

A Complete Guide to Sikhism

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ

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Sikhism

Dr JAGRAJ SINGH

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“There is only one God, He is infinite, his existence cannot be denied, He is enlightener and gracious” (GGS, p1).

“ਏਕ ਪਿਤਾ ਏਕਸ ਕੇ ਹੰਮ ਬਾਚਕ ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰਾ ਗੁਰਹਾਈ”॥

“He is our common father, we are all His children and he takes care of us all.”

--Ibid, p. 611, Guru Nanak

Deh shiva bar mohay ihay

O, Lord these boons of thee I ask,

Shub karman tay kabhoon na taroon

I should never shun a righteous task,

Na daroon arson jab jae laroon

I should be fearless when I go to battle,

Nischay kar apni jeet karoon

Grant me conviction that victory will be mine with dead certainty,

Ar Sikh haun apnay he mann ko

As a Sikh may my mind be enshrined with your teachings,

Ih laalach haun gun tau uchroon

And my highest ambition should be to sing your praises,

Jab av kee audh nidhan banay

When the hour of reckoning comes

At he ran mah tab joojh maroon

I should die fighting for a righteous cause in the thick of battlefield.

--Chandi Charitar, Guru Gobind Singh

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Preface

The reason for writing this book is to disseminate information about the Sikhs and Sikhism in the world beyond the Indian subcontinent, where Sikhism took its birth in the 15th century. The lack of information about the Sikhs and their religion (Sikhism) led to the arrest, harassment, beating of innocent Sikhs and damage to their properties and burning of their shrines (Gurdwaras) in the United States of America after the unfortunate incident of September 11, 2001. And in the after-math of racial hatred the only person shot dead was a Sikh, Sardar Balbir Singh in Phoenix (Arizona) while attending his gas station. The Sikhs were considered to be Taliban Muslims of Afghanistan by the majority of the Americans, because of their beard and turban.

So far no attempt had been made to undertake a structured study of Sikhism to acquaint the people in the outside world about the details of this latest world faith and its followers, the Sikhs. It had become necessary firstly, since the Sikhs now live in the farthest corners of the world (about more than 120 countries), a need exists for the people of those countries to know something of the history, traditions and religious practices and beliefs of the new arrivals in their midst. Secondly, it is a well known fact that the Hindus are highly intolerant of the non-confirming faiths, there have been persistent attempts on their part to overturn the Sikh history and theology particularly after the Sikhs lost their rule. Before the decolonization of the Indian subcontinent in 1947, the radical Hindus of the Punjab were very active in this regard. With the de-colonization of the Indian subcontinent (Hindustan) in 1947 A.D; and the division, destruction and denial of their state back to the Sikhs by the British, they (Sikhs) for the first time in history came under the tutelage of a reviving Hinduism. Immediately after gaining independence the Government of India dominated by radical Hindus undertook the task of distorting the Sikh history, theology and undermining Sikhism and even declaring Sikhism as a sect of Hinduism. Hence it had become utterly necessary to document a structured study of Sikhism to tell the outside world about its separate entity and expose the lies of its enemies.

The glory of Sikh religion is its universality which cannot brook sectarian or narrow loyalties in any shape or form. It was intended by its founders to become the heritage, not of any particular group of people, but of the whole mankind. Guru Nanak was the Guru not of the Sikhs alone, but of the whole mankind. He desired that his message should go to every nook and corner of the world in the same way as it had gone through him during his own sojourn in life.

I have been very keen to produce a book on Sikhism in English, to begin with, which should give a faithful interpretation of the Sikh principles for the English knowing people. I feel that the present generation needs badly Guru Nanak's message in which discerning men will find solace for their restless souls and torch to enlighten them, "*Gur darsan udhray sansaarar, je ko la-ay bhao piara*" i.e, "Through Guru's philosophy whole world can be saved if the same was accepted with devotion and love (GGS,p.361).

In view of this claim of the Guru to save the whole mankind, it becomes a duty to share the message with all and I feel confident that it will serve to elevate them socially, morally and spiritually.

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Though every care has been taken, mistake, if any in typing or otherwise is highly regretted for which I may be pardoned. I shall be grateful to receive suggestions.

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