

EVOLUTION OF KHALSA

Dr V P Singh

Recently the Sikh community in New Zealand have come out to help the victims' families of terrorist attack on two mosques in central Christchurch, New Zealand. Guru Nanak Community Kitchen, an Auckland based NGO, asked the people from the community to come forward to volunteer help transportation of families to the cemetery and organise food (*langar*) for those attending funerals in addition to helping with key funerary services and sewa. It is not first time, Sikhs following their religious beliefs, come forward to help victims of natural or man made disasters towards any community irrespective of caste, creed or religion. They arranged langar at Myanmar-Bangladesh border to help Rohingyas, who were thrown out of Myanmar because of their terrorist activities.

Sikhism came about eight hundred years after Islam and is considered to be a bridge between Hinduism and Islam. But very soon path of two missions diverged drastically. What are the reasons?

Islam from the very beginning was based on violence (Jihad) where as Guru Nanak gave message of love and peace to whole humanity.

Why Islam is so aggressive and can not survive in co-existence? It is well known that it is not possible for non-Muslims to survive in countries where Islam dominates where as they migrate to non-Islamic countries to avail better and peaceful life. It is well known that at the time of partition of India, non-Muslim population in Pakistan was 20% which now is only 2%. Where rest of non-Muslim population has gone? Either forcibly converted or forced to migrate.

According to a prophecy by a Kashmiri Sufi sage made 900 years ago, Muslims believe that one day whole Indian subcontinent including China will become Islamic and all non-believers (qafirs as per koran) will perish. This concept they call *Gazwa-e-Hind (a barbaric war of conquering India . After this war all idol worshippers will be eliminated by the winning Islamic army.)*

Going back to the history, after Arabs accepted Islam, Uthman b., a governor of Bahrain and Oman, sent out ships to raid Thane (near Mumbai), while his brother Hakam sailed to Broach and a third fleet sailed to Debal under his younger brother Mughira 636 AD. Immigrant Arab and Persian trading communities from South Arabia and the Persian Gulf began settling in coastal Gujarat. Ismaili Shia Islam (Ismailis have been led by a living, hereditary Imam) was introduced to Gujarat in the second half of the 11th century, when Fatimid Imam Al-Mustansir Billah sent missionaries to Gujarat in 1073 CE. Islam arrived in North India in the 12th century via the Turkic invasions and has since become a part of India's religious and cultural heritage. The first clash between a ruler of an Indian kingdom

and the Arabs took place in 643 AD, when Arab forces defeated Rutbil, King of Zabulistan in Sistan (in modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan.).¹ Arabs led by Suhail b. Abdi and Hakam al Taghilbi defeated an Indian army in the Battle of Rasil in 644 AD at the Indian Ocean sea coast, then reached the Indus River.

This was the beginning of a prolonged struggle between the rulers of Kabul and Zabul against successive Arab governors of Sistan, Khurasan and Makran in modern-day Afghanistan and Pakistan, which was part of India those days. The Kabul Shahi kings and their Zunbil kinsmen blocked access to the Khyber Pass and Gomal Pass routes into India from 653 to 870 AD, while modern Balochistan, faced several Arab expeditions between 661 - 711 AD. Muslim control of these areas ebbed and flowed repeatedly as a result until 870 AD. The Arabs crossed the Indus further South and defeated the army of Dahir (Hindu Raja of Sindh), who was killed. The Arabs then marched north along the east bank of the Indus after the siege and capture of Rawer. Brahmanabad, then Alor (Aror) and finally Multan, were captured alongside other in-between towns with only light Muslim casualties. Arabs marched up to the foothills of Kashmir along the Jhelum in 713 AD, and then stormed on Al-Kiraj (probably the Kangra valley). Jai Singh, son of Dahir captured Brahmanabad and Arab rule was restricted to the Western shore of Indus. Sindh was briefly lost to the caliph when the rebel Yazid b. Muhallab took over Sindh briefly in 720 AD. Arab progress repeatedly in the "Frontier Zone". In the early 11th century, Mahmud of Ghazni launched seventeen expeditions into South Asia. In 1001CE, he defeated Raja Jayapala of the Hindu Shahi Dynasty of Gandhara (in modern Afghanistan), the Battle of Peshawar and marched further into Peshawar (in modern Pakistan) and, in 1005, made it the center for his forces. By 1027, Mahmud had captured parts of North India and obtained formal recognition of Ghazni's sovereignty. These invasions continued till Mughals (In 1526, Babur won the Battle of Panipat against Ibrahim Lodi, established their rule and started forcible conversion of Hindus. Maharana Sangram Singh (12 April 1482 - 30 January 1528) commonly known as Rana Sanga, was an Indian ruler of Mewar and head of a powerful Rajput confederacy in Rajputana during the 16th century. He fought against the Afghan Lodhi dynasty of Delhi Sultanate, and later against the Mughals.

Sikh Gurus (Guru Nanak born on November 1469) were contemporary of Mughals and were target of Islamic tyranny during their reign. When Babur attacked Punjab in 1519, Guru Nanak was arrested and then released. Guru Arjan Dev, the fifth incarnation of Guru Nanak, was contemporary of Mughal ruler Jahangir and was under the scanner of his fanatic ideology. During times of Guru Arjan, Sikh religion was at its peak and was not liked by Jahangir. He arrested

Guru Arjan Dev on flimsy grounds and tortured him by boiling in water and then making him sit on hot plate. Sixth Guru, Guru Hargobind Sahib took to arms and there were few skirmish with Mughal forces and things subsided after his demise.

For next few years Sikhs were living peacefully during the time of Guru Har Rai and Guru Harkishan. When Aurangzeb acceded to throne by killing all his brothers, wanted to bring whole India under Islam. In southern part of country, Shiva ji fought against his atrocities and in Punjab Sikh were facing him. His main emphasis was on Kashmir. Kashmiri Pandits when forced to accept Islam came for help to 9th incarnation of Guru Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur who was based in Anandpur at that time. On hearing their plight, the Guru asked Pandits to go to Aurangzeb and tell him that Guru Tegh Bahadur is our guru and he may first convert him if possible. If he accepts Islam, we all will accept Islam. On this, Guru Tegh Bahadur was summoned to Agra along with him three of his disciples, Bhai Mati Das, Bhai Sati Das and Bhai Dayal Das accompanied. To terrorize the Guru, Bhai Mati Das was cut in two part by saw, Bhai Dayal Das was boiled in water and Sati Das was burnt alive. When Aurangzeb could not persuade Guru Tegh Bahadur to accept Islam, he was martyred in Chandni Chowk Delhi.

Sikh religion which started with peaceful mission of Guru Nanak had to fight the tyranny of Mughals for about two hundred years. A mission which wished prosperity for all (*sarbat ka bhalla*), was forced to pick up weapon to protect dharma (faith).

Guru Nanak had described the rulers of his time as tigers and dogs. That situation did not change in next 200 years. The policy of non-violence submission and surrender had produced no effect upon these ferocious tigers and mad dogs.

After this martyrdom, the young Gobind Rai was installed by the Sikhs as the tenth Sikh Guru on Vaisakhi on 29 March 1676. Guru Gobind Rai the tenth incarnation of Nanak and son of Guru Tegh Bahadur was only nine year old at the time of martyrdom of his father. The education of Guru Gobind Rai continued after he became the 10th Guru, both in reading and writing as well as martial arts such as horse riding and archery. He started maintaining an army there after.

After the most determined meditation on the sad state of affairs prevailing at that time, Guru Gobind Singh came to the conclusion that to tyrannize was bad, but to bear tyranny patiently was worse (*bhai kahoo ko det naahin, na bhai manat aan*). Guru Gobind Singh decided to create a national awakening in Panjab. The time chosen was opportune. Aurungzeb was involved in life and death struggle in the Deccan

with the Marathas. Panjab was in charge of Prince Muazzam who lived in Kabul. Guru first tried to plant his ideas in the mind of the warrior class of Hindu Rajputs of the Shivalik hills. He soon discovered that the caste ridden and class dominated feudal lords would not respond to his appeals and they would not fit in his ideology of casteless society. He therefore turned his attention to down-trodden masses who were oppressed and had no voice.

The Guru wanted to create a strong self-respecting community. He inspired the Sikhs with courage and heroism and a life of simplicity and hard work. He started an arms factory at Anandpur in order to manufacture swords and lances needed for his soldiers.

The Guru thus established direct relationship with his Sikhs. The institution of the Khalsa was given concrete form on 30 March 1699 when Sikhs had gathered at Anandpur in large numbers for the annual festival of Baisakhi. He addressed the congregation and explained them the tyranny of Mughals to others, and asked for a volunteer from those who gathered, someone willing to sacrifice his head to Guru. A need has arisen at this moment which calls for a head. A



hush fell over the assembly. Daya Ram, a shopkeeper of Lahore, arose and offered himself. He walked behind the Guru to a tent near by. Guru Gobind Singh returned with his sword dripping blood and demanded another head. This time Dharam Singh from Hastinapur or modern Meerut, presented himself to the Guru. Guru Gobind Singh gave three more calls. Mohkam Chand, a calico printer/tailor from Dwarka, Gujarat, Himmat Rai, a water-bearer from Jagannath Puri, Orissa, and Sahib Chand, a barber from Bidar, Karnataka stood up one after another and advanced to offer their heads. They were the first five Sikhs as understood in modern parlance. The Guru came out of tent along with five Sikhs. He called them the Panj Pyare (Five beloved ones) and the first Khalsa in the Sikh tradition.

The disciples wore saffron-coloured raiment

topped over with neatly tied turbans of the same colour. Guru Gobind Singh, similarly dressed, introduced his chosen Sikhs to the audience as Panj Pyare, the five devoted spirits beloved of the Guru. He then proceeded to perform the ceremony. Filling an iron bowl with clean water, he kept churning it with a khanda, i.e. double-edged sword, while reciting over it the sacred verses. Guru Gobind Singh's wife Mata Sahib Kaur brought sugar crystals (*patashas*) which were put into the vessel at the Guru's bidding. Sweetness was thus mingled with the alchemy of iron. Amrit, the Nectar of Immortality, was now ready and Guru Gobind Rai gave the five Sikhs each five palms-full of it to drink. At the end, all five of them quaffed from the steel bowl the remaining elixir binding themselves in



new fraternal ties. Their rebirth into this brotherhood meant the cancellation of their previous family ties, of the occupations which had hitherto determined their place in society, of their beliefs and creeds and of the rituals they had so far observed. Guru Gobind Rai thus founding the *khanda ka pahul* (baptization ceremony) of a Khalsa, a warrior community. Guru also gave them a new surname "Singh" (lion). After the first five had been baptized, the Guru asked the five to baptize him as a Khalsa. This made the Guru the sixth Khalsa, and his name changed from Gobind Rai to Guru Gobind Singh. Creation of Khalsa marked the culmination of about 240 years of training given by the ten Gurus to their Sikhs. The Guru wanted to create ideal people who should be perfect in all respects, that is a combination of devotion (*Bhakti*) and strength (*Shakti*). He combined charity (*Deg*) with the sword (*Tegh*) in the image of his Sikh.

Mughals could not tolerate Guru Gobind Singh keeping an army. First resistance he got from hill rulers who did not like Guru treating low caste people equal to high caste. Khalsa did not have any caste. Aurangzeb issued an order to exterminate Guru Gobind Singh and his family.

Guru Gobind Singh saw the war conduct of Aurangzeb and his army against his family and his

people as unethical, unjust and impious. The period following the execution of Guru Tegh Bahadur was a period where the Mughal Empire under Aurangzeb was an increasingly hostile enemy of the Sikh people. The Sikh resisted, led by Gobind Singh, and the Muslim-Sikh conflicts peaked during this period. Aurangzeb issued an order to exterminate Guru Gobind Singh and his family.

Guru Gobind Singh believed in a *Dharam Yudh* (war in defence of righteousness), something that is fought as a last resort, neither out of a wish for revenge nor for greed nor for any destructive goals. To Guru Gobind Singh, one must be prepared to die to stop tyranny, end persecution and to defend one's own religious values. He led fourteen wars with these objectives.

Aurangzeb sent a large army with two generals, Wazir Khan and Zaberdest Khan in May 1704, to destroy the Sikh resistance at Anandpur. The approach the Islamic army took in this battle was to lay a protracted siege against Anandpur, cutting off all food and other supplies moving in and out, along with repeated battles. Towards the end, the Guru, his family and followers accepted an offer by Aurangzeb of safe passage out of Anandpur. However, as they left Anandpur in two batches, they were attacked, and one of the batches with Mata Gujari and Guru's two sons - Zorawar Singh aged 8 and Fateh Singh aged 5 - were taken captive by the Mughal army. Both his children were executed by burying them alive into a wall. The grandmother Mata Gujari died there as well. In the battle of Chamkor Sahib, two elder sons, Ajit Singh and Jujhar Singh laid their life while fighting large army.

The official successor was Bahadur Shah invited Guru Gobind Singh with his army to meet him in person in the Deccan region of India, for a reconciliation but Bahadur Shah then delayed any discussions for months.

While at Nander, Guru Gobind Singh was attacked by two pathans. He died of his wounds a few days later on 7 October 1708. His death fueled a long and bitter war of the Sikhs with the Mughals. After that the struggle continued by Banda Singh Bahadur. Banda Singh armed with the blessing and authority of Guru Gobind Singh, came to Sonapat and assembled a fighting force and led the struggle against the Mughal Empire. Guru Gobind Singh had also appointed five Sikhs (Baj Singh, Binod Singh, Ram Singh, Daya Singh, Kahan Singh) to assist him.

After long bloody struggle of about hundred years between Sikhs and Mughals ultimately Sikhs captured Punjab and established their own rule under Maharaja Ranjeet Singh in 1801. All Ranjeet Singh's conquests were achieved by Punjabi armies composed of Sikhs, Muslims, and Hindus. The modernized Punjabi army fought well in campaigns in the North-West Frontier (now Khyber Pakhtunkhwa province, Pakistan,

on the Afghanistan border), including quelling an uprising by tribesmen there in 1831 and repulsing an Afghan counterattack on Peshawar in 1837. After the demise of Maharaja Sikhs lost their kingdom to Britishers, treason by Dogra Sikhs.

British ruled India for about two hundred years by dividing the country on caste and religion basis. After Britishers left the country, it was divided into three pieces, India, West Pakistan and East Pakistan. Even after division of India, conflict between Hindus and Muslim did not reduce. Britishers created Kashmir Problem as a bone of contention between two nations.

Due to the mistakes of our leaders, who took over from Britishers, part of Kashmir, was taken over by Pakistan using force. Although India was divided based on two nation theory, still good chunk of Muslims stayed in India, thanks to Mahatama Gandhi, and Pandit Nehru who always had soft corner for Muslims. As a result Muslim population in India become number one amongst all the countries of the world, partly because of polygamy in their religion and partly due to immigration from neighboring countries.

Even after partition, Pakistan was not satisfied with half of Kashmir captured by force, and continued aggression on India and Indian Muslims continuously gave silent approval.

On the top of it, conversion remained undeterred and money was being poured from Arabian countries for making mosques in India. In Kashmir each road has a mosque. Slowly and secretly groups like Muslim Majlis, SIMI and PFI increased their activities of subversion and terrorist activities with the help of Pakistan increased. This resulted in attack on Reserve Police in Pulwama and hell of other terrorist activities in Kashmir as well as in India, with the passive attitude of many political parties. Money also poured from European countries to convert Hindus to Christianity.

Muslim population also speedily grew in India as compared to other religions and on the top of it illegal migration from Bangla Desh and Rohangia from Myanmar also came to India and is continuously entering India, helped by many parties just for the sake of vote bank.

Kartarpur shrine which is only two kilometer from Punjab border went to Pakistan due to negligence of our Hindu leaders. Now it is being used by Pakistan for promoting Khalistan issue in India. Khalistan issue raised by few misguided Sikhs is a dead issue. Punjab has already suffered a lot in the past by the issues created by few misguided Sikh youths and fanned by others.

Religion is a private issue and individual's belief. It is advisable for all in India should live peacefully and worship their Gods in their private life. Religion should not be brought on roads and it should not be imposed on others, the way Muslims and Christians are doing.

Unlike Koran, no religion teaches violence. No religious book says that you kill all those who do not

believe in your doctrine. Concept of Jihad has to be abolished from the minds of Indian Muslims and they have to co-exist with their Hindu brethren by keeping their identity intact but totally in a personalized way.

With the advent of Wahabism, Kashmir which was once dominated by Sufism, has now taken weapons in their hand. Violence in Kashmir is backed by Pakistan and terrorists are being exported to India across the border. Life of peaceful people of Kashmir has become hell. Not only Jammu and Kashmir, whole world is now suffering from Islamic terrorism. Feet of the presence of ISIS are already reached in Kerala, West Bengal and Kerala. ISIS is going to capture Kabul very soon and then it will be easy for them to enter Pakistan. ISIS flags are already being waived in Kashmir.

Sikhs through the message of Guru Nanak, spreading good will in the world by their langar and sewa. It is a war between evil and good. Sikhs can show their magnanimity by rendering seva to every one irrespective of one deserves or not. But while rendering seva, one must see whether it is going in right direction to deserving people. God only know, where this war of religious attrition will ever end?

