which turned out to be so accurate. They exhorted Sikh masses to believe only in the Formless One (*Nirankar*), reject all gods and goddesses, discard all Brahmanical rites and ceremonies, and to conduct their lives according to the teachings of Guru Granth Sahib. Baba Dayal's²⁷ followers were called *Nirankaris* and he passed away in 1853. Whereas the Nirankari movement was limited to Rawalpindi area in Western Punjab, the Namdhari movement of Baba Balak Singh spread very quickly throughout Punjab under Baba Ram Singh who succeeded Baba Balak Singh²⁸ after his death in 1862. Baba Ram Singh shifted headquarters from Hazaro near Attock to Bhahni Sahib, Ludhiana.

After the loss of the Khalsa Raj and the annexation of Punjab by an alien power in 1849, there was deep introspection within "sagacious and pious" Sikhs. Bhai Maharaj Singh called upon the Sikh masses to "come home" to drive away the alien enemy, *Farangi*. Sensing that Bhai Maharaj Singh had the potential to rekindle the Khalsa spirit of *Miri-Piri*, the British took him prisoner and finding that he is non-conciliatory to the English assumption of sovereignty, deported him to Rangoon in 1850, where he died in 1856.²⁹

Baba Ram Singh exhorted Sikhs to follow the strict Khalsa *Rahit* (discipline) and to accept Guru Granth Sahib as the only Guru and he condemned the Sodhis, Bedis, mahants and Brahmans as impostors. Besides, introducing a number of social reforms, he set up an elaborate missionary work. He understood very well that the British annexed Punjab through deception with the connivance of Dogras and Brahmans. With a political goal of restoring Sikh power, he called for the rejection of British-made goods and everything the British stood for. Sensing the danger, the British quarantined him in his village in 1863. In spite of this restriction, the movement gained momentum under his dynamic leadership. There were about 100,000 Namdharis (Kukas) within a very short period.^{30, 31} The British launched a misinformation and defamation campaign against the Namdharis through their toadies, mahants, pujaris and the so-called *guru-ansh* (descendants of Gurus), Bedis and Sodhis. One of the most damaging rumours was that "Baba Ram Singh calls himself reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh."³² The British and Brahmans also spread similar misinformation against Baba Dayal. The British also indulged in character assassination of Baba Ram Singh and his followers in order to discredit his movement through a campaign of defamation. It was claimed that Ram Singh contracted venereal disease through adulterous affairs and his followers were sexually loose, especially, women. Women were

made the target as they were very active in spreading the Namdhari message.³³ Ignorant Sikhs were taken in by this false propaganda and toadies denounced Baba Ram Singh and his followers, as wicked and misguided.³⁴

During the Sikh rule the relations between Muslims and Sikhs had healed and improved so much that "only the Muslims" in the *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* (Khalsa Raj) administration showed "complete loyalty" during the Anglo-Sikh War. So to turn the Muslims against Sikhs, the British agents who had infiltrated the Namdhari movement attacked Muslim butchers in three towns. May be the saboteurs escaped or were used as sacrificial lambs. Seventy-five Kukas were blown up with canons without trial and, Baba Ram Singh was exiled to Burma where he died in 1880.^{31, 32}

It is noteworthy that following the same policy of "divide and rule," Indira Gandhi used the same British methodology to defame Sikhs and to arouse hatred among Hindus against the Sikhs. In 1982, Indian Government agents placed severed "cow heads" before the Hindu temples at Amritsar to blame the Sikhs.³⁵ To label Namdhari movement as millenarian movement is to ignore the evil designs of the British and an attempt to cover up their heinous crimes.

7. "It was not uncommon practice for Hindu families to commit their eldest male progeny to Sikhism."³⁶

This is an erroneous and misleading statement, an echo of Hindu campaign of misinformation against Sikhism. She has quoted British intelligence officer, D. Petrie, in support of her arguments, however, for some reasons she has concealed his report of 1911 about the attitude of Hindus towards Sikhs:

Hinduism has always been hostile to Sikhism whose Gurus powerfully and successfully attacked the principle of caste, which is the foundation on which the whole fabric of Brahmanism has been reared. The activities of Hindus have, therefore, been constantly directed to the undermining of Sikhism both by preventing the children of Sikh fathers from taking *Pahul* and by reducing professed Sikhs from their allegiance to their faith. Hinduism has strangled Buddhism, once a formidable rival to it and it has already made serious inroads into the domain of Sikhism.³⁷

The practice of making their elder son a Khalsa was limited only to Punjabi Khatri and Arora families, who were Sehjdhari Sikhs (who have not taken Khande di Pahul). There is no evidence that any "Hindu" family on their own asked their children to become Sikhs. However, there are numerous examples of Hindus who adopted Sikhism on their own, like the renowned scholar

Professor Sahib Singh, legendary Bhagat Puran Singh of Pingalwara (house for crippled) who dedicated his life to serve the homeless, orphans, cripples and invalids, and the veteran Akali leader Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh was inspired to become a Sikh from the heroic stories he heard in a local Gurdwara. But when he expressed his desire to become a Sikh, his father asked him to leave the house. His mother intervened and it is remarkable that under his influence all his brothers adopted Sikhism.

Contrary to this myth that Hindus used to "commit" their elder son to Sikhism, there is strong historical evidence that some of the high caste Hindus collaborated with Mughals in the extermination of Sikhs. The Rajput chiefs of Shivalik hills declared war on Guru Gobind Singh.³⁸ Khatris and Brahmans of Goindwal had a hand in the execution of Guru Arjan.³⁹ Diwan Sucha Nand advised the *Subedar* (governor) of Sirhind, Wazir Khan to execute the younger two sons of Guru Gobind Singh whereas the Muslim Nawab of Malerkotla pleaded for mercy for the young ones.⁴⁰ The upper caste Hindus emerged as the greatest beneficiaries of the Mughal-Sikh conflict, and developed a vested interest in it both for keeping their positions and influence in the Mughal government and carrying on their war against Sikhism. It was Zakariya Khan's Diwan Lakhpat Rai who took a vow to eradicate Sikhs and Sikhism.⁴¹ Farrukh Siyar in 1716 issued an edict, fixing a price on the head of every Sikh. Hunting parties of Hindus led by Lakhpat Rai joined Mughal forces to destroy the Sikhs. The booty hunters were mainly Hindus like Chuhar Mal Ohri of Amritsar, Deva Chaudhary and his Brahman Diwan Har Sahai of Patti, Sahib Rai the Chaudhary of Naushera, Pahar Mal grandson of Raja Todar Mal, Karma of Chhina, Rama Randhawa of Talwandi, Sahib Rai Sandhu of Noshera Datta and Harbhagat of Jandiala and Massa Ranghar of Mandiala, a Muslim.⁴² Raj Kaul, son of Gangu Brahman who was at one time household servant of Guru Gobind Singh, was granted land near a *nehar* (canal) at Andha Mughal, a suburb of Delhi. He dropped Kaul as his last name and replaced it with Nehru (from *nehr*). His father Gangu betrayed Guru Gobind Singh's mother and two younger sons and handed over them to *Subedar* Wazir Khan of Sirhind.⁴³

Moreover, in 1900 the Arya Samaj leaders reconverted some Rehatia Sikhs through a ceremony involving the shaving of their heads in public.⁴⁴ Lala Lajpat Rai, and Sir Gokal Chand Narang the author of *Transformation of Sikhism*, who were born in Sehajdhari Sikh families turned out to be one of the most anti-Sikh and anti-Punjabi communalists after they joined the Arya Samaj movement.

8. "Their well-known abilities as agricultural cultivators as well as their categorisation by the British as the pinnacle of the 'martial race', paved the way for their preferential treatment by the Punjab administration in the form of land grant in fertile regions and low land revenue demands, particularly in the agriculture colonies."⁴⁵

It is true that Sikhs did benefit from land grants in the "Canal Colonies" in western Punjab, but that was barren land that the farmers made productive with their blood and sweat. To suggest that the British did it as a favour to Sikhs is a farce. The driving force to bring the barren lands under cultivation was for the economic benefit of the British imperialists; they were the primary beneficiaries. Does Jakobsh know that the British threw out of work millions of weavers in Bengal and throughout India by destroying the cottage industry by bringing in cheaper imports from British factories, and they created famine in Bengal by exporting rice from India to other parts of the empire? Besides, to cultivate barren lands they needed cultivators. Since vast majority of the Sikhs happened to be cultivators, they were given land to cultivate. Moreover, Hindu and Muslim cultivators were also given land in the same colonies.

It must be pointed out here that it was the farmers of "Canal Colonies" who revolted under the leadership of legendary Ajit Singh against high farm taxes, high water fees and the laws that the government passed to deprive the farmers of the rights of ownership to the land.

Finally, there is something unique about the Sikh farmers, which distinguishes them from Hindu farmers. Maybe it has to do with the corrosive and dehumanising effect of Brahmanism. Sikh Gurus liberated Sikhs from the shackles of Brahmanism. Here are two examples that illustrate my point. When the British proposed to the ruler of Bikaner (Rajasthan) to bring canal water from Punjab to his desert kingdom, he refused on the advice of Brahmans. The British took him to the canal colonies in Western Punjab to show him what water can do to his desert. He reluctantly agreed, but on the condition that most of the land in Sri Ganganagar area be allotted to Sikh farmers.⁴⁶ The second incidence is the experience of Sikh farmers who migrated to Haryana and U.P. after 1947. They were surprised that Haryana and U.P. farmer did not use iron or iron-tipped ploughshares. The reason was that iron tipped ploughshare could injure the oxen! They also did not cut Banyan and Pipal trees from their fields or chased wild cows and monkeys that destroyed crops.

The huge Banyan and Pipal trees render large areas uncultivable, but it is sin for a Hindu farmer to cut them. And cows and monkeys are holy to the Hindus.⁴⁷

Besides, Sikhs have demonstrated their versatility as superior cultivators. They have brought the "green revolution" not only in Punjab, converting this food deficit area before 1947, into the breadbasket of India, but also made the desert bloom in Rajasthan and transformed the jungles of Tarai in U.P. into one of the most productive agricultural land in India. And they are equally thriving in the agricultural valleys of Argentina, Australia, British Columbia, California, and New Zealand.

9. In her discussion of the Singh Sabha Movement, Jakobsh can't hold back her anti-Sikh feelings. She seems rather upset over why the Sikhs insist that they are not Hindus, why the Sikhs campaigned for the legal recognition of Sikh marriage ceremony (Anand Karaj). She reproduces all the abuses the Arya Samajists used against the Sikhs and their Gurus. She can't help without twisting even a simple straightforward editorial advice to educators and students about the importance of good health and physical fitness. It is remarkable that in the very beginning of "education revolution" in 1890s, Sikhs were laying emphasis on physical education and supports by incorporating them into the curriculum of three R's:

It is a matter of great concern for every Sikh, every government on the Indian soil and every apostle of peace to see any deterioration in the physique and hardiness of these sons of Mars. Handsome, brawny youth... come out of our school or college rooms with haggard look, sunken eyes, tottering frame and pale faces. ... Hence for the Sikhs at least, the culture of intellect and development of brain and enrichment of mind alone are meaningless, absurd and detrimental to the true interests of the community as well as of the country. It is therefore the duty of the men of light and leading to insist upon adequate arrangements being made for the revival of our national games like gatka, riding, chaker throwing, wrestling and others. ... The question is a common place one, on the surface, but a little thought will disclose its immense gravity and far reaching consequences, for the decay of physical vigour is the first sign of the death of a nation (from the Khalsa Advocate, 13 September 1913).⁴⁸

Jakobsh has totally twisted this editorial to fit into her obsession with "Sikh hypermasculinity:"

"Nonetheless, there were repeated concerns that Sikh men attending institutions of higher learning were in danger of losing their manly carriage. Insisting that Sikhs had distinct needs, being of a different breed from other Indians, calls were made to address this dilemma."⁴⁹

10. Jakobsh says there was stiff opposition to the Singh Sabha movement from the peasantry in the countryside, especially by women who taunted the reformers:

"They become Singh Sabhas, when they can't provide."⁵⁰

She has attributed the interpretation of "*Bun gai Singh Sabhiay, jaddon muk gai arrey de daney*" and the insight of sexual innuendo of this proverb to Surjit Singh Hans of Punjabi University.⁵¹ Not satisfied with his interpretation, she gives it a "Eurocentric feminine twist" by making it an expression of resentment by the voiceless and powerless women against male domination:

"The taunt has been closely associated with Punjab's womenfolk. ... In Sikh history, although barely perceptible, the taunt has tended to survive time as well as layers of male bias of history. ... In the case of Sikh history, women's taunts are sexualised; women taunt men for not being true men (Fenech 1996: 181)."⁵²

It is preposterous to suggest that the rural Sikhs, especially the women were opposed to the Tat Khalsa reformers. On the contrary, they were the backbone of the Tat Khalsa reformers. For example, in support of the Anand Marriage Bill in the Legislative Council introduced by Tikka Ripudaman Singh of Nabha, Tat Khalsa reformers mobilised the Sikh masses holding over 300 hundred public meetings and sent co-ordinated petitions carrying 700,000 signatures.⁵³ Besides, under the influence of Tat Khalsa reformers, almost all the Singh Sabha chapters broke their ties with the Amritsar Singh Sabha headed by Baba Khem Singh Bedi, consisting mostly of British toadies⁵⁴ and "Sanatan Sikhs" like Avtar Singh Vahiria, who was carrying out the false propaganda in cahoots with Hindu organisations that "couple married through Anand Karj rite would become brother and sister rather than husband and wife."⁵⁵

This taunt has nothing to do with gender; it was a part of Hindu campaign of misinformation against Singh Sabha movement. Jakobsh has distorted the taunt to fit her views. The taunt that I have always heard and seen in writing is "ਬਣ ਗਿਆ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭੀਆ ਜਦੋਂ ਮੁੱਕ ਗਏ ਘਰਾਂ ਦੇ ਦਾਣੇ (*Bun gia singh sabhia jaddon muk gae gharan de dane*): One becomes a Singh Sabha activist after running out of grains in the house. In other words a poor man becomes Singh Sabha activist.

She has changed "ਘਰਾਂ ਦੇ, *gharan de*" to "ਅੜੇ ਦੇ, *arrey de*",—from grains in the house to "grains" of man, (libido).

There was vigorous opposition to the Singh Sabha Movement from Punjabi Hindus and they did their level best to sabotage it. For example, as far back as June 1863 in the village of Khote there was a large gathering of Namdharis for an inter-caste marriage, but the village Brahmans protested and sought the help of Deputy Commissioner of Ferozepore to stop the weddings.⁵⁶ *The Deputy Commissioner supported the Brahmans not the Namdhari Sikhs. So it is abundantly clear that British did their level best to Hinduize Sikhism.*

The Hindus vehemently opposed the Singh Sabha Movement, Anand Marriage Act (pp. 180-91) and the movement to liberate Gurdwaras from the control of the British and their henchmen—*mahants* and *pujaris*.⁵⁷ They called the progeny of couples married by Anand ceremony as bastards.⁵⁸ They spread rumours about Singh Sabha throughout the Sikh population, especially in the countryside to mislead Sikh masses. They called Singh Sabha as "Singh *safa*," *safa* being a reference to the rampart destruction by the plague epidemic of 1902.⁵⁹ On the other hand Sikhs regarded Singh Sabha as the destroyer (*safa*) of "all Brahmanical influence." But Jokobsh is happy with the Hindu interpretation of *safa*. Arya Samajists and other anti-Sikhs forces joined hands in opposition to the Anand Marriage Act.⁶⁰

Here is another example how the Arya Samajist indulged in dirty tricks to mislead Sikhs. Lahore was the center for education in Punjab where the Arya Samajists had their college. However, they did not want the Sikhs to build a college in Lahore, as it would have taken away Sikh students, whom they wanted to brainwash against Sikhism. So they came up with a scheme to change the Sikh opinion in favour of building the college in Amritsar [Guru Ki Nagri (Guru's city/town)] instead of Lahore, writes Ruchi Ram Sahni:

Now Bhagat Lakshman Singh became a strong protagonist of the Amritsar party. In fact it was his advocacy that led to the formation of a small party in favour of Guru Ki Nagri as the site of the chief educational institution of the Khalsa. Lakshman Singh used to write to the Tribune and other papers under the *nom de plume* of "A degenerate Sikh". But the letters were really written by one of his near relations who was a leader of Arya Samaj. Lakshman Singh little realized at the time what he was doing and was very sorry for it afterwards. He said he was carried away by his youthful enthusiasm for his faith. He must be in his teens at that time. The second gentleman who appeared a little later was no other than a cousin of my own, Rai Bahadur Lala Lubdha Ram. He had been, he told me, in the thick of the plot himself. In

1893, my cousin and myself were occupying the same house at Lahore, where he had been lately posted as an executive Engineer in the railway department. He told me that some year earlier, half a dozen Arya Smajist formed a scheme to get a petition signed by thousands of "Sikhs" begging the Governor of the Province who was actively helping the Sikhs that the college should be located at Amritsar and not at Lahore. Thousands of foolscap signed sheets were circulated through an army of paid men all over north-western Panjab, each sheet bearing the same words to the effect: "I request that the Khalsa college be established at Guru Ki Nagri (Amritsar) and not Lahore." The rest of the page was divided into two ruled columns, one for the names of the petitioners and the other for their address. In this manner several lakhs of signature were said to have been obtained. These sheets were pasted together and then folded up into an impressive Roll. Men who go so far and put themselves to so much trouble and expense in getting up a memorial are not expected to leave things half done. The Roll was wrapped up in an expensive piece of silk and then carried in a palanquin to the Government House on the shoulders of four stalwart Sikhs.⁶¹

It must be pointed out here that it is the same Lakshman Singh whom she has quoted again and again as a source of information on Singh Sabha and Anand Mariiage Act. Lakshman Singh was what Oberoi describes a "Sanatan Sikh."

Besides, is there any reform movement in the world, which is not resisted and rejected by some people who are its target? Conservative and religious women in the United States used all sorts of derogatory names against the pioneers of "National Organisation of Women" like Betty Freidan and others. So it is expected that some Sikhs did deride the Tat Khalsa reformers but it has nothing to do with the sexual inadequacy of the reformers.

Finally, Jakobsh has stated that in 1881, Sikhs were the most uneducated⁶² community in Punjab, but she failed to disclose that in 1940 Sikhs were the most educated, especially women.⁶³ And this remarkable achievement of Sikhs was due to hard work, genius, insight and foresight of Tat Khalsa reformers whom she has represented as oppressive monsters who wanted to put Sikh women in a "cage with fettered feet."

11. Jakobsh's anti-Sikh feelings surfaced in the open from her stance, tenor and tone when she discusses Singh Sabha movement and the Anand Marriage Act (chapters 5-7). Her thesis is the study of the development of gender identity in Sikh history, but she is unwilling even to accept that Sikhs are not Hindus. She does not understand why the "Tat Khalsa" reformers asserted that Sikhs are not Hindus and wanted the Anand marriage ceremony to be legally recognised? Or why they launched a vigorous a

campaign to liberate the Sikh masses from ignorance, superstition and Brahmanical beliefs and practices? Or why they challenged the so-called "Sanatan Sikhs" who were saying that Sikhs are Hindus? It is too much for her to swallow the overwhelming support "Tat Khalsa" reformers enjoyed in the Sikh community and she is really upset over their successes in getting rid of Brahmanical influence among the Sikhs. She seems to be so upset that to console herself, she relishes using the abuses the Arya Samajists were hurling at Sikhs during the Singh Sabha campaign for the enactment of Anand Marriage Act and the liberation of Gurdwaras from the control of the British and their henchmen. She relishes calling Sikh Children of Anand marriages as *haramzadas* (illegitimate).⁵⁸ How could any decent woman, not to speak of a women specialising in "women studies" and concerned with women rights would rejoice in calling any woman's child as illegitimate? To get even with "hypermasculine" Tat Khalsa, she makes no reference to Gurdwara reform movements in which peaceful Sikh volunteers were mercilessly beaten and shot by the British officials and the police: During this five years of the non-violent Akali movement 400 died, 2,000 were wounded and 30,000 men and women were jailed. She has simply dismissed it as an aggression on the part of Tat Khalsa reformers on the poor mahants who were the legal owners of gurdwaras:

By and large mahants were not members of the Khalsa orders, many completely rejected the outward Khalsa symbols. Given Tat Khalsa endeavours to unify Sikh identity markers and practices, mahants had long proved a source of irritation and dismay for the reformers. Yet mahants were legally in position of power due to their historic association with the shrines they maintained. They were, however, increasingly denigrated as representing the worst of Hinduized Sikhism and as definite obstacles to Sikh interests. Ultimately, Tat Khalsa reformers came to see the fruits of their intense labours against these custodians. In 1925, the Sikh Gurdwara Act was legislated; with this Act, control of Sikh shrines was arrested away from the 'old' orthodoxy—mahants and Sanatan Sikhs who were represented by guru lineages— and placed under the jurisdiction of the 'new' orthodoxy.⁶⁴

Not satisfied with her belittling of the Gurdwara reform movement she goes on to eulogise Swami Dayanand, his teachings and the Arya Samaj movement⁶⁵ and, attributes the success of Tat Khalsa reformers to the tactics they learned from Christian missionaries⁶⁶ and Arya Samajists.⁶⁷

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Chapter 15

What the British Did to the Sikhs?

The British had studied the Sikh character for more than a century before declaring war on *Sarkar-i-Khalsa* (*Khalsa Raj*)—the Sikh kingdom of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. They were convinced that a Sikh's drive to be independent and the spirit to fight for freedom is rooted in the theology of Aad Guru Granth Sahib:

"British observers noted that the martial prowess of the Sikhs stemmed from a religious impulse; for this reasons the British fostered the Khalsa identity over all others."¹

However, contrary to this malicious propaganda the British tried every thing possible to Hinduise Sikhs by subverting Sikh theology and history. Therefore, in order to wean away Sikhs from the teachings of AGGS, they took control of Gurdwaras and appointed Hindu *mahants* and *pujaris* to Hinduize Sikhism:

For instance, in the first two decades after Punjab's annexation, the colonial government of India, as part of its general policies, insisted that the administration relinquish its control over Sikh shrines like the Golden Temple; at the same time the British army was furthering its image of Sikh identity and employing Sikh granthis, and the provincial administration in Punjab was pressing to retain control over major Sikh shrines. Moreover, evangelical district officers like R. Cust, confident that Sikhism was on the decline, were simultaneously drafting policies to push it towards its final demise. Such conflicts over policy remained an inherent feature of British rule. It was not at all easy for one institution of the state to alter the thinking of another organ of imperial rule.²

Unlike Bengal, Madras and Bombay, where officials were somewhat wary of evangelical activities, in Punjab they were not assailed by doubt. Robert Cust, who had been associated with Punjab administration since 1846 and moved on to be a judicial commissioner, says in an autobiography intended for private circulation:

Another important subject had to be handled firmly. I had belonged from the very first, 1843, to supporters of the principle, that it was our duty to Evangelize, and all leading Punjab officials were of the same school ... After the Mutinies there were signs of fanatical spirit, and desire to introduce the Bible into schools, to push Christians forward in Government-office, to let the Missionaries interfere, to preach to the prisoners in Gaol.³

The Sikhs were the main target of the evangelists. It is noteworthy that in the 1855 census of Punjab, the British did not even acknowledge the existence of Sikhs--Sikhs were counted as Hindus! In order to accomplish their goal, the British authorities took all the necessary steps to destroy Sikh religious reform movements. As already pointed out, they sabotaged the peaceful Nirankari movement and ruthlessly suppressed the more assertive Namdhari movement. They were nonplussed and shaken that in spite of high recruitment of Sikhs in the army and payments to toadies (aristocrats and descendants of guru lineage, Bedis and Sodhis and clergy), the Namdhari movement spread rapidly among the Sikh populace throughout Punjab. The British were also very much concerned about the unity between Punjabi Muslims, Hindus and Sikhs. So to turn the attention of Sikhs, Muslims and Hindus away from the oppressive and exploitive colonial rule, they instigated intra as well as inter religious strife among Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. During the Sikh rule the relations between Sikhs and Muslims had improved so much that during the Anglo-Sikhs War, only Punjabi Muslims displayed total loyalty to the Khalsa Raj. The British agents who were implanted in the Namdhari movement attacked Muslim butchers to create hostility between Muslims and Sikhs. As already discussed, the split between the Namdharis and Sikh masses was accomplished by spreading the false propaganda against Baba Ram Singh and his followers alleging that he called himself as the reincarnation of Guru Gobind Singh.

The head of the British sponsored Ahmadiya movement, Mirza Ghulam Ahmad caused uproar among Muslims by declaring himself as a Messiah (*masih-i- maw'ud*). In his *Burahinh-i-Ahmadiya* (1880-1884), which was meant to rejuvenate Islam on the basis of Quran, he tried to refute the Christian missionaries, the Arya Samajists and the Brahmos. In another work he argued that Guru Nanak was in fact a Muslim.⁴ To divide Punjabis on religious lines, Urdu was introduced as the medium of education in government schools up to matriculation level, though Punjabi was

the dominant language of Punjab.⁵ The Muslim associations, Anjuman-i-Islamia and Anjuman-i-Himayat-i-Islam promoted Urdu as the language of Punjabi Muslims.⁶

In 1877, Brahmo Samaj, an organisation that was pro-British, anti-Punjabi, anti-Sikh and anti-Muslim, opened its centre in Lahore. It was an offshoot of Brahmo Samaj founded by Raja Ram Mohan Roy in Bengal and its main agenda was to promote the interest of upper caste Hindus and Bengalis in particular and the British imperialists. As discussed earlier, Raja Ram Mohan Roy extolled "the merits of the British Government in India" and extended wholehearted support to it without any hesitation. Raja Rammohan Roy and his compatriots hated the Muslims so much that they considered the British as "deliverers." Their hatred towards the Muslim was so intense that in 1831 the Bengali Hindus refused to support the revolt against the British in Nadia and Barasat by textile workers (cotton weavers) as millions of them were thrown out of work by the British import of cheap textiles from England. Most of the workers were Muslims and their leader Titu Meer was also a Muslim. The Hindus feared that the revolt, if successful, would bring back the Mughal rule.

The Brahmo Samaj leaders though, willing to make use of Urdu and Punjabi for propagating their ideas, favoured and promoted Hindi in Devanagri script as the language among its followers.⁷ There is no evidence that the Brahmo Samaj ever promoted Hindi in Devanagri script in Bengal, Assam, Orissa, Maharastara and Gujarat. The influence of Christianity on Brahmo Samaj ideology and its pluralistic creed made Punjabis wary of it.⁸ Their "more British than the British" attitude and unashamed support of the British cause earned them the disdain of Punjabis. "A Brahmo was looked upon as the most hateful person and ... the mere public profession of the faith was enough to seriously lower a man in the eyes of his community," recalls Ruchi Ram Sahni in his autobiography.⁹ The Brahmos manipulated an eccentric aristocrat, Dyal Singh Majithia to will his estate including his English newspaper, The Tribune, Dyal Singh College, and Dyal Singh Library to the Brahmo Samaj. When his widow Bhagwan Kaur and his closest relative challenged Dyal Singh Majithia's will on the ground that Hindu inheritance laws could not apply to him as he was a Sikh, the Privy Council disagreed with them, thus ensuring that Hindu laws cover the Sikhs.¹⁰ *This incidence leaves no doubt about who benefited the most from the British colonial rule and, whom it favoured the most! It also explodes the myth that the British promoted Sikh identity or they were friends of the Sikhs or they were concerned about the subversion of Sikhism by Hindus*

and Christian missionaries. The Tribune since it came under the control of Brahma Samaj in 1898 has served as the mouthpiece of anti-Punjabi and anti-Sikh propaganda.

In 1877, the British brought Swami Dayanand, a Gujarati Brahman, who did not find many listeners to his Vedic philosophy in his home state of Gujarat or in Maharashtra and Bengal.¹¹ But the Punjabi Hindus rallied around him and formed Arya Samaj that also opened its centre in Lahore. Moreover, the Swami who used to reject any doctrine, which did not accept the supremacy and divine revelation of Vedas, was a changed man. He had deeply offended the Sanatan Hindus by his proclamation of Vedic sanction of eating bovine flesh, offering animals for religious sacrifices and using flesh in *havan*. Now he was advocating the protection of the sacred cow and he had established a "Cow Protection Society." Besides, now the target of his venom was not Sanatan Hindus, but Muslims and Sikhs. Upon his arrival in Punjab he found that Punjabi Hindus knew neither Hindi nor Sanskrit and could read their scriptures only in Urdu translation.¹² His message of superiority of Vedas over other religious scriptures and the glory of ancient Aryans appealed and captivated the deeply wounded psyche of Punjabi Brahmans, Khattris, Aroras, and Baniyas; they accepted him as their "saviour." But there was one problem, under more than seven centuries of oppressive Muslim rule, Brahmans, Khattris, Aroras and Baniyas were not only humiliated and dehumanized but also bastardised with little Aryan blood left in their veins. The blood that was flowing through their veins was mostly a blend of Afghan, Turkish, Arabic, Persian and Mughal. To solve this problem the Swami came with a clever idea. He asked them to forget their past, in other words to disown the language and culture of their ancestors. So the Arya Samajists denounced and renounced Punjabi language and adopted instead Hindi in Devangari script. From thereon the venom had set in Punjab, Punjabi culture, and Punjabi language. However, recently to hide their shame and to distinguish themselves from other Hindus, Arya Samajists like journalist Kuldip Nayar and ex-Prime Minister Inder Kumar Gujral have coined a counterfeit term "*Punjabi*at." The way Punjabi Arya Samajists "manipulated" their own culture and language to come to terms with their past history is similar to what Hindu intelligentsia in general and historians in particular are doing to cope with their past history—for them the Indian history starts on August 15, 1947.

For the Punjabi Arya Samajists who knew nothing about their scriptures, Swami was a paragon of virtue and great genius who carried all the wisdom of ancient *Rishis* and *Munis* in his head.

However, soon Swami's hot balloon of "ignorance and arrogance" was punctured when he held a debate with Giani Dit Singh on Vedas.¹³ The Swami (1877 C.E.) like the Pope more than 250 years earlier (1616 C.E.) kept insisting that the sun revolved around the earth.¹⁴ Giani Dit Singh in his *Dambh Vidran* (Exposing Hypocrisy), in Punjabi language, aptly remarked, "The Sadhu did not have the intelligence that many people credited him with. Sadhu Dayanand was a simple-minded and ordinary person, who wrote whatever came into his mind. He did not reflect whether it was proper or not."¹⁵ For example, in his *Satyarth Prakash*, Swami has described Guru Nanak as a man of little learning. In Swami's opinion Guru Nanak lacked knowledge of Vedas and Sanskrit.¹⁶ On the contrary, neither the Swami nor his followers knew that Guru Nanak rejected not only Vedas and all the essentials of Hinduism, but also Sanskrit and its script as a medium to propagate his philosophy. Guru Nanak recorded his thoughts in the language of people in Gurmukhi script, which he and Guru Angad constructed from contemporary crude scripts:

ਕਥਾ ਕਹਾਣੀ ਬੋਦੀ ਆਣੀ ਪਾਪੁ ਪੁੰਨੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੁ ॥
 ਦੇ ਦੇ ਲੇਣਾ ਲੈ ਲੈ ਦੇਣਾ ਨਰਕਿ ਸੁਰਗਿ ਅਵਤਾਰ ॥
 ਉਤਮ ਮਧਿਮ ਜਾਤੀ ਜਿਨਸੀ ਭਰਿਮ ਭਵੈ ਸੰਸਾਰੁ ॥

It is the teachings of Vedas, which has created the myths of sin and virtue, hell and heaven, and karma and transmigration. One reaps the reward in the next life for the deeds performed in this life—goes to hell or heaven according to the deeds. The Vedas have also created the fallacy of inequality of caste and gender for the world. AGGS, M 2, p. 1243.

Vedas are no different than the literature of other contemporary ancient people, for example, the Greeks. Vedas describe in great detail, religious beliefs, ceremonies, customs, daily human activities and sexual practices. But the vast majority of Hindus, who were even forbidden to hear the Vedas, not to speak of reading them, have been led to believe that Vedas are the source of "wisdom and spiritual and scientific knowledge." Further, the deeply troubled and tormented Hindu psyche due to oppressive and dehumanising subjugation by Muslims and Christians for over a millennia needed some balm to heal. And that balm is the mythical "glorious Hindu civilization" based on Vedas before the Muslims conquest. Thus even for educated Hindus it is difficult to face the mind-boggling depravities recorded in Vedic literature. Moreover, little did the Swami realize that Vedas had been translated into English in the second half of the

nineteenth century and, the "Arya zealots" were dependent on these translated materials!

It was only in the second half of the nineteenth century, when Max Muller initiated his series on the "Sacred Books of the East," that a six-volume edition of Rig Veda (1840-74) was printed, and this ancient work became a book.¹⁷

Like *Kama Sutra*, it was the sexual content of the Vedas that caught the fancy of the readers: polygamy, polyandry, joint wife, sex with priests, sex with animals, sexual orgies, adultery, debauchery and Niyoga¹⁸ —the custom of childless widow or woman having sexual intercourse with a man other than her husband to beget a child. It was this disclosure about the Vedas that upset the firebrand Arya Samajists so much that some of them started scurrilous propaganda against Islam and Sikhism. An anonymous author wrote *Rangila Rasool* (Pleasure Loving Prophet) to malign Prophet Mohammed. Raunak Ram and Bishumbar Dutt wrote a booklet, *Khalsa Panth ki Hakikat*, depicting Mata Ganga, Guru Arjan's wife asking Baba Buddha for Niyoga.¹⁹ It was condemned by the Hindus including most of the Arya Samajists. It troubled Daulat Rai, an Arya Samajist, so much that he was forced to pick up the pen to author: "*Sahib-i-Kamal*" *Guru Gobind Singh* (Par Excellent Master, Guru Gobind Singh). In this book he reminded Punjabi Hindus of the humiliation and degradation to which their ancestors were subjected under Muslim rule before the Khalsa liberated them. Quoting various historical sources, he wrote:

Not only Muslim invaders killed Hindus by the thousands, looted their properties and carried away men and women as slaves in the thousands, but also under some Muslim rulers Hindus were not allowed even the comforts of life like -- good clothes, good food, ride horses, wear turbans or keep good homes or valuables or even beautiful children or wives. They were allowed to have minimum possessions for mere survival. Often they were given two alternatives: either conversion to Islam or pay Jazia (tax on non-Muslims).²⁰

However, blinded by hatred against the Sikhs, Jakobsh dug up this obscure booklet (*Khalsa Panth ki Hakikat*) to malign Guru Arjan and his wife. Even going beyond this, she steps in to distort *Karewa*, a ceremony for the marriage of a widow:

While Niyoga as delineated by Dayanand was similar in most respects to *karewa* widely practised by the Sikhs, the latter's connection to landed property and its protection

from the whims of widows as opposed to the desire of progeny, made *karewa* far more acceptable to the rulers.²¹

Contrary to her distortion, "*Karewa*" is remarriage of a widow according to customs and traditions²² practised by Jats and other agriculturist communities of Punjab long before the advent of Sikhism. *Karewa* is performed preferably between a widow and her diseased husband's brother or cousin or any suitable match if brother or cousin is not available. On the other hand, "*Niyoga*" is the custom of childless married woman having sexual intercourse with another man to beget a child. Another outcome was sending a widow or any woman to a particular man for sexual intercourse so that she bears a son. This custom is discussed in detail in Vedic literature. In "*Aadi Parva*" of Mahabharata (chap. 95 and 103), it is mentioned that Satyawati had appointed her son to bestow sons to the queens of Vichitrvirya, the younger brother of Bhishma, as a result of which Dhratrashta and Pandu were born. Pandu himself asked his wife, Kunti, to have sexual intercourse with a Brahman to bless a son (*Aadi Parva*, chapters 120 to 123).¹⁸

The pretension of the British that they were the protector of "Sikh faith and identity" and perpetuation of this myth by Hindus and others like Jakobsh lies naked for any reasonable person to see:

To begin with, there was the very question of Sikh identity, and jurisdiction of the government to define who was a Sikh. This was complicated by government interference in religious affair of the Sikhs; the continued management of the Golden Temple under official patronage; the glaring defiance of the Temple management in according differential treatment to low caste Sikhs causing obstruction to revivalist groups; the judgement in June 1919 confirming the appointment of an apostate Sikh as a manager of Gurdwara Babe di Ber, Sialkot, bringing to the fore the inadequacy of law; and British Courts serving as vehicles of imposition of status quo to the indignation of the Tat Khalsa.²³

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Conclusion

I must make it clear that I have no personal animosity against Dr. Jakobsh. I wish her the best in future. We Sikhs are not perfect people. In fact we have a lot to learn from others, but certainly not from Dr. Jakobsh. Rather, she is an example who can be instrumental in unlearning and then buffing the reader with falsehoods.

My concerns are about her professional role. Her curriculum vitae is impressive: She earned her B.A. degree from the University of Waterloo with honors in Social Development Studies/Religious Studies and, Master of Theological Studies from Harvard University before moving on to the University of British Columbia for Ph.D. degree. Given this background, it is quite clear that Sikhism was not her area of training until she moved to UBC. Her latest website says she instructs or has instructed in courses: Eastern Religions; Sikhism; Hinduism; Women in the Great Religions; East Comes West, West Turns East; Women in Asian Religions; World Religions in Cultural Perspective; Asian Spiritual Disciplines; and History of Modern Asia. In addition she also instructs on Mahatma Gandhi.

In the United States, there has been a controversy brewing for a while. A number of us have seen a decline in education standards, especially with the academia associated with humanities. It is evident that a sizeable number of these professors have taken upon themselves the mantle to promote

their hidden private agendas under the disguise of academia, thereby influencing the next generation of students. It's almost like a cancer growing on the academic body, and that professional academia is helpless in instituting remedies and policing its runaway members.

David Harowitz in his book, "*The Professors: The 101 Most Dangerous Academics in America*" addresses his mounting concerns about perverse culture of academics that are poisoning the minds of today's college students. It appears that this disease afflicting American institutions of higher learning have penetrated its Canadian counterpart. We need not look for examples north of our border--thanks in part to Prof. Jakobsh for presenting herself as a specimen to examine.

To her credit, she admits that her direct knowledge of Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) is minimal at best. This in of itself doesn't render her incompetent or disqualify her unless she takes concrete steps to compensate for this weakness. From her thesis and consequently the book being released, it is evident that Prof. Harjot Oberoi was to fill in the slot to both provide an account and a cover for her weaknesses. This was her major blunder. Prof. Oberoi is incompetent in matters of Sikhism and the subjects that ensue from it. All other professors who had "participated" in her thesis development amounted to just nothing: pure futile exercise in the delivery of a doctorate degree! They might as well have not participated for sake of academia and its integrity.

"Scripture Twisting" is a rampant phenomenon among Christians. Twisting the scriptures comes in various guises, which Jakobsh utilized to the fullest extent either directly or indirectly. Let's take the indirect example of *Brihaspatismriti*, one of the Hindu scriptures, classed under the Hindu law-books, in the same category adjoining *Manusmriti*. While linking Guru Nanak's humanism with the author of *Brihaspatismriti*, Dr. Jakobsh cited the following two references:

1. Why then should the father's wealth be taken by another person (Aiyanger 1941, cited in Bose 1996: 3).
2. Bose, Mandakranta, ed., *Visions of Virtue: Women in the Hindu Tradition*, Vancouver: M. Bose, 1996.

Instead of relying on the above secondary or tertiary references to make her case, Jakobsh should have looked for a primary source. Had she done so she would have prevented herself from committing a grave error! How difficult is it to find the

primary source? Hardly! I asked Colonel G.B. Singh and in the next five minutes he had the English translation of *Brihaspatismriti* in his hands. Once this scripture is read, in all likelihood, Jakobsh would have not erred. Similarly had she taken the safeguards while discussing so much of her error-ridden research including mountain of literature twisting (already analyzed in this paper) against the Sikhs and their religion, she would have avoided the pitfalls and, would have nurtured credibility and prestige to her name, faculty (even to Oberoi) overseeing her research, and above all, to the University of British Columbia. Sad to say, she failed on all counts.

APPENDIX--A

W. H. McLeod

Jakobsh's understanding of Sikhism is based on McLeod's writings and she has quoted him repeatedly in support of her thesis to spread false propaganda against Sikhism:

"W. H. McLeod has almost single-handedly transformed the academic study of Sikhs through his near exhaustive scope of inquiry."¹

It is important and essential for the readers to know how McLeod has become "one of the foremost scholars and the leading authority on Sikhism." W.H. McLeod has created a unique precedent--getting his Ph.D. in Sikhism with no oversight from the University of London. Enough has been written about McLeod's "expertise and scholarship" on Sikhism, but it needs to be highlighted here, as McLeod is Jakobsh's main source on Sikhism -- Jakobsh is McLeod's academic grandchild -- a lineage of fraudulent research on Sikhism.

While McLeod was studying at the Theological Hall, he had second thoughts about his chosen career as a clergyman.² And he dreaded the thought of a parish life in New Zealand.³ However, after completing his studies in 1957, somehow he managed to go to Punjab at a time when the entry of Western missionaries was banned in India. At that time due to the ongoing "Cold War,"

Europeans coming to India were suspected as CIA or British intelligence agents, but here was McLeod, a Presbyterian missionary in Punjab, the state which shares border with Pakistan, India's perpetual sworn enemy, and Kashmir a disputed territory. He obtained his Ph.D. in Sikhism unfairly from the University of London and got himself declared as the leading authority on Sikhism through clever maneuvers. Prof. A.L. Basham, his supervisor, knew hardly anything about Guru Nanak and very little about the Punjabi language. This is how McLeod writes about his experience with his research supervisor:

Apparently, and as expected he made only three minor changes to the thesis; one of which was his insistence on the use of the plural form "appendices" instead of "appendixes. ... Once a month I was required to appear before him and report progress and difficulties. I would outline the difficulties and at each of them he would nod his head wisely and make some such comment as "Yes, that is a problem", or "That is a difficulty we all have." After the interview was over I would ask myself what have I gained from it and the answer would be that I had derived nothing. Professor Basham was, however, an experienced supervisor and even if I received no direct guidance concerning my thesis topic I did at least get the understanding noises which at that time I needed.⁴

Moreover, McLeod had very little interaction with the two examiners who did not even read the complete thesis before approving it.⁵ Again in McLeod's own the words:

When I presented myself for the viva on July 13th Dr. Allchin, one of the examiners whom I had not previously met, opened the questioning by frowning very severely at me. "Mr. McLeod," he said, "We have a serious criticism to make of this thesis." This, needless to say, is just what the nervous candidate does not want to hear. Dr. Allchin paused and then went on: "You did not allow us sufficient time to read it." It was a joke and he and the other examiner Professor Parrinder, together with Professor Basham, joined in the jolly laughter. It soon became clear, however, that neither examiner had in fact managed to read the complete thesis, and after a single question from each I was dismissed. Fortunately they both agreed to sustain the thesis.⁵

It should not surprise anyone that Prof. Parrinder knew nothing of Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion except what he learned from McLeod's thesis.⁶ In other words, McLeod himself was the supervisor as well as the examiner of his thesis. Then who determined the veracity of the contents of the thesis? And who ascertained its adequacy for the award of a Ph.D. degree? After all, the thesis was not about English literature; it was about Guru Nanak's authentic teachings enshrined in Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) as pointed out by McLeod himself:

The Adi Granth contains a substantial number of works by Guru Nanak. These can all be accepted as authentic. It is clear that Guru Arjan compiled the Adi Granth with considerable care and the principal source, which he used, was a collection, which had been recorded at the instance of the third Guru, Amar Das, who was only ten years younger than Guru Nanak.⁷

One may ask McLeod why didn't he pick a thesis supervisor or examiners with expertise in Sikhism? One may even question the University of London for falling short on the standards. Was Fauja Singh, "an honest and honorable historian of Punjab"⁸ or Ganda Singh, "certainly an eminent Sikh historian"⁹ or any other Indian scholar not good enough to be his thesis supervisor or examiner? Besides, why were the contents of the thesis kept out of view until November 1968^{10, 11} while the University of London accepted the thesis in July 1965?¹² Why were even his friends, Ganda Singh and Harbans Singh,^{10, 11} who had offered assistance in his work, kept in the dark until 1968 when "*Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion*" was released—upon which McLeod was hailed as "widely known as being among the foremost scholars of Sikh studies in the world?"¹¹

Generally, scholars spend many years and sometimes their entire research career before being recognized as "being among the foremost scholars in their field" by their peers. But here McLeod was awarded this distinction by R.C. Zaehner (1913-74), Professor of Eastern Religion and Ethics at the University of Oxford,^{11, 13} who reviewed *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* in the *Times Literary Supplement* in 1968.¹⁴ In other words, McLeod became "one of the foremost scholars of Sikhism" simply through the publication of his Ph.D. thesis which bypassed all the rigors of academic reviews.¹⁴ Did Zaehner who was an alcoholic¹³ know anything about Guru Nanak's teachings? After the publication of Zaehner's review, McLeod rightly expressed his jubilation: "Professor Zaehner could never have known what joy he created!"¹¹ From thereon, McLeod has never missed an opportunity to self-promote himself. Given this historical background, one wouldn't be wrong to question his academic credentials, the quality of his scholarship and academic ethics. While at the same time one would not be wide off the mark to understand "how and why" McLeod manipulated the mantra: "one of the foremost scholars of Sikhism"¹⁵ to spread misinformation about Sikhism persistently and consistently since the 1960s. For example, Sikhs have endowed several Sikh Chairs in North America. Is it a mere coincidence that the holders of the three chairs have one common outstanding qualification—their relationship to McLeod? He supervised Pashaura Singh's Ph.D.

thesis and was consultant to Harjot Oberoi and Gurinder Singh Mann for their Ph.D. researches.

For detailed analysis of McLeod's writings, see:

www.globalsikhstudies.net; www.sikhspectrum.com, August 2005; Abstracts of Sikh Studies, July-September 2005, pp.6-76.

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APPENDIX--B

Harjot Oberoi

Yet if women and men are inherently equal in Sikh tradition in terms of roles and status, why are they not given similar representation in Sikh history? It is a question that can perhaps best be explained in light of McMullen's analysis of differentiation. Namely, what is officially touted as normative with regard to gender in history is not necessarily the same as the actual operative aspects of the same history. Further, Harjot Oberoi (1994: 30-31) has posited that the principles of silence and negation are paramount in addressing issues that could be conceived as ambiguous within tradition. This chapter addresses these principles of silence and negation along with those of accommodation and idealization, specifically with regard to secondary sources of Sikh history.¹

I may add that in addition to McMullen's analysis of differentiation, and Oberoi's principles of silence and negation, historians also use the principles of deception and manipulation in writing history. For example, Harjot Oberoi's *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*² is replete with deception and manipulation of historical information, as demonstrated by the following four samples:

1. This book is about Sikhs and their history, but the author does not mention even once the basic principles of Sikhism or the definition of a Sikh from Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS),

which is the only authentic source of Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat). Had he done so, readers such as me could use his references to understand what he is talking about. Instead, he gives two examples: the religious rituals observed by Ruchi Ram Sahni's father, and the palanquin-bearers observed by Henry M. Clark, an observant evangelist, while travelling in Punjab in the 1880s. By citing these two examples, Oberoi expects the readers to learn that Sikhism has no definite principles; an idol worshipper or huqqa smoker or one who cuts hair is a *sincere and devout* Sikh. And he builds his entire thesis on the basis of these two examples. With respect to Sahni's father, we read:

He had his daily role of idol-worship with all the warmth of a *sincere believer*, so much so that when he was ill, he would ask me to go through the forms and formalities of washing the idols in the morning, properly dressing them, and making them the usual offerings of flowers, sweets and scents. On such occasions my father's cot was carried to where the idols were, and he would himself sing hymns at the appropriate places. I never questioned myself whether it was right or wrong to do what I was bidden by my father to do. It was enough for me that I was carrying out my father's wishes. To judge from the warmth of feeling and regularity, with which the worship was conducted, I have every reason to conclude that my father was a sincere idol worshipper. The only thing that now raises doubts in my mind is the fact that both in the morning and at night he recited, *with equal warmth and regularity*, the Sikh scriptures Reheres and Sukhmani (emphasis in the original).³

Now anyone who is familiar with the religious beliefs and customs of eighteenth and nineteenth century, Punjabi Hindus would have no problem in identifying the person in the example cited above as a typical Punjabi Khatri Hindu. Besides, Sahni does not make any mention, specifically, that his father considered himself a Sikh. A simple fact that Harjot Oberoi failed to grasp! For him to label Sahni's father as "Sikh" because this person recited selected portions of the Sikh scripture amounts to outright gross distortion of the facts at hand as well as the Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat), which categorically rejects the worship of idols:

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਮੂਲੇ ਭੂਲੇ ਅਖੁਟੀ ਜਾਂਹੀ॥
 ਨਾਰਦਿ ਕਹਿਆ ਸਿ ਪੂਜ ਕਰਾਂਹੀ॥
 ਅੰਧੇ ਗੁੰਗੇ ਅੰਧ ਅੰਧਾਰੁ ॥
 ਪਾਥਰੁ ਲੇ ਪੂਜਹਿ ਮੁਗਧ ਗਵਾਰ॥
 ਓਹਿ ਜਾ ਆਪਿ ਡੁਬੇ ਤੁਮ ਕਹਾ ਤਰਣਹਾਰੁ॥

Hindus are utterly mistaken and going on the wrong path. They worship whatever Nard told them to worship. They are spiritually blind and dumb and groping in the darkness. The

ignorant fools worship stones. How could a stone that itself sinks in water help a human being across the ocean of worldly temptations?

AGGS, M 1, p. 556.

Moreover, it is intriguing that Oberoi chose an example from Ruchi Ram Sahni's unpublished manuscript: *Self-Revelation of an Octogenarian* in the possession of Mr. V.C. Joshi,⁴ while ignoring *Struggle For Reform In Sikh Shrines*⁵ authored by Sahni decades earlier. In this book Sahni has described his eyewitness accounts of the atrocities inflicted by the British officials and their henchmen on non-violent Sikh volunteers. Why didn't Oberoi pick an example of a Sikh from this book? Is it because Sahni's eyewitness accounts of Sikhs refutes unequivocally Oberoi's flawed claim that Sikhs had no distinct identity before the British conquest of Punjab?

Anyone who heard the call to protect and safeguard the Granth and Gurdwara (the two greatest objects of veneration by the entire community) and was prepared to risk his life in preventing the sacrilege at the hand of Muslim fanatics, became an *Akali* (immortal) for the time being, but as soon as immediate task was finished, the Akali would revert to his or her hum-drum life as a house-holder. It is a significant fact that in adopting the role of an Akali, no sex distinction is observed.⁶

Looking back upon what I have myself seen of the Akali movement, particularly during the past quarter of a century, I feel the account presented in these pages does but scant justice to the epic drama that I myself witnessed, mostly at close quarters, being enacted from day to day and month to month.^{7, 8}

The second example cited by Oberoi is that of labourers who smoked and had cut their hair:

The doli [planquin]-bearers on the Dalhousie road, though they seem to be Sikhs, yet use tobacco freely. When I asked the reason, they told me they found it very hard work to carry dolis without refreshing themselves with huqqa, so when they left their homes to come up for the summer work, they had their hair cut, and so gave up Sikhism. On their return home for the winter they paid a few annas and were reinitiated.⁹

How and why did the Christian missionary (Henry M. Clark) assume that the huqqa smoking coolies/labourers with cropped hair were Sikhs, as smoking and cutting of hair is forbidden for the Sikhs? Could it be a part of the campaign of misinformation and defamation the missionaries and the British imperialists were spreading against the Sikhs to demoralise them after the annexation of Punjab? Or could it be that coolies/labourers were pulling his leg when he struck a conversation with them? Besides, even if they were Sikhs, how could any reasonable

person extrapolate from this solitary case that hugga smoking and hair cutting was common among Sikhs at that time? Probably, Oberoi doesn't know that even prior to Guru Gobind Singh's inviolable injunction issued to the Khalsa against cutting body hair and smoking, it was also a general precept of earlier Gurus. Bhai Nand Lal Puri, grandfather of the famous child-martyr Hakikat Rai (1728) visited Guru Har Rai (1630-1661) at Kartarpur to seek benediction. He was advised not to shave, or shingle the *Kesh* (hair), not to smoke tobacco, and not to wear a cap (the traditional slave's headgear) on the head.^{10, 11}

Guru Nanak himself advised against eating and drinking anything that is injurious to health:

ਬਾਬਾ ਹੋਰੁ ਖਾਣਾ ਖੁਸੀ ਖੁਆਰੁ ॥

ਜਿਤੁ ਖਾਧੈ ਤਨੁ ਪੀੜੀਐ ਮਨੁ ਮਹਿ ਚਲਹਿ ਵਿਕਾਰੁ ॥

Dear Sir! Food, which is injurious to body and mind, ruins happiness.

AGGS, M 1, p. 16.

Further, it is interesting to note that the second example is from an article "Decay of Sikhism" published in *Punjab Notes and Queries* by Reverend Clark in 1885.¹² However, it is odd that later on in order to discredit the Singh Sabha reformers (Tat Khalsa), Oberoi himself refutes the notion of "decline and decay" of Sikhism propagated by the British:

The ideologues of the Singh Sabha, in order to enforce their new version of Sikhism, also wanted to demonstrate that prior to their intervention Sikhism was weak and ill-equipped to cope with the future. ... Unfortunately, historians have tended to take the British discourse, seconded by the Sabha's literature, at face value, a neat little model that posits decline in Sikh fortunes and then shown an ascendancy—variously called the Sikh revival or renaissance. Following British rule, the Sikhs were undoubtedly faced with complex changes, both in institutional domain of the community and the every day life of the faithful: but terms like 'decline' and 'effete' conjure up images that do not easily correspond with social reality.¹³

Then to buttress his argument Oberoi quotes Joseph Davey Cunningham:

Among all the prophets of doom there was a dissenting note that has largely been ignored. The colonial state took the extreme course of silencing this lone voice, dismissing Joseph Davey Cunningham from the administrative service. Cunningham remained, nonetheless, one of the most informed individuals on the Sikh faith in the mid-nineteenth century Punjab. In his well-known work on Sikhs he says:

The observers of the ancient creeds quietly pursue the even tenor of their way, self-satisfied and almost indifferent about others; but the Sikhs are converts to a new religion, the seal of the double dispensation of Brumha [Brahma] and Mahomet [Mohammed]: their enthusiasm is still fresh, and their faith is still active and a living principle. They are persuaded that God himself is present with them, that He supports them in all their endeavours, and that sooner or later He will confound their enemies for His own glory. This feeling of the Sikh people deserves the attention of the English, both as civilised nation and as a paramount government. Those who have heard a follower of Goroo [Guru] Govind [Gobind] declaim on the destinies of his race, his eyes wild with enthusiasm and every muscle quivering with excitement can understand that spirit which impelled the naked Arab against the mail-clad troop of Rome and Persia. ... The Sikhs do not form a numerous sect, yet their strength is not to be estimated by tens of thousands, but by the unity and energy of religious fervour and warlike temperament. They will dare much, and they will endure much, for the mystic Khalsa or commonwealth; they are not discouraged by defeat, and they ardently look to the day when Indians and Arabs, and Persians and Turks shall all acknowledge the double mission of Nanuk [Nanak] and Govind [Gobind] Singh [parentheses by B. Singh].¹⁴

Here, Oberoi is endorsing Cunningham's view that the Sikhs were firmly committed to the teaching of Guru Nanak and Guru Gobind Singh and were fired with optimism about their future. In contrast, in the rest of the book he is trying to convince the readers that Sikhs had no separate "Sikh identity"—there was no difference between Sikhs and Hindus and, anyone -- an idol worshiper or a huqqa smoker or one with cropped hair was a Sikh.

2. According to Oberoi:

In the case of the subcontinent, the either/or dichotomy is not to be taken for granted, for the religious life of the people, particularly in the pre-colonial period, was characterised by a continuum. There was much inter-penetration and overlapping of communal identities. It is not without reason that Indian languages do not possess a noun for religion as signifying single uniform and centralized community of believers.¹⁵

Here, he is proposing that the Indian subcontinent was free from religious demarcations in the pre-colonial period. In other words there was no religious animosity, and pre-colonial India was a peaceful and harmonious society. Historians like Romila Thapar have started rewriting Indian history to promote this view: "Imagined Religious Communities? Ancient History and the Modern Search for a Hindu Identity."¹⁶ However, there is not even a hint in the history of the subcontinent that lends support to Oberoi and Thapar's view.

He says, "It is not without reason that Indian languages do not possess a noun for religion as signifying a single uniform and centralised community of believers."¹⁷

Maybe he has not studied Indian languages! Indeed, there is a noun for religion in Sanskrit and related languages and it is called Dharma (Dharam). For the Hindus, Dharma is the Varna Ashrama Dharma/caste system. In the ever-changing scene of the shifting importance of deities, creeds, racial antipathies and other considerations, there was one factor, which was persistent and constant. It was the concept of Hindu Dharma. This concept was synonymous, or very closely interwoven with the social order of Brahmanism—Varna Ashrama Dharma/caste system. Like the banks of a river it determined the limits within which the current of Indian social life must flow and the direction in which it must move. So long as the current remained confined within the prescribed social limits, all varieties and sorts of dogmas, ideas, faiths, creeds, customs and practices were tolerated and allowed to be a part of Hindu Dharma. But any threat to the framework of the social order was frowned upon or combated against, depending upon the seriousness of the threat posed. When a Hindu ignored duties of his caste of his birth, he destroyed his Dharma. It was only through caste that one belonged to the Hindu community, without caste identity one was a pariah.¹⁸

This view of Varna Ashrama Dhrama is endorsed even by modern Hindu Avatars like Mahatma Gandhi and Swami Vivekananda:

I believe in Varna Ashrama (caste system), which is the law of life. The law of Varna (color or caste) is nothing but the law of conservation of energy. Why should my son not be a scavenger if I am one?

Mahatma Gandhi, Harijan, 3-6-1947.

He, Sudra may not be called a Brahman, though he (Sudra) may have all the qualities of a Brahman in this birth. And it is a good thing for him (Sudra) not to arrogate a Varna (caste) to which he is not born. It is a sign of true humility.

Mahatma Gandhi, Young India, 11-24-1927.

There is something in caste, so far as it means blood: such a thing as heredity there is, certainly. Now try to [understand]—why do you not mix blood with the Negroes, and the American Indians? Nature will not allow you. Nature does not allow you to mix your blood with them. There is unconscious working that saves the race. That was the Aryan's caste. ... The Hindus believe—that is a peculiar belief, I think; and I do not know, I have nothing to say to the contrary, I have not found anything to the contrary—they believe there was only one civilized race: the Aryan. Until he gives the blood, no other race can be civilized.

(From a speech given by Swami Vivekananda to a white audience on February 2, 1900, in Pasadena, California, USA).¹⁹

"Inter-penetration and overlapping of communal identities," was tolerated as long as it did not challenge the caste system and the supremacy of Brahmans. For example, one of the most outstanding features of Buddhism is its compassion and tolerance. Lord Buddha himself showed respect to Brahmans and Ashoka-the-great advocated respect for them in his edicts. Then, why were the Buddhists, of all the creeds of Indian origin, singled out for special punitive treatment, and purged out of the Indian body politic in a manner the human system eliminates a foreign element? This hostility could not be because Buddhists were atheists, as other atheistic creeds like the Sankhya were left untouched. The Buddhists who shared some common features with Hindus were singled out for destruction because they did not recognize the authority of Vedas and other Hindu scriptures, and they undermined the supremacy of the Brahmans by rejecting the caste system—unpardonable sin in the eyes of Brahmans. On the other hand, Buddhism and Jainism are far less divergent than the multitude of widely different paths of Hindu Dharma. From a purely theological point of view, Jainism was no less heretical than Buddhism, but the Janis suffered far less persecution than the Buddhists. It was so because, if the necessity arose, Jainism was willing to admit a god of popular Hinduism to their galaxy of gods. Besides, it was also not opposed to the theory of caste. It was thus very much less hostile and more accommodating to Brahmans.²⁰

I agree with Oberoi that Vedas, Bhagavad-Gita, Ramayana and other Hindu texts do not use the word Hindu,²¹ but they have other words and expressions to classify/identify people: Varna Ashrama Dharma, Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaisya, Sudra, *Antyaja* (untouchable) and *malesha* (unclean, polluted) — anyone outside the pale of Hindu society, foriegners.²² Permanent human inequality by birth is the *summum bonum* of Brahmanical ideology. The Brahmans proclaimed that Prajapati (God) created the caste system and the Sudra as a slave of the other castes. Moreover, Prajapati was the God of Aryans only, from whom the Sudras were excluded. It was also claimed that gods do not associate with every man, but only with an Arya, a Brahman, or a Kashtriya, or a Vaisya, who can make religious sacrifices to gods. Nor one should talk with everyone, as God does not talk to everybody but only to an Aryan. The order and rank of castes is eternal as the course of stars and the difference between the animal species and human race. Thus the Sudra was excluded from the domain of religion and barred from any religious activity.²³

Manu claimed that Brahma (God) enacted the code of the caste system and taught it to him. He taught it to Bhrigu and the latter would repeat it to the sages.²⁴ It was Manu who codified Varna Ashrama Dharma/caste system dividing the Indian people into four castes and myriad of sub-castes and, the *Antyaja* (unouchable/outcaste). It is based on the avowed principle that "men are for ever unequal." Caste system is the most rigid social mechanism devised by human ingenuity to entrench human inequality and hierarchy. It raised "caste status" above "economic status" and "political status." It compartmentalized the economy according to its own social patterns, and prevented the economic forces from attaining full potential. This system was designed to serve the interests of a small minority of people, the Brahmins, at the expense of the vast majority belonging to other castes, the bulk of whom belonged to the Sudra caste. Lower still were the *Antyajjas* (untouchables/outcastes) outside the pale of Hindu Dharma, whose mere shadow could pollute the upper castes. The entire conquered/enslaved population of *Advasis* (aboriginal tribes) called Dravidians was forced into Sudra and untouchable/outcaste ranks. Never in the history of mankind was such an "evil and cruel system" conceived by intelligent but depraved men for the exploitation of man by man. It took away the human dignity of vast majority of the Indians and subjected them to untold injustices and atrocities. The untouchables/outcastes were treated worse than animals for thousands of years and this is continuing in villages across India even today. The caste system also made political power subservient to political patronage. In fact, the preservation of the caste or sub-castes became the over-riding motive/consideration of the Brahmanical order.

The Brahman invoked divine sanctions to perpetuate this system for eternity. Sacred Hindu scriptures proclaim that the caste division has divine sanction. Manu declared that the soul of one who neglected his caste-duties might pass into demon. The Bhagavad-Gita preaches that according to the classification of actions and qualities of people, God creates the four castes. According to a passage from Mahabharata: As cisterns for cattle, as streamlets in a field, the Smriti (code of caste system) is the eternal law of duty, and is never found to fail. The Dharma-Sutras enjoined that a King have to rely on the Vedas and Dharma Sastras for carrying out his duties.²⁵ To combat Buddhism, strict adherence to Dharma (caste system) and obedience to Brahmins is constantly insisted upon in Mahabharata. According to Bhagavad-Gita if anybody wants to quit the works and duties of his caste and adopts those of another caste, even if it would bring a

certain honor to him, it is a sin, because it is a transgression of the rule.²⁶ Next surfaced the doctrine of Karma to desensitize people's sense of justice and compassion against atrocities committed on the masses to enforce the caste system. According to this "divine law", one reaps the fruit in this life for the deeds performed in the previous life. So, if a person is subjected to injustice and cruelty in this life, it is due to one's own actions in previous life, not due to the perpetrators of cruelty and injustice. By observing the caste rules strictly and serving the superior castes faithfully one can earn the reward for the next life. The Karma theory is a cruel and an unconscionable joke on the Sudra and untouchable, as only faithful commitment to the duties of his castes would earn him reward in next life!

Under the caste system some sections of the Indian population were regarded as almost bestial rather than human. The whole conquered Sudra race (Dravidians) was equated with burial ground. *Aitareya Brahmana* describes Sudra as "Yatha-Kama-Vadhya" (fit to be beaten with impunity) and "Dvijatisusrusha" (menial service was his prescribed lot). One text puts the murder of a Sudra on the same level as the killing of a crow, an owl or a dog. A Sudra could be killed at will. The excessive contempt, humiliation and degradation of the Sudra reached its climax in the permanent institutions of untouchability and unapproachableness.²⁷

The Sudra was prohibited from amassing wealth, as it would subject his superiors to him. Sudra was also barred from the realm of religion and prohibited from making religious sacrifices open to other castes.²⁸ The exploitation of the masses reduced them to the level of dumb driven cattle.

Al-Biruni, the celebrated mathematician and astronomer, is regarded as one of the foremost Indologist. He came to India in the wake of the invading forces of Mahmud of Ghazni in the 11th century C.E., and he spent many years studying the Indian people, their culture and literature. He writes: Hindus totally differ from Muslims in religion, as Muslims believe in nothing in which Hindus believe, and vice versa.

On the whole, there is very little disputing about theological topics among themselves, at the utmost they fight with words, but they will never stake their soul or body or their property on religious controversy. On the contrary, all their fanaticism is directed against those who do not belong to them—against all foreigners. They call them *mleccha*, i.e. impure, and forbid having any connection with them, be it intermarriage or any

other kind of relationship, or by sitting, eating, and drinking with them, because thereby they think they would be polluted. They consider as impure anything which touches the fire and water of a foreigner, and no household exist without these two elements. Besides, they never desire that anything, which once has been polluted, should be purified and thus recovered under ordinary circumstances. They are not allowed to have social interaction with anybody who does not belong to them, even if he wished it, or was inclined to their religion. This too, renders any connection with them quite impossible and constitutes the widest gulf between Hindus and Muslims. Moreover, Hindus believe that people are unequal in every respect, whereas Muslims consider all men as equal, except in piety. This is the greatest obstacle, which prevents any approach or understanding between Hindus and Muslims.²⁹

Daulat Rai concurs with Al-Biruni when he writes that whatever the Hindus do, Muslims do the opposite, even simple things like putting on a shirt. Hindus put on the shirt from the right side whereas Muslims from the left. Hindus hate blue color but Muslims cherish it and consider it as sacred. Hindus regarded saffron color sacred while Muslims hate it.³⁰

Besides, there was no love lost between Muslims and Hindus. Muslim invaders killed thousands of Hindus, looted their properties and carried away men and women as slaves in the thousands and some bigoted Muslim rulers deprived Hindus even the comforts of life. They were forbidden to wear good clothes, eat good food, ride horses, wear turbans or keep good homes or valuables—even beautiful children or wives. They were allowed to have minimum possessions for mere survival. Often they were given two alternatives: conversion to Islam or pay Jazia (tax on non-Muslims).³¹

Hindus regarded Muslims as *maleshas* (unclean). They were considered so much outside the pale of Hindu society that Hindus once converted to Islam could on no account be taken back in the parent fold even though converted forcibly.³²

3. Oberoi claims that for much of the nineteenth century Sikhs were deeply involved in the worship of miracle saints and undertook regular pilgrimage to their shrines:

Among these saints Sakhi Sarvar, also known, as Lakhdatta ... was widely worshiped by Sikhs. ... In the 1911 census 79085 Sikhs said that they were followers of Sakhi Sarvar. It is very likely that, in the nineteenth century, Sikh followers of Sakhi Sarvar were far greater than is apparent from 1911 figures. The exact numbers were not

reflected in the census reports for three reasons. First, those who reported their religion as Sikhism might simultaneously have worshipped Sarvar and taken part in rites, rituals, and festivals associated with him: religious boundaries were highly flexible and the categories 'Sikh', 'Muslim', and 'Hindu' did not have the implications they do today. Second, the census officers were not epistemologically equipped to handle beliefs and practices that did not mesh with the three 'great traditions' of Punjab. Third by the time of 1911 census the Singh Sabha movement had been actively campaigning to wean Sikhs away from the worship of pirs like Sakhi Sarvar. This exercise was highly successful, and by the turn of the century entire Sikh villages which had worshipped Sarvar and taken part in the ritual cycle associated with that pir stopped doing so. Consequently, the figures from 1911 census are poor indicators of Sarvar's following among the Sikhs.³³

As I have stated in the beginning of this article, the vast majority of today's Sikhs are descendants of Sultani-Hindus. Most of the Sikhs of the nineteenth and early part of the twentieth century were not more than three or four generations apart from their forefathers. Thus, it is understandable that some of them continued to worship Sarvar, but to assert that "Sarvar was widely worshiped by Sikhs," based on assumptions and speculations enumerated above by Oberoi defies logic and commonsense. It is futile to argue about assumptions and speculation, rather, let us examine the census figures. The figure 79,085 is indeed a substantial number, but it is only 2.74 percent of the total Sikh population of 2,883,729 in 1911.³⁴ How could any reasonable person construe from this figure that "Sarvar was widely worshiped by Sikhs"? Moreover, there was a large influx of new entrants into the Sikh faith, as shown by the doubling of Sikh population from 1881 to 1931: from less than two million in 1881 to four million in 1931, raising the percentage in the total population of the province from about 8 to over 13.³⁵ So it is not surprising that the new converts were holding onto their earlier beliefs contrary to the categorical rejection of gods, goddesses, saints and *pirs* (Muslim holy men) in Aad Guru Granth Sahib and Rehatnamas. Further, generally the Sikhs did not approve of such practice as pointed out by Ratan Singh Bhangu in his *Prachin Panth Parkash* (1841).³⁶ He says that Sikhs did not believe in ghosts, spirits and graves, nor did they have any faith in Guga and Sarvar. Rather, there were frequent clashes between Sikhs and the Sarvarias in villages and towns. In this context, Rose clearly endorses Bhangu's view: "Comparatively few Sikhs are followers of Sarvar and there is in fact a sort of opposition in the central districts between Sikhs and Sultanis. You hear men say that one party in a village, worship the Guru, the other worship Sarvar; that is that one party are Sikhs and other ordinary Hindus who follow Sarvar."³⁷ Oberoi has quoted Rose four times to support his arguments but

has ignored or concealed Rose's observation about the relationship between Sikhs and the followers of Sarvar. But the question is why did he do so? Moreover, he has quoted Macaullife's observation about the worship of Sakhi Sarvar among Hindus and Sikhs to buttress his argument that Sarvar worship was prevalent among the nineteenth century Sikhs³⁸ while concealing Macaullife's statement that Gurus Arjan,³⁹ Hargobind⁴⁰ and Tegh Bahadur⁴¹ advised Sikhs not to worship Sarvar. Besides, to backup his contention "it is very likely that, in the nineteenth century, Sikh followers of Sakhi Sarvar were far greater than is apparent from 1911 figures" he argues:

By the time of 1911 census the Singh Sabha movement had been actively campaigning for over three decades to wean Sikhs away from the worship of pirs like Sakhi Sarvar. This exercise was highly successful, and by the turn of the century entire Sikh villages which had worshipped Sarvar and taken part in the ritual cycle associated with that pir stopped doing so. Consequently, the figures from 1911 census are poor indicators of Sarvar's following among Sikhs.⁴²

But, later in the chapter "Resistance and Counter-resistance: The Triumph of Praxis" he argues vigorously that the Singh Sabha was an elite organization confined to urban setting and was vehemently opposed by the so-called Sanatan Sikhs and the Sikh peasantry and artisans, who nicknamed it *Singh Safa* (organization of destruction).⁴³ If there was that much opposition to Singh Sabha then how was it so successful to wean away Sikh peasantry and artisans from the worship of pirs like Sakhi Sarvar?

4. Oberoi has not used AGGS to support his thesis except once when he argues that Gurus did not start a separate religion. Here he not only distorts Guru Arjan's hymn affirming that Sikhs are distinct from Hindus and Muslims, but also makes misleading statements by putting words in Professor Sahib Singh's mouth:

Those who argue for the distinct Sikh world-view from initial Guru period often quote the following verse:

I neither keep the Hindu fasts nor the Muslim Ramadan.
I serve him alone who in the end will save me.
My Master is both the Muslim Allah and the Hindu Gusain,
And thus have I finished the dispute between the Hindus and the Muslim.
I do not go on a pilgrimage to Mecca
Nor bathe at the Hindu places;
I serve the one Master, and none beside Him.
Neither performing the Hindu worship nor offering Muslim prayer,
To the formless One I bow in my heart.
I am neither Hindu nor Muslim.⁴⁴

Taking the last line as the key to this hymn, many have argued that Guru Arjan is proclaiming here that Sikhs are neither Hindus nor Muslims, and therefore form a distinct religious community. There are several textual problems with this reasoning. As pointed out by Sahib Singh, the most eminent Sikh exegete of this century, Guru Arjan wrote this hymn in a definite context; he was responding to an older verse by Kabir, included in the Adi Granth:

I have no dispute,
For I have renounced the path of both the Pandit and the Mullah.
I weave and weave to make my own way,
And sing of the Supreme Being to empty the self.
All the codes inscribed by the Pandit and the Mullah,
Those I absolutely renounce and will not imbibe.
Those pure of heart shall find the Supreme Being within,
Kabir says in knowing the self, one realizes the Supreme Being.⁴⁵

Guru Arjan is only reinforcing Kabir's thoughts. In line with a dominant theme in the medieval sant poetics, both Kabir and Arjan speak of rejecting the received Hindu and Muslim orthodoxies, of not taking part in their formal modes of worship and pilgrimage, of finally asserting that the mystery of the Supreme Being is to be resolved in one's heart. It is over simplistic to suggest that they are discounting one set of categories to embrace a new set of labels.⁴⁶

From both Guru Arjan and Kabir's hymns, it is crystal clear to any reasonable person who can read English that both Guru Arjan and Kabir rejected Hindu as well as Muslim beliefs and their religious practices. In each verse Guru Arjan proclaims that he is distinct from both Hindus and Muslims. And in the last line he tells in no uncertain terms that he is neither a Hindu nor Muslim. In spite of this Oberoi asserts: "It is over simplistic to suggest that they are discounting one set of categories to embrace a new set of labels." Then what label does Oberoi want to apply to Kabir or Guru Arjan, as both of them rejected earlier categories of Hindu and Muslim beliefs?

Unlike Kabir, Guru Nanak set his community of followers apart from the caste-society to launch a movement against the atrocious caste ideology and the bigotry of Muslim rulers. The impact of Guru Nanak vis-à-vis Kabir on the Indian people is quite obvious to students of Indian history. And AGGS confirms that Guru Nanak's followers were called Sikhs right from the beginning:

ਹੋਰਿਓ ਗੰਗ ਵਹਾਈਐ ਦੁਨਿਆਈ ਆਖੈ ਕਿ ਕਿਓਨੁ॥
ਨਾਨਕ ਈਸਰਿ ਜਗ ਨਾਥਿ ਉਚਰਦੀ ਵੈਣ ਵਿਰਿਕਿਓਨੁ॥

The people say that Nanak is the image of the Almighty, Who is the Controller (*nath*) of the world. He has promulgated

a philosophy of the highest order that has changed the course of Ganges*.

* It means that Guru Nanak rejected earlier religious traditions, and challenged social, political and economic system of his time.

AGGS, Balvand and Satta, p. 967.

ਸਿਖ ਸਭਾ ਦੀਖਿਆ ਕਾ ਭਾਉ ॥

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਸੁਣਣਾ ਸਾਚਾ ਨਾਉ ॥

Sangat (Sikh congregation) is the result of love for Guru's teaching. There a *gurmukh* (God-centered being) listens to the attributes of the True One.

AGGS, M 1, p. 350.

ਸਿਖ ਸੰਗਤਿ ਕਰਮਿ ਮਿਲਾਇ ॥

One finds Sangat (Sikh congregation) through God's kindness (righteous conduct).

AGGS, M 1, p. 412.

Balvand and Satta attest in their composition that the Sikh community accepted Ram Das as Guru, not his opponent Baba Mohan.

ਸਿਖੀ ਅਤੈ ਸੰਗਤੀ ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਰਿ ਨਮਸਕਾਰਿਆ ॥

The Sangat (congregation) and the wider Sikh community greeted him as an image of the Infinite One.

AGGS, Balvand and Satta, p. 968.

ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸਤਿ ਸਤਿ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਣਹੁ ਗੁਰਸਿਖਹੁ ॥

ਹਰਿ ਕਰਤਾ ਆਪਿ ਮੁਹਹੁ ਕਢਾਏ ॥

Dear Sikhs, consider the *bani* of the true Guru as Truth, as it is the Creator, Who makes the Guru utter it.

AGGS, M 4, p. 763.

ਜੇ ਦੀਸੈ ਗੁਰ ਸਿਖੜਾ ਤਿਸੁ ਨਿਵਿ ਨਿਵਿ ਲਾਗਉ ਪਾਇ ਜੀਉ ॥

When I meet a Guru's Sikh, I touch his/her feet with great humility.

AGGS, M 5, p. 763.

From the above verses of Aad Guru Granth Sahib it is quite evident that Sikh Gurus established a distinct community from the very beginning of the Sikh movement. Further Oberoi's statement: "There are several textual problems with this reasoning" is misleading and erroneous, amounting to

intellectual dishonesty! He does not point out even a single textual problem! Sahib Singh did not say anywhere that there is textual problem with Guru Arjan's passage. Actually, it was McLeod who suggested textual problems related with this passage:

There is hymn by Kabir which appears in the midst of a Guru Arjan cluster, and which includes an unusually explicit rejection of both Hindu and Muslim authority. ... The exception is worth noting because several writers, following Macauliffe, have accepted the hymn as the work of Guru Arjan. This is probably incorrect, for an analogue appears in the Kabir-granthawli tradition, and even in the Adi Granth version it bears the name Kabir.⁴⁷

Sahib Singh has explained this anomaly of Kabir's name instead of "Nanak" in Guru Arjan's sabad (stanza) by pointing out that Guru Arjan wrote this passage to explain Kabir's views more clearly and assertively: *Guru Arjan Sahib aapne shabad vich kbir ji de dite khial di viakhia kar rahe han* (ਗੁਰੂ ਅਰਜਨ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਆਪਣੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵਿਚ ਕਬੀਰ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਦਿੱਤੇ ਖਿਆਲ ਦੀ ਵਿਆਖਿਆ ਕਰ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ). The last couplet of Guru Arjan's hymn, which Oberoi has concealed, is addressed to Kabir. Guru Arjan asks Kabir to say:

ਕਹੁ ਕਬੀਰ ਇਹੁ ਕੀਆ ਵਖਾਨਾ ॥
ਗੁਰ ਪੀਰ ਮਿਲਿ ਖੁਦਿ ਖਸਮੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥

Hey Kabir make a declaration: "After testing the paths of Hindu gurus and Muslim pirs, I have found my Master myself."

AGGS, M 5, p. 1136.

There are other hymns of Guru Arjan, wherein he comments in a similar manner on the thoughts of Kabir and Farid.

Oberoi's interpretation of the fourth verse of Guru Arjan's hymn as "And thus have I finished the dispute between the Hindus and the Muslim" is also not correct. It means, "I have no religious connection both with Hindus and Muslims (I have rejected both Hindu and Muslim paths).

Oberoi's grotesque distortion of this hymn is misleading. His erroneous statements about "textual problems" is a mirror image of his opinion of AGGS:

"Religious texts like Adi Granth are so amorphous that those in favor of the status quo, reformists and insurrectionist, could all with ease quote chapter and verse in favor of their cause."⁴⁸

It seems that Oberoi either did not read or has concealed, "his mentor," McLeod's opinion about the AGGS:

The fact that Guru Nanak's thought is not set out systematically does not mean that it is necessarily inconsistent. On the contrary, one of the great merits of his thought is its very consistency. The accusations of inconsistency have been leveled against him, but we believe that the system outlined in the present chapter will constitute a rebuttal of the charge.⁴⁹

A number of references to the creative activity of God have already been quoted and there are many more available. The frequency with which they occur is significant in that it brings out clear and explicit concept of the personality of God. Again the comparison with Kabir is interesting. An affirmation of the personality of God does emerge from Kabir's works, but it emerges rather by hint and implication than by explicit statement. References to God as Creator are comparatively scarce and lack the clarity of Guru Nanak's declarations. The same also applies to other attributes, which imply a notion of personality. In Kabir's works we must often grope; in Nanak's we find clarity.⁵⁰

It is unacademic, unprofessional, unethical and intellectually dishonest to make baseless statements about Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS) without properly studying it.⁵¹

Finally, I have asked Oberoi repeatedly to clarify the following statements he has made in his book, but to date there has been no reply:

- a. What do you mean when you say that Indian languages do not have a "noun" for religion?
- b. What does "Indic culture" mean?
- c. Why did the Achaemenid Persians give the name "Hindu" to all those people who lived on or beyond the river Sindhu, or Indus? If the Indian people acquired the name Hindu that way then why didn't the name Sindhu change to Hindu or Sindh change to Hind or Sindhi change to Hindi? Did the natives have any name for their country or religion or ethnic identity?
- d. Why isn't the word "Hindu" found in any Hindu Scripture?

Analysis of the four examples described above demonstrates unambiguously that Oberoi has used distortion, misinformation and deception/manipulation of historical information to build his thesis: *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*. Therefore, it is no wonder it is the same rudder that navigates Jakobsh's thoughts in manufacturing *Relocating Gender In Sikh History: Transformation, Meaning and Identity*.

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8. *The Morcha: My personal testimony*. The Guru-ka-Bagh morcha, to call it by the name by which it was generally known at the time, was an event which would live not only in Sikh history, but also in the history of Mahatma Gandhi's non-violent, non-co-operation movement. Having been in the thick of both the movements myself and having watched their progress from day to day from inside, I can say in all sincerity that I do not know of another instance of a large community observing absolute non-violence, in word and

deed, day after day in the face of the severest provocation and suffering abuse, ill-treatment and tortures, not only without uttering a word of complaint, but literally with words "Wahi Guru, Wahi Guru Ji" on the lips of one and all members of Akali Jathas. I wish to record here that having read some of the harrowing accounts of torture which old Sikh martyrs are said to have suffered uncomplainingly and even cheerfully, I was in my hearts of hearts reluctant to believe that such things could have really happened, and that, probably, the historians of those days under the impulse of religious enthusiasm had been carried away to indulge in the language of exaggeration, but after I had myself accompanied from day to day Jathas of a hundred Akalis from their start at Akal Takhat to their place of destination till they were stopped, and having witnessed with my own eyes the inhuman beatings which they received at the hands of a batch of policemen, generally under the orders of a European officer, till they had either become unconscious or were at least unable to stand on their legs and every one of them had to be carried to a special hospital established at Amritsar, having seen all these things not for a day but for almost the whole period during which the Guru-ka-Bagh struggle lasted, I cannot but add my own personal testimony to the absolute truth of harrowing incidents I have narrated in the following pages in this chapter. I consider it a privilege, though a painful kind, to have lived through these tragic times and witnessed the strange things which not only the elect few but the masses of Sikh community suffered and bore with patience, courage and fortitude I frankly find myself unable to describe, p. 108-109.

Meanwhile the usual beating of small batches of Akalis continued at Guru-ka-Bagh. Jathas of four or five men at a time attempting to go forward to cut wood from nearby lands for Guru-ka-Langar, were stopped and beaten with lathis to semi-consciousness. One day of which I am speaking an old Akali is said to have implored Mr. Beaty that he might be given a specially severe thrashing, because "that alone would purge his very sinful soul". I know there are some sophisticated people who consider such things in the light of a joke. At one time I myself used to look upon such statements as exaggeration, but having seen such strange things to happen in connection with Guru-ka-Bagh morcha, I have come to realize better that I did before the wonderful power of the spirit in life of a man of faith, p. 130-131.

Many Sikh mothers, wives and sisters garlanded their sons, husbands and brothers and gave them a loving send-off to Jaito. A mother whose eldest son had fallen in the first Shahidi Jatha, garlanded her second son for the second Shahidi Jatha and said to him, "Dear son, fight the battle of your Panth and bless your mother with the heroic sacrifices, p. 229."

Considering the limited numerical strength of the Sikh Community, I am not a little surprised that, under the stress of the times, and the new forces that arose so many heroes, big and small, should have been thrown up, nobody can say how and from where. Almost everybody, who was sworn before the Akal Takhat for the service of the Guru under the direction of his Jathedar, became a hero. He behaved in a manner in which he himself could not have expected to behave before he had heard the call and obeyed it. He went through sufferings and made sacrifices that could only have been demanded of seasoned soldiers. In their case it was not blind obedience like that of the Balaclava horsemen. Not desperate submission to an order because it must be obeyed, but the indomitable, unconquerable faith that they were doing the right thing in the service of their God and community. The stories of Crusaders pale into insignificant before the Guru-ka-Bagh or Jaito episode

for instance, because, if for no other reason, the Akalis practised non-violence such as Christ himself preached in the Sermon of the mount, p. v-vi.

To put it briefly, to be an Akali was, in the word of Shelley,

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite;
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;
To defy power which seems omnipotent;
To love and bear; to hope till Hope creates;
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;
Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent, p. vi.

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APPENDIX--C

The Sant Tradition

Jakobsh repeats verbatim what McLeod has written about Guru Nanak to make him a part of the so-called "Sant tradition," an expression concocted by him:

Guru Nanak has been characterized as fitting squarely within the Sant *parampara* (tradition) and also in a wider sense, the Bhakti milieu of North India. The tradition rejected the worship of incarnation and Hindu forms of professional asceticism, spurned the authority of Vedas and other scriptures, and ignored the ritual barriers between low and high castes. Further, the sants stressed the use of vernacular language in their rejection of orthodoxy. Central to their doctrines, and binding them, were their ethical ideals and the notion of interiority—rituals, pilgrimages, and idols were worthless in the quest for liberation; only loving adoration of the Ultimate mattered. These strong similarities between the various groups who lived by these ideals have been characterized by W. H. McLeod (1989:25) as Sant synthesis, a combination of Vaishnava tradition and the Nath tradition, with possible elements of Sufism as well. What the Sants also had in common was a stress on the necessity of devotion and practice, the

repetition of the divine name, the devotion to the divine guru (satguru), and the need for the company of sants (satsang).¹

Only a person who is ignorant of Guru Nanak's teachings or someone with "ulterior motives" will place Guru Nanak squarely within the "Sant tradition"—a combination of Vaishnava tradition and the Nath tradition, with possible elements of Sufism as well. There is no historical evidence that there was any tradition called "Sant tradition" in North India during the time of Guru Nanak. However, it is found in the writings of Europeans of later eras and popularized by people like W.H. McLeod. Let us examine these traditions one by one.

First, all the sages of diverse background, whose thoughts are incorporated in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib (AGGS), preceded the Sikh Gurus. In the AGGS, the words, sant and bhagat occur frequently and interchangeably. Their meaning is the same, and in English, sant has been translated as a saint, though it does not convey the proper meaning. In the Adi Granth, compiled in 1604 by Guru Arjan, the honorific "bhagat" is used for Namdev, Kabir, Ravidas and others, and their *banis* (hymns) are called "*bhagat bani*." Had they been known, as "sants" at that time, Guru Arjan would have used the honorific "sant" for them. Thus, the honorific sant came to be associated with their names after 1604.

Second, Nirvikar Singh (in 2001) in his thought-provoking and analytical article: "Guru Nanak and the 'Sants': A Reappraisal" questioned the existence of "Sant tradition" in Guru Nanak's time.² In response to this article, McLeod acknowledged the fact that the "Sant tradition" label applied to North Indian bhakats (bhagats) such as Kabir and Ravidas **does not emerge until the nineteenth century.**³

Third, since I studied *Guru Nanak and the Sikh Religion* in 2002, it has been a recurring thought in my mind that Reverend McLeod got the idea of "Sant tradition" from the Radhasoami *dera* (camp, center) at Beas. Beas is not very far from Batala where he held a teaching job at Baring College, and "Sant tradition" is a literal translation of "Sant Mat", the name Radhasoamis of Beas use for their teachings. However, I was unable to find any reference in his writings about this possible connection. Nonetheless, McLeod's statement "the 'Sant tradition' label applied to North Indian bhakats (bhagats) such as Kabir and Ravidas does not emerge until the nineteenth century" points in the direction of the Radhasoami sect founded by Shiv Dayal Singh (1818-1878) in the 1850s in Agra. Further, in his autobiography

published in 2004, McLeod mentions that in 2001 he attended a conference of Namdharis,⁴ who do not believe that Guru Gobind Singh consecrated Aad Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru of the Sikhs, and they have their own line of physically living Gurus after Guru Gobind Singh. And McLeod keeps repeating that Guru Gobind Singh did not anoint AGGS as the Guru of Sikhs. My quest for the evidence where did McLeod get the idea of "Sant tradition" was rewarded soon. My friend Colonel G.B. Singh surprised me with a book: *"The Japji: The Message of Guru Nanak"* authored by Kirpal Singh, a disciple of Baba Sawan Singh. I couldn't believe my eyes when I saw the endorsement of this book on the cover by Mark Juergensmeyer, currently Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara:

This classic sixteenth century prayer hymn of Guru Nanak, the Sant who is regarded by Sikhs as the founder of their faith, has been rendered into powerful English and adjoined with extensive commentary by a modern master in the Sant tradition, Kirpal Singh. He has unpacked the dense philosophical language of the original, and provided us with his own distinctive interpretation, one in which the insights of Guru Nanak are enhanced by those of Kirpal Singh's more recent predecessors—Sawan Singh, Jaimal Singh and Swami Shiv Dayal Singh. For that reason the reissue of this readable little book will be best appreciated by those who wish to understand not only the medieval Sant tradition but its modern revival as well.⁵

It seems Juergensmeyer, who is not known for his mastery on Guru Nanak's teachings, had no compunction in advertising this book, which is full of gross distortions, amounting to repudiation of Nanakian philosophy (Gurmat). Juergensmeyer has also authored *Radhasoami Reality: The Logic Of A Modern Faith*.⁶ McLeod is one of the persons acknowledged who read the manuscript. McLeod and Juergensmeyer are close friends as reported in McLeod's autobiography.⁷ Perhaps, they first met each other at a Radhasoami dera where they both possibly coined the term "Sant tradition." It is also worth noting that Juergensmeyer had some input into Harjot Oberoi's *The Construction of Religious Boundaries: Culture, Identity and Diversity in the Sikh Tradition*, which received worldwide criticism from Sikhs for blatant disregard for truth and flagrant misrepresentation of Sikh theology and history. When Oberoi finished his doctoral dissertation he thought his questions stood answered, until Mark Juergensmeyer, Jerry Barrier and Robin Jeffery read the dissertation:

They had their own set of questions, and over the past four years these also became my questions. Answering them started yet another journey towards revising and reformulating my graduate exercise, and as a result this book does not resemble the dissertation, particularly in

its overall argument and specific discussion. Although I am still far from finding all the answers to the questions so gently posed by the three readers of the dissertation, particularly in its overall argument and specific discussions.⁸

It becomes more and more obvious where the missionary from New Zealand picked his other odious ideas. It is very likely that it was at the Radhasoami center at Beas where he got the idea that Guru Gobind Singh did not invest Guruship in Aad Guru Granth Sahib⁹ and, the numerically preponderant Jat Sikhs bewail the fact that there was never a single Jat Guru.¹⁰

Now who is this Kirpal Singh and what are his credentials that qualify him as a great exponent of Nanakian philosophy, as advertised by Juergensmeyer? Kirpal Singh (1894-1974) says that for years he investigated the claims of many yogis and saints before his initiation by Baba Sawan Singh of Beas where he studied diligently for 24 years under him. Further he stresses that Sawan Singh had chosen him as his spiritual successor.¹¹ However, he is reluctant to divulge why he couldn't succeed Sawan Singh at Beas, but it is not difficult to figure out why? He was muscled out of Beas by Jats who wanted Jagat Singh Klare, a Jat as their guru. Jagat Singh, who used to look like a typical Punjabi "lala"¹² started supporting a lavish white beard and Kesh (scalp hair) covered with a neat impressive "Sikh style" white turban becoming "Sardar Bahadar Jagat Singh Ji Maharaj"¹³ — characteristic of a typical "Jat thug." One may ask what was wrong with his "lala" appearance? Couldn't he fly to "sach khand" with his "lala" appearance? And who gave this "Hindu Jat" the title of "Sardar Bahadur"? The British used to bestow "Rai Bahadur" and "Sardar Bahadur" titles to Hindu and Sikh toadies, respectively! Who were Sawan Singh and Jagat Singh trying to deceive and mislead? Besides, it is a mystery why Jagat Singh left for "sach khand" in such a hurry in 1951 only three years after Sawan's flight to "sach khand." The Radhasoami literature says that "Masters" can live as long as they like:

"Death does not come to them as it does to other human beings. When a Master wishes to leave His body, He simply steps out of it as one casts off an old garment. Daily they pass through the experience of death in their meditation, when they take their soul to Higher Regions. ... They could remain in their bodies for centuries or for any number of years if they so wished, but they do not get any pleasure in doing so."¹⁴

Then why was Jagat Singh in such a hurry? Could it be that Sawan's favorite grandson, "Charana" was in a hurry to become "Maharaj Charan Singh Ji"?

There are other mysteries about Jagat Singh. According to Radhasoami literature, *The Science of the Soul*:

He passed away quietly on the morning of 23rd October 1951. The day before, He had dictated His will and given instructions about his funeral. He wanted no show, no waiting for people to attend the cremation. The body was to be cremated within a few hours and the remains were to be consigned to the river on the same day. There is a custom in this country to bathe the dead body, anoint it with perfume etc. and cover it with a clean, new sheet of cloth. He completed this process very simply the night before His death by asking the doctor to give Him an enema, getting His body rubbed with a wet towel and changing into a clean sheet.¹⁵

These statements raise many questions. Why was it necessary for Jagat Singh to have an enema on the night before his flight to "sach khand"? Radhasoami literature is filled with references to Yoga and the Chakras in which the yogi's "Brahmand" is reflected.¹⁶ Yogis were by and large homosexuals who lived in their own camps on hills and mountains away from the general public. They practiced the art of sophisticated trickery and magic for their livelihood. They were essentially parasites without any spiritual attribute or any positive contribution to society. They indulged in all sorts of sexual activities to gratify themselves and they were particularly preoccupied with the "Guda Chakra, Muladhar (anus plexus)." They were also obsessed with the cleanliness of their internal organs, particularly the rectum. They developed a technique, Wasti Karam (enema) for flushing the rectum with water through a hollow bamboo stick, one finger broad and four fingers long passed up through the anus.¹⁷ All the Radhasoami Masters indulged in this practice more or less routinely.

It was Jaimal Singh (1838-1903), a Jat of Gurdaspur District, who established the Radhasoami *dera* at Beas after his retirement as a Havildar from the British army in 1889.¹⁸ It was at the instance of Swami Shiv Dayal Singh that he enlisted as a sepoy in the British army at Agra in 1856.¹⁹ It would be interesting to find out what role Jaimal Singh and his Swami played during the mutiny of 1857! According to Kirpal Singh, Jaimal Singh's regiment was disbanded after the great rebellion of 1857. **It seems that Jaimal Singh must have earned laurels from the British, as he wasted no time in re-enlisting in the 24th Sikh Regiment at Peshawar in 1858.**²⁰ Kirpal Singh describes Jaimal Singh as pursuer of rigid *brahamcharya* for he remained celibate

all his years.²¹ But this does not seem to be correct, as it is quite evident that he made up for the lost time by having good time with Bibi Rukko, "the spiritually advanced disciple" of Baba Chanda Singh, who was also initiated by the Swami Shiv Dyal Singh. When Chanda Singh was ready to fly to "sach khand," Bibi Rukko asked, "What was to become of her?" "Fear not my child" replied the sage, "another greater than myself shall take care of you." "Where shall I find him, Sir," asked Bibi Rukko. "Find him? No, you shall have no need, for he himself will seek you out."²² After Jaimal's ascent to "sach khand," Bibi Rukko a "spiritually advanced soul" descended to the earth, she fought with Sawan and, with a wooden club beat the hell out of others who were staying at the dera in Beas.²³ It would be really interesting to find out what Sawan did to poor Bibi Rukko! For more important is to find out how and why that scoundrel Chanda Singh destroyed the life of a poor helpless woman?

Jaimal used to amuse himself by calling himself "Jat-guru."²⁴ The Punjabi proverb, "ਜੱਟ ਮਚਲਾ ਖੁਦਾ ਨੂੰ ਲੈ ਗਏ ਚੋਰ (*Jat machla khuda nu lai gae choar*): a Jat can even pretend that thieves stole God" depicts Jaimal's character so accurately! Kirpal Singh also claims that Bhai Bala of "Bala Janam-Sakhi" had prophesied that he would reappear in some future age at some Jat home and that Jaimal Singh was the reincarnation of Bhai Bala, who incidentally was also born in Gurdaspur district. He further claims that Jaimal Singh's followers "did not fail to note the resemblance between the two."²⁵

The Radhasoami dera at Beas headed by Jats is like another heretical Jat cult, the Hindalis or Niranjani founded by Bidhi Chand, the son of Baba Hindal of Jandiala. He was a contemporary of Guru Hargobind (1595-1644). Baba Hindal was a devout follower of Guru Amar Das, who on account of his dedicated service in the Guru's Langar was appointed to a position of authority in the Langar (community kitchen).²⁶ The Bala Janam-Sakhi was created by this cult²⁷ to undermine Nanakian philosophy.^{28, 29} They were bitter enemies of the Sikhs and they supported Ahmad Shah Abdali against the Sikhs.^{26,30} It is no wonder why Bala Janam-Sakhi is the favorite "spiritual literature" of Radhasoamis. Kirpal Singh says, "Guru Nanak had Bhai Bala and Bhai Mardana, one a Hindu and the other a Mohammedan on his right and left through his travels in Asia."³¹ But there is no evidence that Bhai Bala was a close associate of Guru Nanak. In Bhai Gurdas' list of prominent Sikhs, the name of Bhai Mardana is near the top but there is no mention of Bala.³²

Moreover, Guru Nanak rejected all the essentials of Hinduism including reincarnation, celibacy and ascetic life and denounced yogis and their methodology to attain salvation. But Kirpal Singh interprets Guru Nanak's Japji as if Guru Nanak was a practicing yogi. For the sake of brevity let me cite two instances:

ਤਿਥੈ ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ ਮਹਿਮਾ ਮਾਹਿ॥

AGGS, Jap 37, p. 8.

Kirpal Singh interprets this verse as "Here dwell devotees with devotion, incomparable as Sita's (Sita: The wife of King Rama Chandra known for her great devotion)."³³

He interprets "ਸੀਤੋ ਸੀਤਾ" (*sito sita*)" as Rama's wife Sita whereas it means stitched together (fully absorbed in contemplation on God, who have merged their identity with God, one with God). Similarly, in his commentary on celibacy, Kirpal says: In the *Shastras* (Hindu scriptures) it is stated that to waste even a drop of semen is equal to death and to conserve it is life. Guru Nanak has also said, "Whosoever loses semen loses every thing."³⁴

Now, Guru Nanak was a householder and he rejected and denounced celibacy and ascetic way of life in no uncertain terms.

The Radhasoami "masters" are not different from other Indian "holy men" or "evangelist preachers."

Vaishnava Tradition:

The term "bhakti movement" is also a European construct. There is no equivalent term in contemporary Indian language, nor is there any evidence that the Vaishnava bhagats as a group or as individuals had any specific objective/agenda for the Hindu society, which was conquered by Muslim invaders. If it was anything it was symbolic of total surrender of Hindus to Muslim rulers—*Ishwara va Dillishwro va* (The emperor of Delhi is as great as God).³⁵

The Vaisnava bhagats were generally Brahmans/upper castes like Ramanuja, Madhava, Nimbarka, Ramananda, Vallbha and Tulsidas. They were dualistic—monotheistic and pantheistic at the same time. They worshiped and adored God whom they called Narayana and Hari but they also had their favorite deity, the reincarnation of Vishnu—Lord Rama or Lord Krishna. They adored Rama and his wife Sita and, Krishna and his consorts. They accepted the authority of Vedas and Upanishads and all the doctrines and systems

prescribed therein including the caste system and its social ramifications. They also accepted the doctrine of incarnation and the external forms of worship, including idol worship, formalism, rituals and the sanctity of Hindu pilgrim centers. Above all they were ascetics who advocated celibacy and their thoughts represent the mainstream of Hindu philosophy going back to the Vedas.³⁶ Moreover, their so-called "bhakti" was an escape from their societal responsibilities. It was devoid of any spiritual merit altogether. The advent of political Islam thrust on the Indian horizon in the medieval age resulted in the alienation of the Hindu society from political power. Instead of responding to this situation in a positive way, Hindu society of the period adopted an escapist attitude. Through the bhakti ethos, the drifting of the "Hindu collective alienation" from political power was completed in due course of time. The compulsive surrender to political Islam lended a way homologous to voluntary self-surrender to God; the political alienation brought forth compensation in re-union with the Divine in hypothetical life hereafter.

The conservative, retrogressive, nihilistic and pessimistic nature of the Vaishnava bhakti provided the Hindu elite an ideological legitimatization to their political alienation, thus rendering them incapacitated and paralyzed on the sociological level. In other words it was an "illusionary" compensation of *moksha* (salvation) in *Baikunth* (heaven) for their loss of political power and all the privileges that come with it. Niharranjan Ray hits the nail on the head when he points that the "Vaishanava Bhakti movement betrayed an attitude of surrendering abjectly and absolutely as much to their personal God as to the established social order."³⁷ Professor Mohammed Iqbal, a celebrated poet and a great Islamic thinker of the twentieth century, does not see any impact of the bhakats on the India society:

ਕੌਮ ਨੇ ਪੈਗਾਮ ਗੌਤਮ ਕੀ ਜ਼ਰਾ ਪਰਵਾਰ ਨਾ ਕੀ । ਕਦਰ ਪਹਿਚਾਨੀ ਨਾ ਆਪਨੇ ਗੌਹਰ ਜਕਦਾਨਾ ਕੀ । ... ਆਹ ਛੂਦਰ ਕੇ ਲੀਏ ਹਿੰਦੋਸਤਾਨ ਗਮਖਾਨਾ ਹੈ । ਦਰਦੇ ਇਨਸਾਨੀ ਸੇ ਇਸ ਬਸਤੀ ਕਾ ਦਿਲ ਬੇਗਾਨਾ ਹੈ । ... ਫਿਰ ਉਠੀ ਆਖਿਰ ਸਦਾ ਤੌਹਿਦ ਕੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਸੇ । ਹਿੰਦ ਕੋ ਇਕ ਮਰਦੇ ਕਾਮਲ ਨੇ ਜਗਾਇਆ ਖੁਆਬ ਸੇ ।

The Indian people did not pay any attention to the message of Gautam. They did not recognize the value of their 'flawless diamond'. ... India is a land of sorrow and suffering for the Shudar. There is no compassion in this place. ... Eventually, a voice rose from Punjab proclaiming the unity of mankind under "One and Only God". A "perfect man" from Punjab awakened the conscience of the Indian people with his message of "universal love and humanism".

Poem: Nanak

The abnegation by the Hindu elite of its responsibility to Hindu society and the country, and their abject surrender to Muslim onslaught did not go unnoticed by historians:

In the history of the fateful forty-five years (1295-1345) traced by us so far, the one distressfully disappointing feature has been the absence, in Maharashtra, of the will to resist the invaders. The people of Maharashtra were conquered, oppressed and humiliated, but they meekly submitted like dumb driven cattle.³⁸

What is painful is that, sometimes, a handful of foreigners overran vast tracts of the land without countering any sizable resistance. Shihab-ud-din Gauri won the second battle of Tarain (near Delhi) in 1192 C. E., and within fourteen years his General, Bakhtiyar Khilji had reached the bank of Brahmaputra. Nadiya was occupied with an advance party of no more than eighteen horsemen and this opened the way for the establishment of Muslim rule in Bengal.³⁸ (parenthesis by B. Singh)

Nevertheless, the Brahman who was the kingpin, ideologue and the center of Hindu Dharma, missed being a *raj mantri* (minister of state), *raj guru* (religious advisor to the king) and *raj prohibit* (family priest of the king) after the defeat of Rajput rulers. He was not satisfied with status quo. He turned to the Chanakya (Kautilya) *niti* (policy) of perverse morality—morality turned upside down, instead of seeking *moksha* (salvation) in *Baikunth* (heaven).³⁹ Instead of praying to the statue of goddess Durga, he turned to the goddess in flesh—Rajput princess; in order to get back not only into the Mughal court but also into the Mughal palace. He advised the royal Rajputs to give their daughters in marriage to Emperor Akbar. Now, it is an anathema even for an ordinary Rajput to marry his daughter to a non-Rajput Hindu, not to speak of a royal Rajput marrying his daughter to a Muslim, whom he considers as *malesha* (unclean). But this case was different as this matrimonial alliance was blessed and sanctified by the Brahman. The Rajput rulers led by the Ambar family accepted this proposal without blinking an eye.⁴⁰ This opened the door for Brahmans, Rajputs, Khatris, Baniyas and Kayasthas in Akbar's administration. Many of them held prominent positions, Birbal and Todar Mal were among the "jewels" of Akbar's court and Raja Man Singh was a very distinguished and decorated commander in the Mughal army. In gratitude, Akbar cancelled the *Jazia* (tax on non-Muslims) imposed by the earlier Muslim rulers. The Rajputs played a major role in the expansion and consolidation of Mughal Empire. The Brahmans chanted a new mantra, *Ishwaro va Dillishwaro va*, (The emperor of Delhi is as great as God)."³⁵ Akbar's Rajput in-laws made it sure that there was no royal Rajput left who would taunt them: "You have sent your daughters to the *haram* (concubine quarters) of a *malesha*." The only Rajput sovereign, who refused to kowtow to Akbar, was Maharana Partap.

All the Rajput vassals joined Akbar in defeating this valiant man.⁴¹

Radical Bhagats:

On the other hand radical bhagats—Namdev, Kabir and Ravi Das repudiated Vaishnava beliefs. Calling these bhagats as Hindus or Hindu reformers betrays ignorance of their ideology or it is a disingenuous attempt to hijack their ideology. These bhagats denounced the tyranny of caste system on the one hand and bigotry of the Muslims on the other. They were neither Hindus nor Muslims; they were humanists. That is why Jagjit Singh and Daljit Singh have characterized these bhagats as "radical bhagats"^{42, 43} to distinguish them from Vaisnava bhagats:

ਹਿੰਦੂ ਅੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਤੁਰਕੂ ਕਾਣਾ ॥
ਦੁਹਾਂ ਤੇ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਸਿਆਣਾ ॥
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਪੂਜੈ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਮੁਸਲਮਾਣੁ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥
ਨਾਮੇ ਸੋਈ ਸੇਵਿਆ ਜਹ ਦੇਹੁਰਾ ਨ ਮਸੀਤਿ ॥

Muslim is one eyed whereas Hindu is totally blind spiritually. Wiser than both is the one, who sees God in all. Temples are sacred to Hindus and mosques to Muslims whereas Nam Dev focuses his mind on the One and Only, Who is not restricted either to the temple or the mosque.
AGGS, Namdev, p. 875.

ਅਲਹੁ ਗੈਬੁ ਸਗਲ ਘਟ ਭਤਿਰਿ ਹਿਰਦੈ ਲੇਹੁ ਬੀਚਾਰੀ ॥
ਹਿੰਦੂ ਤੁਰਕ ਦੁਹੂੰ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੈ ਕਹੈ ਕਬੀਰ ਪੁਕਾਰੀ ॥

"O mullah, ponder over the fact that God resides within all," Kabir proclaims loudly, "The same God is within both Hindus and Muslims."
AGGS, Kabir, p. 483.

ਬੇਦ ਕੀ ਪੁਤ੍ਰੀ ਸਿੰਮ੍ਰਿਤਿ ਭਾਈ ॥
ਸਾਂਕਲ ਜੇਵਰੀ ਲੈ ਹੈ ਆਈ ॥

O my brothers, Simrti is based on the Vedas. It has brought the chains of the caste system and ropes of rituals and liturgy to entrap you."
AGGS, Kabir, p. 329.

ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨ ਸਾਸਤ੍ਰੁ ਅਨੰਤਾ ਗੀਤ ਕਬਿਤ ਨ ਗਾਵਉਗੋ ॥
ਅਖੰਡ ਮੰਡਲ ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰ ਮਹਿ ਅਨਹਦ ਬੇਨੁ ਬਜਾਵਉਗੋ ॥

I shall not sing the endless verses and hymns of Vedas, Puranas and Shastars. I shall play a steady tune on the flute of love for the Formless One Whose abode is Eternal."
AGGS, Namdev, p. 972.

ਕਰਮ ਅਕਰਮ ਬੀਚਾਰੀਐ ਸੰਕਾ ਸੁਨਿ ਬੇਦ ਪੁਰਾਨੁ ॥
ਸੰਸਾ ਸਦ ਹਿਰਦੇ ਬਸੈ ਕਉਨੁ ਹਿਰੈ ਅਭਿਮਾਨੁ ॥

If one determines good or bad actions on the basis of Vedas and Puranas, one's mind is filled with doubt and worry. These scriptures do not tell how to cure self-conceit and arrogance.

AGGS, Ravi Das, p. 346.

ਗਰਭ ਵਾਸ ਮਹਿ ਕੁਲੁ ਨਹੀ ਜਾਤੀ ॥
ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਤੇ ਸਭੁ ਉਤਪਾਤੀ ॥

ਜੋ ਤੂੰ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੀ ਜਾਇਆ ॥
ਤਉ ਆਨ ਬਾਟ ਕਾਹੇ ਨਹੀ ਆਇਆ ॥
ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਹਮ ਕਤ ਸੂਦ ॥
ਹਮ ਕਤ ਲੋਹੁ ਤੁਮ ਕਤ ਦੂਧ ॥

O Brahman! Inside the womb there is no lineage or caste! All are created from the seed of Brahm (God). If you are Brahman born of Brahman mother then why did you not take birth by some other route? How come you are Brahman and I am Shudar? How come I am defiled (blood) and you are holy (milk)?"

AGGS, Kabir, p. 324.

ਕਬੀਰ ਰਾਮ ਕਹਨ ਮਹਿ ਭੇਦੁ ਹੈ ਤਾ ਮਹਿ ਏਕੁ ਬਿਚਾਰੁ ॥
ਸੋਈ ਰਾਮੁ ਸਭੈ ਕਹਹਿ ਸੋਈ ਕਉਤਕਹਾਰ ॥
ਕਬੀਰ ਰਾਮੈ ਰਾਮ ਕਹੁ ਕਹਿਬੇ ਮਾਹਿ ਬਿਬੇਕ ॥
ਏਕੁ ਅਨੇਕਹਿ ਮਿਲਿ ਗਇਆ ਏਕੁ ਸਮਾਨਾ ਏਕੁ ॥

After thinking over the meaning of "Ram", Kabir says that there are differences in the usage of this word. While everyone uses "Ram" for God, the actors use it for Ram Chandar, the son of Dasrath. Kabir dwells on "Ram", Who is present in all whereas the other (Ram Chandar) was only himself.

AGGS, Kabir, p. 1374.

ਏਕੈ ਪਾਥਰ ਕੀਜੈ ਭਾਉ ॥
ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਥਰ ਧਰੀਐ ਪਾਉ ॥
ਜੇ ਓਹੁ ਦੇਉ ਤ ਓਹੁ ਭੀ ਦੇਵਾ ॥
ਕਹਿ ਨਾਮਦੇਉ ਹਮ ਹਰਿ ਕੀ ਸੇਵਾ ॥

One stone is adorned whereas another is trodden under feet. If one is god, the other is also god. Namdev says, "I serve only God."

AGGS, Namdev, p. 525.

That is why Guru Arjan honored these radical *bhagats* by incorporating their hymns in the AGGS, whereas there is no mention of any Vaishnava *bhagat*.

Nath Tradition:

In his long composition, *Sidh Gost* and other hymns Guru Nanak rejected every thing the *sidhas/yogis* stood for. Guru Nanak's attitude was the same for other ascetic orders. The *sidhas* were searching for individual salvation through acetic and celibate life whereas Guru Nanak championed householder life as the right path for the salvation, as it is the householder, who sustains society. The presence of Nath terminology such as *kundalini*, *ida*, *pingala*, *sushmana*, *chakra* and *pranayam* in Guru Nanak's composition can in no way be construed that it has any relevance to Nanakian philosophy. These terms are there because Guru Nanak refuted unequivocally the rationale behind such practices for the realization of God. Even McLeod himself reaches the same conclusion when he says:

"Here there is no *kundalini*, no *ida*, *pingala*, and no *susumana*, no *chakra* and no *pranayam*."⁴⁴

ਘਾਲਿ ਖਾਇ ਕਿਛੁ ਹਥਹੁ ਦੇਇ ॥
ਨਾਨਾਕ ਰਾਹੁ ਪਛਾਣਹਿ ਸੋਇ ॥
ਗੁਰੁ ਪੀਰੁ ਸਦਾਏ ਮੰਗਣ ਜਾਏ ॥
ਤਾ ਕੈ ਮੂਲਿ ਨ ਲਗੀਐ ਪਾਇ ॥

One who works hard to make an honest living and practices charity finds the righteous path. Never touch the feet of the one who claims to be a spiritual guide but begs alms. AGGS, M 1, p. 1245.

ਨਿਰੰਕਾਰਿ ਜੋ ਰਹੈ ਸਮਾਇ ॥
ਕਾਹੇ ਭੀਖਿਆ ਮੰਗਣਿ ਜਾਇ ॥

Why should he beg alms, who claims to dwell on God?
AGGS, M 1, p. 953.

ਬਿੰਦੁ ਨ ਰਾਖਹਿ ਜਤੀ ਕਹਾਵਹਿ ॥

Yogi calls himself *jati* (celibate) but has no control over his sexual drive.
AGGS, M 1, p. 903.

ਜਤਨ ਕਰੈ ਬਿੰਦੁ ਕਿਵੈ ਨ ਰਹਾਈ ॥

In spite of all efforts the ascetic cannot control his sexual urge.

AGGS, M 1, p. 906.

ਬਿੰਦੁ ਰਾਖਿ ਜੋ ਤਰੀਐ ਭਾਈ ॥

ਖੁਸਰੈ ਕਿਉ ਨ ਪਰਮ ਗਤਿ ਪਾਈ ॥

If celibacy could lead to salvation then why does not a eunuch obtain salvation?

AGGS, Kabir, p. 423.

ਮੁੰਦਾ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸਰਮੁ ਪਤੁ ਝੋਲੀ ਧਿਆਨ ਕੀ ਕਰਹਿ ਬਿਭੂਤਿ ॥

ਖਿੰਥਾ ਕਾਲੁ ਕੁਆਰੀ ਕਾਇਆ ਜੁਗਤਿ ਡੰਡਾ ਪਰਤੀਤਿ ॥

ਆਈ ਪੰਥੀ ਸਗਲ ਜਮਾਤੀ ਮਨਿ ਜੀਤੈ ਜਗੁ ਜੀਤੁ ॥

ਅਦੇਸੁ ਤਿਸੈ ਆਦੇਸੁ ॥

ਆਦਿ ਅਨੀਲੁ ਅਨਾਦਿ ਅਨਾਹਤਿ ਜੁਗੁ ਜੁਗੁ ਏਕੋ ਵੇਸੁ ॥

AGGS, Jap 28, p. 6.

O Yogi! Let contentment be your earrings, hard work a begging bowl and bag, and meditation on God be the ashes you put on your body. Let the thought of death be your patched quilt, chastity your yoga, and staff faith in God. Let your Aee Panth (a sect of yogis) be universal brotherhood and subdue your mind to conquer worldly temptations. Salute again and again the One, Who is eternal, immaculate, timeless, indestructible, and changeless throughout the ages.

Given the above verses of Guru Nanak, it comes as astonishing, that first Jakobsh says: "Guru Nanak's theology is a combination of Vaishnava tradition and the Nath tradition, with possible elements of Sufism as well."¹ Here she follows in the line of McLeod, but immediately in the next paragraph she contradicts herself (in the line of Grewal) when she draws the distinction of Guru Nanak against Kabir and yogis:

To understand Guru Nanak's attitude towards women and gender in general, it is useful to compare his theological underpinnings with those of Kabir, the fountainhead of Sant synthesis. Though Kabir lived 150 years before Guru Nanak, the similarity of their teachings is striking, and as Karine Schomer points out, it is precisely this aspect as opposed to historical connection or institutional foci that closely binds Guru Nanak and Kabir. ... Yet, especially with respect to Kabir's attitude towards women, there appears to be a subtle break in the similarities between the two. Grewal (1996:150) explains this in terms of their relative standings in the sant tradition of Northern India. ... For Yogis, whose primary aim was the vanquishing of desire, particularly sexual desire, women were great obstacles to be conquered. Kabir's attitude towards woman was similar to that of the yogis in that he viewed women as seductive, as tempting men away from their true

calling. Guru Nanak, on the other hand, criticized yogis for their solitary, ascetic spiritual search. Contrary to the yogic apprehension of sexuality, Guru Nanak furthered the ideal of householder.⁴⁵

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