

Failures of the Akali Leadership: Gurmit Singh (1981) [309P] Usha Institute of Religious Studies

Book Review: Kavneet Singh



Gurmit Singh a practicing lawyer in Sirsa, Punjab has written a book with a genuine yearning to figure out the weakness of the Sikh political leadership and makes an attempt to find reasonable solutions via a written question-answer debate with Hukman Singh a veteran politician of the partition era.

Dili Takhat par bahegi; Aap Guru ki fauj, Chhatter phirega sis par; Barhi karegi Mauj, Raj karega khalsa; Aaqi eahe na koe, Khwar hoye sabh milenge; Bache saran jo hoye., i.e. Guru's own men will rule over Delhi empire. Crown will grace their head and they will prosper. The Khalsa shall rule, no hostile refractory shall exist, Frustrated, they shall all summit, and those, who come in for shelter, shall be protected.....[Page 24] Extremely few writers even have the guts to write the truth. Even the eminent historian Ganda Singh apologizes, makes excuses, wrongly defines the above couplet and further suggests lame impractical ideas. Banning this couplet is among a long list of other very important issues how the canny British circumcised the Sikhs permanently. Even though the Khalsa clearly means “Sovereign” most explanations by Sikhs are; the “Khalsa” is defined as “Pure”, which is completely wrong because Sikhs through mass cowardicing have submitted to the mental yoke of the majority on even the ultra important Sikh definitions. Banning this couplet in 19th century was the beginning of reining in the fiery spirit of the Sikhs so that they may never think of self rule ever again.

Hukam Singh states, “The Sikhs faltered at every step with every move of the pendulum from a united to a divided India; they could not stand at one firm position”.....[Page Politically naïve with very little experience in Brahminical statecraft, limited vision, bombastic egos, short on education, no clear goal, disunity and a whole host of issues among the Sikh leadership was the failure due to which they missed the train.

Even writers like Barstow have admitted that: “at heart, Hinduism has always been hostile to Sikhism”.....[Page 34]

Sikhs have never understood Hinduism. Unless and until all their socio-religious books are all read and understood one cannot fathom the devious minds of its followers.

The reason for not pressing the demand for a Sikh State was our ignorance of history and world politics. None of us had known that a community can have a state of its own inspite of its being a minority in that area. Jewish State 'Israel' is one such recent example.....[Page 64]

Here is clear quote by Master Tara Singh from his autobiography and shows his ineptitude and one of the primary reasons that the leader himself had a shallow understanding of his own situation, therefore trying to understand his opponents is an entirely different matter and beyond his scope.

The objection to separate electorates by the Hindus.....First of all, there is no nation of Indians in the real sense of the word. The nation does not exist, it is to be created....The real objection to separate electorates by the Hindus is different.....does not permit the Hindus to capture seats reserved for the untouchables; on the other hand, joint electorate does.....[Page 79]

Dr. Ambedkhar's above statement clearly sums up the diabolical design of the Hindus which was implemented by the cunning MK Gandhi eventually through his fast onto death drama which ultimately turned out to be the death knell for the Dalits/untouchables.

Inspite of the increased representation they were to remain a hopeless minority in the legislature dependent on the mercy of Hindu members....[Page 88]

There were options available albeit very tough ones. One of which was to amass themselves in any area which afforded a majority like Malerkotla, stabilize yourself and think of strategies. A tiny place would be better than permanent strangulation by the permanent dominant majority in a larger area. The Muslim league's overtures were never given serious consideration. Sikhs never got anything in writing from the Hindus.

Common Punjabi proverb, "Mussalman kuchh khuda de khouf manda hai, par Hindu da tan koi deen iman hai he nahin, os nu ten ya be-imani tera he asra hai" i.e., Muslim has some fear of god and tries to fulfill his commitments; Hindu has no such fear, he lives by hypocrisy and deceit.....[Page 96]

Proverbs always have some merit otherwise they would not be proverbs. If Sikhs had taken this to heart there may have been a different history than today's pathetic plight.

Gandhi on April 8, 1931 speaking at Amritsar, said, "The national flag is my personal creation....Do you think it is a pleasure to me to agree to its being altered?...[Page 100]
The Indians got duped again by Gandhi and the Sikhs of course got the worst end of it.

The most delicate issue related to safegaurds for minorities. Azad wanted reservation of seats for the Muslims and other minorities within the framework of general electorates. Patel opposed such safeguards....[Page 114]

Vallabhai Patel was as rabid a Hindu and as cunning as Gandhi and wasted no time to hammer the nail into the joint electorate coffin of the minorities.

Hardit Singh Malik in Sunday World of October 24, 1971 writes, "I asked him (Jinnah) to spell out the details.....he told us to put down all our demands on paper and offered to affix his signature to the document".....[page 124]

Jinnah the leader of the Muslim league offers to sign a document of Sikh demands yet the stupid Sikh leadership accepted verbal promises by the Hindu leadership and still have not come out of their comatose slumber.

When these meetings were utilized to propagate hatred against a small minority (Sikhs) who had undergone tragic sufferings both before and after partition, then the attitudes of the Government also of the majority could not be anything but of discrimination against and denunciation of that ill-fated minority.....[Page 151]

Gandhi's intense hatred of the Sikhs can fill at least 20 pages from his own writings. It is understandable since a rabid Hindu who through deceit and chicanery, check mated the Dalits into accepting the joint electorates into permanent subjugation. The Sikhs were simply overwhelmed, who were completely controlled by Article 25 in the Indian constitution by bringing them underneath the umbrella of Hinduism permanently.

Sardar Brar has argued that the Sikh leadership suffered from an obsession of hatred against the Muslims, and were pre-possessed by certain attitudes.....[Page 164]

This was another important element in the overall equation which prejudiced the Sikh leadership to trust any promises even in writing by the Muslims.

Sardar Kapur Singh, former ICS who was one the chief protagonist of the Sikh Homeland demand, apposed this resolution through a press statement issued to him on 27th April 1969 at Jullunder, "It was further demanded by this group that more powers should be transferred from the center list of seventh schedule of the constitution Act to its state list....The demand for the internal autonomy in the Sikh homeland is directed towards strictly regulating state powers for preserving the eternal unity of India.....that are inimical towards the integrity of India and a united Indian nation".....[Page 170]

It is amazing how could a giant in the Sikh esteem, be so conceited or shortsighted to make such a retrograde statement.

The result was that Sikhs were left as orphans in no man's land.....[Page 192]

That's a pretty sick joke but the hard truth is that Sikhs are legally, religiously, culturally complete orphans who can be kicked around on whim by the Hindus.

A sum of forty-six lakhs.....for the maintenance of Hindu temples and shrines in the territories transferred to the state.....Tranvcore-Cochin....[Page 207]

It is clear that this Article 290-A of the Indian constitution directly violates the so-called "secular" concept that the same, claims to uphold.

Religion is only a cloak, a cover for political purposes.....I urged them strongly not to lower their religion to such a pitch as really fall to a level where for a mess of pottage you really give up the substance of religion. But they did not agree.....[Page 211]

Hukman Singh warnings were not heeded and the incompetent-impotent Sikh leadership lowered the great egalitarian Faith to the level of Brahmanism to include some of their Faith brothers into the backwards 'castes' legally.

But in modern times, their (Sikhs) political leadership has often been poor, partly because their numbers are small, but also because their talents are of markedly practical, go-getting sort. As a result of this second factor, their ablest men, the cream of the community, are continually being skimmed off into lucrative activities outside politics..... Politics among the Sikhs has in recent years been a profession which got not much more than leavings.....[Page 224-225]

Ian Stephen a well known British journalist writes in his book, Pakistan – Old Country New Nation about the status of the Sikh predicament very astutely.

Judicial inquiry is not going to serve any useful purpose. What is needed is to incorporate these events in the Sikh heritage so that coming generations may know their real history. Sikh Ardas certainly needs revision.....[Page 237]

Gurmit Singh is astute enough to realize how lax Sikhs are in writing history and how clever Hindus are in diluting it, therefore current events if incorporated into the revised Ardas will preserve (Sikh) history in perpetuity in the minds of the followers.

Akalis should not ask the Parliament to enact All India Gurdwara Act because once the right of the Parliament to enact is conceded, right to amend or alter the same automatically vests in it and it has serious consequences because it amounts to surrendering the sovereignty of the Sikh people in the matter of their religion to an outside agency.....[Page 253]

Gurmit Singh has squarely confronted the SGPC's conundrum which they have been debating time and again and very forcefully put across the dire consequences of such an ill fated move.

Sikh since independence of the country, have felt that there is an organized plan to demonize the Sikhs as the builders of Indian History.....[Page 259]

This is a real fact, because if one reads school and college books of the Indian curriculum starting from 1947 – 2009 there is a clear trend to demonize, dilute, subvert and outright lie about the unbelievable sacrifices made by Sikhs towards the freedom of India. Today, the same books have practically no mention of Sikh contribution at all, in fact they are made out to be antinational and unpatriotic terrorists.

Sikhs must remember that in Congress terminology the word "minority" has always meant the "Muslim minority" and not the Sikhs who are treated by the national leadership as a sect of the Hindus. The Sikh intelligentsia therefore, must sit together to find a remedy to the present situation.....[Page274]

The proof is in the pudding; (Article 25 of the Indian Constitution) as the Constitution states that Sikhs are Hindus. Legally Sikhs are Hindus and therefore permanently castrated.

One basic truth, which must be asserted, is that Sikhism is a sovereign Faith and not an off-shoot of Hinduisim. In this connection, we must agree with an English author (Max Arthur MacAullife) who says: "At heart, Hinduism has always been hostile to Sikhism, because the Sikh Gurus had successfully attacked the principle of caste, and that it therefore, necessarily strives for Sikhism's overthrow, both by preventing the children of Sikh fathers from taking 'Pahul' and by seducing proposed Sikhs from allegiance to their Faith. Hinduism strangled Buddhism, once a formidable rival, it is now making inroads into Sikhism.....[Page 303]

Gurmit Singh wrote this book in 1980 nearly 30 years ago; he would be shell shocked to see the state of affairs among the Sikhs today, that his prophetic words were even more true in 2009 than in 1980. Ultra right Hindus of which there are many and powerful have a permanent agenda with Millions of Rupees being spent since the late 80's through the vicious RSS/BJP combine to completely dilute and swallow the Sikh Faith.

Gurmit Singh has honestly tried to critically analyze past and current problems of the Sikh Nation. An unbiased writer who is blunt yet understands the Sikh psyche to suggest simple yet practical solutions. One wonders why there are not enough right thinking writers among the Sikhs who keeping the collective's interest as paramount (like the author says) and come up with a mature, wise, working strategy for the survival of the Sikhs. A book to be read by all!