

# Salahiyat ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ صلاحیت

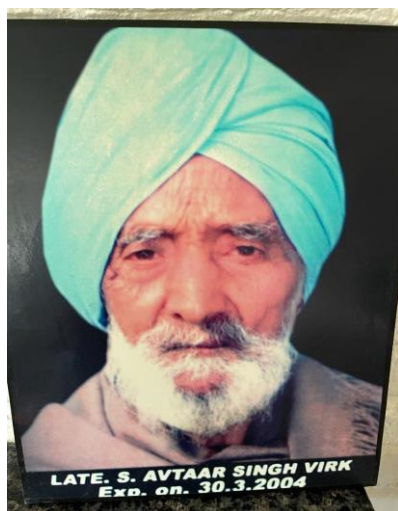


Lord Mountbatten visit of Lahore main Khatri Bazar Shah Alam Market in riot of 1947

Guest Editor : Prof Hardev Singh Virk,  
Professor of Eminence (Honorary),  
SGGS World University,  
Fatehgarh Sahib, India.

***Mujhey Apney Bikhar Janey  
Ka Gam Nahi,  
Lekin baad aneywali nasal kay  
Cherey swaran jana,  
Who jurmey Hadd parasti ki saza  
tazebib farmain lain,  
Hamey atta hai har dushwar manzil  
Say gujar jana,  
Yanhi lutey gayey kfiley,  
Aksar ujalon kay,  
Jara manzil say pahley  
Kfiley waley thahar jana***

## **Dedicated to Parents of Prof. Hardev Singh Virk**



**Father: Avtar Singh Virk s/o Nand Singh Virk and Kesar Kaur Born in 1910 at Kamoke, District Gujranwala (now in Pakistan)**

**Mother: Tej Kaur Bajwa d/o Jawala Singh Bajwa and Jeevan Kaur**

**Born in 1915 at Majhiwala Bhuler (Chak No. 270RB), Tehsil Jaranwala, District Layalpur (now in Pakistan)**

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## **Guest Editor:**



### ***Prof Hardev Singh Virk***

***Prof. Hardev Singh Virk was born in Kamoke Mandi, district Gujranwala (now in Pakistan) on 23rd Feb. 1942. He received his Masters in Physics from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (1963) and Doctorate in Nuclear Physics from Marie Curie University, Paris (France) in 1972. He served in Punjabi University, Patiala (1965-79) and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (1979-2002). His research interests are manifold: Nuclear & Radiation Physics; Geochronology; Earthquakes & Environment; Ion Tracks & Nanotechnology; History & Philosophy of Science; Sikh Religion and Punjabi Literature.***

***Professor Virk retired from Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar in June 2002 after serving as Director Earthquake Research and Dean Academic Affairs. He was re-employed as Director Research, DAV Institute of Engineering & Technology, Jalandhar (2008-2011); Adjunct Professor, Akal University, Baru Sahib (2010-till date); Visiting Professor, SGGS World University, Fatehgarh Sahib (2013-17); and Professor of Eminence, Punjabi University, Patiala (2017-19). Presently, he is serving as Professor of Eminence (Honorary), SGGS World University, Fatehgarh Sahib.***

***Professor Virk is recipient of several awards, viz., Senior Associateship of International Centre for Theoretical Physics (ICTP), Trieste, Italy (1988-93); Shiromani Award as Best Writer of Scientific Literature in Punjabi awarded by Punjab State Languages Department (1993); S. Kartar Singh Dhaliwal Award for Scientific & Literary Writing in Punjabi by Panjabi Sahit Akademy, Ludhiana (2000); Honourable Mention Award of Templeton Foundation (USA) for a Project on Global Perspectives of Science & Sikh Religion (2005).***

***Prof. Virk has published 450 research papers, 45 books and nearly 200 articles on Science education, Science policy, Sikh Religion and Punjabi literature. Presently, he is working on Ground water contamination due to Uranium and Heavy Metals in Punjab and its mitigation.***

## **EDITORIAL:**

### **PARTITION AND ITS AFTERMATH**

***Hardev Singh Virk***

***Professor of Eminence, SGGS World University, Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab), India***

**Dr. Sunil Bhatia, Chief Editor of SALAHYAT, dedicated the August Issue to Partition of India and asked Prof. Amir Hamza Virk of Pakpattan (Pakistan) to act as Guest Editor of this Special Volume. Dr. Hamza Virk did a wonderful job by writing an Editorial and contributing an Article pointing to the hidden imperialistic factors responsible for the 1947 partition. The viewpoint of Authors on the other side of Wagah border appeared as an effort in reconciliation which is the aim and objective of SALAHYAT. I proposed to Dr. Sunil Bhatia to spare the September Issue for the views of authors of Indian Punjab about 1947 Partition and he willingly accepted my suggestion. But the onus of editing the September Issue on Partition fell on my shoulders. I am afraid if I shall be able to meet the high standards set by Prof. Hamza Virk in the August Issue on Partition.**

**The August Issue opens with the Poem of Allama Iqbal, the Poet Laureate of United Punjab:**

***Shakti Bhi, Shanti Bhi Bhagton Ke Geet Mein Hai***

***Dharti Ke Basion Ki Mukti Pareet Mein Hai***

***[Both] power and peace are implied in the songs of the disciples.***

***The salvation of the people of the world lies in love!***

**Our MOTTO on both sides of Wagah border should be LOVE & PEACE. I borrow the phrase from Guest Editorial of August Issue that the British adopted the policy of "Divide and Rule" to perpetuate their rule and maintain their hold over India but when**

**they left, they used another weapon "Divide and Quit": Everyone is aware of the divide and rule policy of the British in the subcontinent. Therefore, there is no need to talk much about it. When the British and other imperialists left their colonies, they adopted the policy of "Divide and Quit". This weapon was used by British Imperialists in all their colonies in Asia and elsewhere.**

**I face a great challenge to do justice with my assignment as a Guest Editor. I was an eye witness to horrendous crimes committed by Punjabis on both sides of Wagha border as a young boy of six years. I am afraid if I go into the details of what I saw with my own eyes during Partition of Punjab, it may bring tears into eyes of readers. I, therefore, wish to avoid my narrative based on Sikh sentiments expressed elsewhere as a part of MY STORY recorded for the 1947 Partition Archives of Guneeta Singh Bhalla, a brilliant Physicist who has devoted her life to her chosen mission on Partition of Punjab.**

**Who were the real culprits for this Partition? In my view, the greatest culprit were the British Rulers who shirked their responsibility to keep the India united at all costs but they proved to be utter failure at the spur of the moment and left India in a great hurry. They declared that India will be a free nation in June 1948 in British Parliament but then advanced this date to mid-August 1947. The other culprits were Indian National Congress, Muslim League and to some extent, the Sikh leaders under the garb of Akali Party.**

**Indian National Congress under the leadership of Gandhi and Nehru made a monopoly to win freedom for India using non-violence as a potent weapon. The British created a fissure among the unity of Indian masses by introduction of religion based**



**constituencies in pre-partition India. India was not treated as one nation by the British and Muslim League and Sikhs allotted reservation quota of seats in constituent assembly based on their population in Punjab. Muslim League wanted Pakistan on the basis of Two Nation theory but I wonder why Congress buckled under this false pretense and yielded to accept the Partition of India. This theory was applied partially to Punjab and Bengal while Muslim population in the rest of India remained unperturbed. This shows the dual character of both Congress and Muslim League.**

**The specter of Muslim League appeared suddenly on the horizon of Punjab. In 1937 Punjab provincial assembly elections, Muslim League won only 2 seats. But in less than a decade, it gained ground among the masses by playing the communal card and won 75 seats to Punjab assembly in the elections held in 1946. The Unionist Party formed a government with the support of Congress and Akali party and Muslim League was left out of power politics of Punjab. This development was crucial because it was taken as a vote in favour of Pakistan, given that the League's main policy was a homeland for Muslims. Muslim League called for a direct action and created law and order situation in Punjab. Sir Khizar Hyat Khan Tiwana, the secular Prime Minister of Punjab, was forced to resign which created a chaotic situation in Punjab.**

**Master Tara Singh, the Akali Party leader, must share the blame for creating a situation which triggered the riots in Rawalpindi division. When Khizar Tiwana resigned, Muslim League laid its claim to form Ministry in Punjab. The opposition of Congress and Akali Party proved to be a stumbling block and Governor's rule was imposed in Punjab to the chagrin of Muslim League. Master Tara Singh not only provoked the Muslim League but also taunted it by unsheathing of his sword and declaring from the precincts of**

**Punjab assembly “Pakistan Murdabad”, meaning death to the idea of Pakistan. It was an affront to the Muslim League which had won the highest number of seats in Punjab provincial elections in 1946. After this episode during the first week of March, 1947, the riots were started by sympathizers of Pakistan in Lahore and Rawalpindi. It is estimated that 5000 Sikhs were murdered in the Rawalpindi division alone. Lord Mountbatten made a tour of riot-affected areas as shown in the photograph on the cover page.**

**The September Issue of SALAHYAT has some heart-rending accounts by the authors of Indian Punjab. Dr. Bhagwan Josh, a well known historian of JNU, New Delhi, has traced the origin of Hindutva linked to Partition of India. Pakistan was created as an Islamic state and as its natural corollary, India slowly and steadily shifted from Secularism to a religion based agenda in the shape of Hindutva, being practiced by covert and overt means as its state policy by the ruling party of India. Bhagwan Josh explains the implications of Partition for the Hindutva ideology in his essay: *“Partition and the Rise of Hindutva Movement in Contemporary India”*.**

**Hardev Singh Virk, Guest Editor, traces the failure of Sikhs to gain anything worthwhile in this game of power and pelf at the time of Partition. The British rulers annexed Punjab in 1849 from the Sikh rulers and were obliged to return favours for the services rendered by the Sikhs during World Wars. However, when the other two parties, Indian National Congress and Muslim League, got what they wanted as exploits of Partition, Sikhs were losers on all fronts. Prof. Virk traces the reasons of failure in his well researched article: *“How the Dream of Sikh State was shattered in 1947?”* He quotes Akhtar Hussain Sandhu who blames the Sikh leadership for its lackadaisical attitude during partition parleys:**

**“Sikhs issued every statement that could undermine the Muslim cause whether it helped their own cause or not. The Sikhs had rejected the Cabinet Mission proposals but even then they were pursuing a change in the plan which testifies to their weak performance in the political contest. Therefore, the Akalis’ pro-Congress politics as a one item agenda throttled the possibility of their being workable alternatives for the Sikh future”.**

**Amardeep Singh of Singapore, a celebrated author of ‘Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan’ and its companion, ‘The Quest Continues: Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan’ has narrated a touching story of his aunt, who was lost as a child of five years, during the Partition riots of Mansehra under the title: “Meeting Noori (Jaswanti) in Rawalpindi”. It speaks volumes of pain and suffering undergone by the women folk of Punjab during the ill-fated Partition of Punjab. Jasbir Singh Bindra narrates his first hand account of Partition days. It is a narrative based on his personal experience and how they faced death during movement to a safe haven in Indian Punjab. All Punjabis who migrated from either side of Wagha wish to visit their birthplace. Ahmed Naeem Chishti wrote an account based on his personal interviews in August issue of SALAHYAT. Hardev Singh Virk narrates his own experience of visiting his ancestral PARTITION home in Pakistan: “Reminiscences of My Visits to Pakistan”.**

**Sunil Bhatia has helped me in formatting the articles which were received in different formats incompatible with our standard format for the SALAHYAT. I am grateful to the authors who contributed articles for September Issue. Hope the legacy of Sanjha Punjab and Punjabiati will be revived through the efforts of authors on both sides of Wagha border.**

# **Reminiscences of My Visits to Pakistan**

***Hardev Singh Virk***

***Professor of Eminence (Honorary), SGGS World University,  
Fatehgarh Sahib (Punjab), India***

**I was born in Chak No. 270 RB (Majhiwala Bhuler), Tehsil Jaranwala, district Layalpur (now Faisalabad) in August 1941 in my maternal grandmother's (*nani*) house. I moved to my paternal home in Kamoke, a mandi town of Gujranwala district, in 1946 to start my primary school education. In 1947 Partition Archive, my story describes our escape from Kamoke on 14<sup>th</sup> August 1947 leaving our home and hearth in a jam-packed military truck. I have been fortunate to visit Pakistan thrice to participate in Summer College and International Conferences during 1981, 1983 and 1988. I was lucky to visit my ancestral house in Kamoke twice to revive old memories.**

**In June 1981, I participated in International Summer College on Physics held at Nathiagali, a hill station in Abbottabad district. I was visiting Pakistan after 34 years of Partition of Punjab and had a lurking fear in my mind. After crossing the Wagha border, I took a bus to Lahore. On reaching Lahore, I was picked up by my French friend, Jean Marie Lafont, who hosted me for one night before moving to Nathiagali. I did not dare to move out of the house out of fear as the memories of our migration in 1947 were disturbing my mind. Next day, I reached Rawalpindi in a van where I was picked up by the organisers and made me feel comfortable. My journey to Nathiagali was full of excitement. I was lodged in a hut and served delicious food. I started feeling at home in the cool environment of this mountain resort.**

**Our Summer College was of four weeks duration. I participated in excursions to Murree and Abbottabad. But organisers planned a two day trip to Peshawar passing through Haripur, Attock, Hassan Abdal and Naushehra. My life's wish was fulfilled when I was allowed 15 minutes stop over to visit Panja Sahib gurdwara at Hassan Abdal. On the last day of Summer College, a farewell was organised which was presided over by the Chairman Pakistan Atomic Energy. I was treated as a special guest. The hosts organised a cultural evening where we were entertained by Pashto music and songs. I was invited to make a brief presentation. I took up the challenge and joined the Pashto singer in a duet which was highly appreciated.**

**My return journey from Nathiagali took me through Islamabad, Jhelum, Gujranwala and Kamoke. I made a stopover at Kamoke to visit my ancestral house. With the help of a passerby, I could trace it without much difficulty. The occupants of the house had migrated from Fatehgarh Churian of Gurdaspur district. I felt hesitant to enter as a stranger but they welcomed me with open arms. To help me resurrect my days of childhood, they called a Maulvi and an old lady of our mohalla. Both of them knew my family. The old lady took me in her lap and consoled me while I was weeping all the time. She was the saviour of my grandmother who was left behind by mistake when we left our house in panic.**

**In 1983, I visited Lahore with my family to participate in an International Conference on Renewable Energy. Jean Marie Lafont and his wife Rehana were our hosts. The highpoint of our visit was a pilgrimage to Nankana Sahib, the birth place of Guru Nanak, the founder of Sikh religion. We enjoyed the hospitality of Lafonts, our family friends, and the organisers of International Conference.**

**The third visit in Sept. 1988 for participation in International SSNTD Conference held at Lahore proved to be a landmark for our**

research group at Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. We presented 18 research papers out of a total 44 presented by India, the highest number by any group at this conference. Dr. Asghar Ali, my old friend of Paris days, entertained our research group to a dinner at his residence in Gulbarga. Before our departure, I took an evening trip to Kamoke. I took some photographs of our ancestral house. Somehow, the news of my visit spread in the mohalla and sons of my uncle, Tajdin Virk, came to invite me to visit their family. I knew from my parents that Tajdin's father took to Islam but our families maintained mutual relationship at social and cultural levels. The ladies of the house did not use *purdah* (hiding behind a veil) as I was treated as their own kith and kin from a Virk family.

The organisers arranged for our group a guided tour to Nankana Sahib and Gurdwara Sacha Sauda at Farooqabad, district Sheikhpura. The Prime Minister of Pakistan offered the delegates from Europe to visit Swat valley but Indians were not included otherwise I was interested in that trip. The photos of this conference are included in this write up to revive old memories.



**A Duet with Mahajbeen Qazalbash, Bulbul-e-Sarhad, in Nathiagali (1981)**





**At Dinner with Dr. Asghar Ali in Gulbarga, Lahore (1988)**



**A visit to my ancestral house in Kamoke, Distt. Gujranwala (1988)**



**A visit to Gurdwara Sacha Sauda, Chuharkana (Farooqabad) (1988)**



**Reciting a Poem by Amrta Pritam on Partition (*aj akhan Waris Shah nu*), Lahore (1988)**





**Prof Bhgwan Singh Josh**

***Prof Bhagwan Singh Josh, M.A. History; M.Phil. History; Ph.D. Jawaharlal Lal University, Centre/School/Special Centre ,Centre for Historical Studies, School of Social Sciences***

***Books 5.Ashoka, Historical Discourse and the post-independence Indian State in Patrick Orivelle (ed.), ASHOKA AND THE MAKING OF MODERN INDIA, OUP, 2011.***

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# **PARTITION AND THE RISE OF HINDUTVA MOVEMENT IN CONTEMPORARY INDIA**

***Bhagwan Josh***

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## **Abstract:**

***Hindutva movement is now actively seeking to capture instruments of state power and trying to impose its cultural hegemony by mobilizing Hindus. In post-Independent India, the Hindutva movement has reached such proportions because the much desired 'left-of-centre' consolidation failed to emerge in the 1970s and 1980s. Over these decades, the governments of the day claimed that India was a secular country but in actual practice, because of the fear of losing Muslim votes, they constantly postponed the implementation of a secular agenda thereby opening the space for the Hindutva forces to rush in. Now the political terrain has changed drastically. Is the belief that a multi-religious and culturally diverse society can wield itself into a nation and democratic polity coming apart? Is the sub-continent returning to the European model of building ethnic nation-states underpinned by the cultural codes of a mono-culture or single religion? In a line, could this be attributed to the 'long shadow' of the Partition of India?***

**KEYWORDS:** *BJP, Cultural hegemony, Hindutva, RSS, Secularism, Two-nation theory.*

Since 2014, after it has been able to successfully form the Government at the centre, Hindutva movement (an exclusivist variety of Hindu nationalism that seeks to construct Indian nation in a supremacist vision) has been actively seeking to capture instruments of state power and simultaneously trying to impose its cultural hegemony by mobilizing Hindus, especially the youth, on the issues of cow-slaughter, beef-eating, terrorism in Kashmir and the tensions with Pakistan, conversions to other religions, singing of the national song *Vande Matram* (hail the motherland), and above all, the longstanding issue of constructing the Ram temple in Ayodhya, at the exact site where Hindu idol Ram has supposed been born centuries ago. Twenty-five years ago, on 6<sup>th</sup> December, 1992, three domes of a medieval mosque in a Uttar Pradesh town came crashing down. Throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> century, extremist varieties of Hindu nationalism have fought a long battle to change the cultural complexion of the nation. However, during the struggle for India's independence, this movement has been running parallel to the mainstream anti-imperialist movement led by the Indian National Congress and M.K. Gandhi. The Partition of India provided it a new fuel of tremendous anti-Muslim sediment hatred. As millions of Hindu and Sikh refugees began to pour in India by crossing the hurriedly drawn border, a new political climate of anger began to be built up against the Congress leadership, especially against Gandhi, who was seen as still being sympathetic to the Muslims. This is what Nathu Ram Godse explained his action to the trial court, embodying the frustration and anger of millions of Hindus:

I do say that I had no respect for the present Government owing to their policy which was unfairly favourable to the Muslim. At the same time I could clearly see that the policy was entirely due to the presence of Gandhiji. In the absence of such pressure the way

is now open for the establishment of a secular State in the true sense of the word. I have to say with great regret that the hon'ble Prime Minister Nehruji quite forgets that his actions and deeds are at times opposed to each other, when he talks about secular State in season and out of season; because it is significant to note that the hon'ble Pandit Nehruji has himself taken a leading part in acquiescing to the establishment of Pakistan, a theocratic State. But he should have realized that it will never bring prosperity to Indian Union with a State founded on fanatically blind religious faith and basis by its side. After having considered absolutely to myself, my mind impelled me to take the action against Gandhiji. (Godse, par. 48)

The Partition of the sub-continent along religious lines convinced the extremist Hindu nationalists that since Pakistan was a Muslim nation, India should be a Hindu nation. Sections of this movement have continued to believe and preach that Indian Muslims are inheritors of a historical tradition of violence by Muslim kings. They have their own understanding of India's "medieval" past which is dubbed as inaccurate and distorted history by self-proclaimed "secular historians". In the conquest of the demolition of a mosque for them, which carried the name of the first Mughal emperor, the celebrations after the demolition appeared to settle multiple scores. All the Muslims in India did not descend from the Muslim aristocracy, which came from other countries and made India their home. It is generally believed that about 9 out of 10 of them are converts from low-caste Hindus who were attracted to Islam's message of equality. As opposed to the view of secular historians, sections of the Hindutva movement continue to believe that those conversions of the past were forced conversions and were inimical to the organic and natural evolution of Hindu society. Hence, its agenda to stop conversions to Christianity and Islam in

post-independent India by various means, including violent means. For them denationalised Christianity and Islam continue to pose serious threat even today and the only way to handle this threat was the creation of a Hindu Rashtra. This agenda, with the complicity of local police, takes the form anti-Christian violent activities at the grassroots level. The anti-conversion agenda, it must be remembered, has legal cover in Madhya Pradesh: sweeping provisions in the Madhya Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act, 1968, allow police to criminalize conversion (Josh 2009: 97-115).

The partisan ideological notions of the vigilante groups such as "ghar-vapsi" (reconversions to Hinduism) and "love-jihad" (discussed below) are attempts to create in Hindu society a strong awareness to stop such conversions and (crossing over Hinduism's boundaries by young women to non-Hindu cultural enclosures). For them state's efforts to remove poverty through economic development is not enough. The state in independent India (also must become a cultural state). For secularists the idea of such conversions to other non-Hindu religions is blown out of proportion and devised to mislead the people. Moreover, keeping in view the colonial and Congress traditions, India's multi-culturalism must be allowed to remain intact and the Indian state must remain neutral in religious-cultural matters.

For the extreme Hindu nationalist forces, the Muslims who had stayed back after the Partition, irrespective of the Constitution, in actuality, have forfeited their right to Indian citizenship as the new state of Pakistan was demanded in the name of Islam and on behalf of all the Muslims of the Indian subcontinent. The Partition had been agreed to by the Congress leaders on the basis of religion. Therefore, the other half of the state, comprising the Indian territory, must now be logically considered and also must existentially become, a Hindu state. This was the agenda of extreme Hindu nationalism since 1930s and the movement embodying it continued to persist as

a marginal political force till 1970s. To its credit, the leaders of this movement stood for democracy and opposed the Emergency by Indira Gandhi in 1975. This was the moment that the RSS was waiting for, to wash the stain of Gandhi's murder and acquire the political respectability to enter the mainstream of India's political life. This led to a sudden turn in its fortunes as it became a part of the Government at the Centre for the first time in 1977, a politically centrist Government that was also supported by the Communists.

In the 1980s, the *Sangh Parivar*, a network of Hindu organisations, sought a new symbol to stir up the Hindu nationalist fervor. It began to actively align itself with the movement seeking to build a grand temple to Hindu God Ram *at the exact site* where a Mosque built by the Mughal emperor Babur stood. In actuality, the demand was based on the "fact" of belief of Hindu masses ( *Hindu astha*), and from the very beginning, was cast in the form of a trial of strength between India's two broad cultural forces—one proclaiming secularism and other extreme Hindu nationalism.

On December 6<sup>th</sup> 1992, the demolition of a dilapidated mosque —known as Mosque— was announced to the world by the BBC correspondent: "Hindus have done something which they had not done in the last five hundred years." This was the first moment of decisive triumph for this movement. The politicians who had been leading this movement have not looked back since then. A decade after the demolition of the mosque, the Bhataiya Janata Party (BJP) came to power at the Centre and it decided that for V.D. Savarkar's ideology i.e. Hindutva, be officially recognised, a due ceremony was in order. By 2003, Savarkar's dream of making India a Hindu nation had finally been moving towards its partial fulfillment. It decided to place Savarkar's portrait in Parliament House's Central Hall, along with portraits of the greats of India's freedom struggle. The shunned, if not hated, ideological variety of Hindu nationalism, and its main articulator despised by many, had

finally arrived on the Centre stage of Indian politics. Just like Jinnah, Savarkar had believed that Hindus and Muslims formed Two Nations. Jinnah realized his goal with Partition. Savarkar did not, could not, for India chose to follow Gandhi, Nehru and the Congress. Let it be added here, according to the Kapur Commission of Inquiry Report constituted in 1969, Nathuram Godse had a long meeting with Savarkar on January 23 or 24, before he returned to Delhi and shot Gandhi thrice at point-blank range on January 30<sup>th</sup> 1948. Savarkar was arrested in connection with a conspiracy to kill Gandhi. But there was no direct evidence to legally prove criminal conspiracy. The judge found it "unsafe" to convict Savarkar. Godse and Narayan Apte were awarded death penalty but Savarkar was acquitted.

But the rise of forces of extremist Hindu nationalism were immediately preceded by two other political developments known as-Mandal Commission and L.K. Advani's Rath Yatra of 1990. Both were closely linked with each other. The Mandal Commission was established in India on 1<sup>st</sup> January 1979. In 1980, the Commission recommended that members of other backward classes (OBC) be granted reservations to 27 percent of jobs under the central government and public sector undertakings. The Report became the site of sharp political contest when the National Front government under V.P. Singh decided to implement this recommendation of the Report in August 1990. The BJP, which was part of this government, perceived it as a deliberate attempt to encourage the identity politics of caste, thereby undermining its ideology of organic Hindu society and denial of primacy of Hindu nationalism over the divisive politics of caste identities. Thousands of young men flocked to Advani's call, forming the bands of volunteer army which sought to demolish the Masjid unsuccessfully in October 1990, before achieving this 'success' two years later. BJP

leader L.K. Advani travelled across the country in a chariot from Somnath temple, a temple which had been plundered by the Turk invader Ghazni in 1024, symbolising the crimes of Muslim rulers. Anti-Muslim sentiments were roused to a fever pitch throughout this journey, peaking at levels unsurpassed since the Partition riots.

Preceding and following the demolition of the Babri Masjid were a series of riots, in which thousands of innocent Indians lost their lives. No single event in independent India has so polarized public opinion; no single event so adversely affected life on the ground, generating widespread suspicion and hostility between groups of citizens —and leading to much violence and suffering too. Today, there are violence-oriented young vigilante groups in various parts of the country which are still continuing to raise the slogans, day in and day out: 'Musalman kay do hee sthaan, Pakistan ya qabristhan'(there are only two places for Muslims —Pakistan or the graveyard.)<sup>1</sup> Stray incidents of mobs lynching Muslims do form a clear pattern to send the message that Muslims should know their place, that of second-class citizens. All those secularists who were egging on the Muslim leadership not to compromise with Hindus on cultural issues of conflict are now nowhere to be seen. No wonder, a sense of terror has gripped the Indian Muslims. Almost all the leading newspapers are telling the government and the leaders of the BJP to be mindful of their agenda of building a grand temple in Ayodhya before the parliamentary elections of 2019. A long quotation from the editorial of a very important daily will be in order here:

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<sup>1</sup> *At many religious places anti- Christian and anti-Muslim slogans could be found written on the walls. For example these were the slogans on the walls of Shabri temple in Gujarat's conflict ridden tribal district Dangs: Hindu jagao, Christi bhagao (awaken the Hindus and force the Christian missionaries to run away).*



**Priests of several akharas in Ayodhya, who clearly have no notion of what spirituality means, have served an 'ultimatum' to BJP to build a Ram temple at the site of the demolished Babri Masjid as a way of 'avenging' the deaths of Karsevaks in Godhra in 2002. But the politics of revenge has already caused devastating riots in Gujarat after Godhra —indeed all communal riots are motivated by a similar politics of revenge. It's a new century now and the country is striving to move past this legacy of violence and bloodshed, stemming from the 1947 Partition, towards a future of peace, development and prosperity. In the words of Prime Minister Narendra Modi: 'sab ka saath, sab ka vikas.' Attempts to disinter the ghosts of the past, therefore, must be resisted at all costs. The demolition of the Babri Masjid itself was a criminal act to which political authorities turned a blind eye, out of the mistaken notion that nebulous entities such as hypothetical 'community sentiment' should gain precedence over the rule of law and constitutional values such as equality and religious liberty. Once enshrined, such a notion will become a principle of instability and anarchy, subverting democracy itself; India will come to resemble neighbouring Pakistan. ("Old obsessions" 2017).**

**The series of events that led up to the demolition in December 1992, began with the Shah Bano case. In 1978, sixty two years old Shah Bano Begum of Indore was driven out of her matrimonial house by her husband. When Shah Bano sought maintenance under CRPC, section 125, her husband divorced her by resorting to the practice triple *talaq* (divorce). Not only that, her husband Mohammed Ahmad Khan, refused to provide her and her five children promised maintenance of Rs. 500. Various court judgments upheld the right of Shah Bano to monthly maintenance. Rajiv Gandhi came to power in 1984 after the assassination her mother Indira Gandhi. Under pressure from Muslim hardliners, his Government**

enacted a Law in Parliament that overturned the Supreme Court judgment in the Shah Bano case. The 1986 Muslim Women (Protection on Rights of Divorce) Act diluted the Supreme Court judgment and allowed maintenance to a divorced woman only during the period of iddat or till 90 days after the divorce. More importantly, this was done after Muslim leaders protested that the judgment encroached upon the right of the community to be governed by its personal laws. This was widely seen as an appeasement of Muslim orthodoxy and betrayal of the promise of implementation of Uniform Civil Code made in the Constitution. This offended many Muslim and Hindu supporters of the Congress and exposed the hollowness of its ideology of secularism. It was widely believed that Rajiv Gandhi overturned the Shah Bano judgment for fear of losing the Muslim vote. The BJP had strongly criticized the “appeasement” of Muslims. In order to pacify the anger of the Hindus, the gates of the Babri Masjid were unlocked and, three years later, at the end of Rajiv’s tenure, the Vishav Hindu Prishad (VHP) was allowed to carry out the *Shilanyas* (to lay foundation) for the construction of Ram temple. The practice of instant triple *talaq* continued and in August 2017, ShayaraBano and four other women won their case in the Supreme Court. An overwhelming majority of Muslim women wanted an end to practices such as *talaq-e-biddat* (instant triple talaq), *halala* (wherein a Muslim woman if she wants to remarry her divorced husband, must first consummate her marriage with another man) and polygamy. On August 22<sup>nd</sup> 2017, thirty-two years after the Shah Bano case, the Supreme Court of India declared that the practice of triple *talaq* violates the right to equality and is thus against the law. Unlike the Congress Government, the BJP Government is expected to take the triple *talaq* verdict of the Supreme Court to its logical conclusion by framing a very stringent law whereby the government plans to make triple *talaq* a crime punishable with three years in jail and a fine as a

**“necessary deterrent.” Many Muslim organisations have denounced it as a vicious ploy of the BJP government to criminalise Muslim men.<sup>2</sup>**

## **II**

**In today’s world, even when nationalism is once again asserting itself and many governments and parties are busy promoting it, there is no dearth of individuals who still feel convinced that the “nations are lines in the sand, tomorrow they may not be there... why would you give up your life for that?” (Rajanit Kath Ganesh 2017). Yet the explosive power of these “lines” continue to create wars in the contemporary world, including the ones in the post-colonial South Asia.**

**W.H. Auden’s unsparing poem ‘Partition’, written in 1966, is a caustic criticism of the five weeks Cyril Radcliffe spent in the subcontinent drawing up the borders between India and Pakistan. And it is this line, known as “Radcliffe Line”, which became the immediate cause of an explosion of violence that killed one million people and displaced 12 million. Retrospectively, it has now been universally accepted that “1947” created a cycle of revenge that has resonated through the decades and still plagues the subcontinent. Thus for it has led to three wars, countless acts of terrorism, polarization around the Cold War powers and both**

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<sup>2</sup> *In the Shah Bano case [1985(2) SCC 556], the Supreme Court of India had aptly said: “It is also a matter of regret that Article 44 of the Constitution has remained a dead letter. It provides that the State shall endeavor to secure for the citizens a uniform civil code throughout the territory of India’. There is no evidence of any official activity for framing a common civil code for the country. A belief seems to have gained ground that it is for the Muslim community to take the lead in the matter of reforms of their personal law.” “A common civil code will help cause of national integration by removing disparate loyalties to laws which have conflicting ideologies. No community is likely to bell the cat by making gratuitous concession on this issue. It is the state which is charged with the duty of securing uniform civil code for citizens of the country and, unquestionably it has the legislative competence to do so. A counsel in the case whispered, somewhat audibly, that legislative competence is one thing, the political courage to use the competence is quite another.” Quoted in The Times of India, January 8th 2017.*

nations spending massive amounts on their military while millions live in poverty. The roots of much of today's violence in the region are in the decisions taken that year. Moreover, "this line", has left an unforgettable legacy which continues to cast a long shadow on the daily lives of Indians in many subtle and not so subtle ways. Each year Partition is being remembered in new ways. On 24<sup>th</sup> October, 2016, the Partition Museum was launched in Amritsar. The latest literary festival in Gurgaon, the place where I live, devoted a special session to "Memories of Partition". In the last few decades, scores of films have been made, novels have been written and plays enacted on the theme of Partition. Also there is a substantial amount of poetry dedicated to this theme. Hardly, a day passes in the lives of the Indian people when some "banal" incident or some statement of an utter "absurdity and stupidity" by some extremist fringe group do not remind Indians of the bitter memories associated with "this line."

With the arrival of a new type of modern colonial state the political power of the erstwhile Muslim rulers was replaced by a new centralised administration based on modern scientific methods. This massive change opened up spaces for the Muslim cultural hegemony, built during the long period of so-called medieval history, to be challenged by the Hindu groups. Thus, towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, just thirty years after the great revolt of 1857, India began to be engulfed in massive sectarian riots between the two communities. These peaceful and violent, constitutional as well as non-constitutional, cultural contests on various issues between the Muslim and the Hindu cultural forces were geared towards dismantling the earlier cultural power relations. Even after Partition, this cultural strife has continued intermittently as large number of Muslims had stayed back in India. The rise of the forces of Hindutva were born and

nurtured in the interstices created by the continuously occurring violent and peaceful confrontations between sections of the two communities, in this *longue duree* history.

In post-Independent India, while the nationalists in the Indian National Congress sought to contain these Hindu-Muslim cultural contests within a discourse of democracy and mass representation, sections of the Hindus found in this democratic polity an opportunity to argue for an aggressive strategy, to establish Hindu hegemony by mobilizing Hindus on a multi-pronged agenda. One of the leading ideologues of Hindu nationalism, M.S. Golwalkar had defined the 'we' of the future Indian state:

*In Hindustan exists and must need exist the ancient Hindu nation and nought else but the Hindu nation... so long, as they (Muslims and other non-Hindus) maintain their racial, religious and cultural differences, they cannot but be only foreigners... There are only two courses open to the foreign elements, either to merge themselves in the national race and adopt its culture, or to live at the sweet will of the national race... they must cease to be foreigners, or may stay in the country, wholly subordinated to the Hindu nation... (Gowalker 19, 52-56, 62).*

Since 1940, this theme/idea/ideology of Hindutva has been sought to spread throughout the country by thousands of committed cadres organized into RSS *shakhas* (groups) through regular meetings, conferences, educational institutions, and hundreds of small and big newspapers. The dissemination of this ideology by various Hindu organisations and personalities has been the subject of scores of academic studies and hundreds of research papers. The long-term impact of Partition is the creation and perpetuation of psychological mindsets where Hindus and Muslims could not be seen as one unified nation and this sediment idea now refuses to

be undone through any kind of consensus. What has come to be called as 'Uniform Civil Code' (1985) and 'Ram Janambhoomi Controversy' (1992), along with the recently enacted and zealously imposed laws to protect the 'Gau-mata'(mother-cow) are three prominent issues of durable contention and sectarian social strife. As we would see in the discussion that follows that the cultural contest centering on these three issues, and some other issues indirectly associated with them, instantly invoke the deeper cultural fault-line of *longue duree* history of Hindu-Muslim relations (Joshi and Josh 1994: vol. 3, chp. 5, 6). The stoking of this fault-line, over the years, has continued to generate immense political energies, violent passions and mass mobilizations which firmly set contemporary India on to a trajectory which has finally brought a pro-Hindu political party (BJP)-into power in 2014. As a result of this continued cultural strife, post-independent India, especially after 1980s, continues to be a battleground of contesting nationalist ideologies, one claiming to be secular and the other labeled and denounced by secularists as "communalism" (Joshi and Josh 2013: vol 3).

Since 1990s, with the background of rising terrorism, a constant war has been going on between the armed groups in Kashmir and the Indian Army; some call it a 'proxy war' between Pakistan and India. The impact of happenings in Kashmir covered by TV channels, print and social media continues to influence the existing mindsets of the Indians. As a result, the day to day cultural-political atmosphere of the country remains surcharged and tension ridden under the surface of an uneasy calm. The cultural project of making India Hindu is being implemented in many ways by the Modi-led Government: from the top by its own carefully designed cultural policies and from the bottom by being complicit with mass agitations and demands in society that are challenging the freedom of expression of poets, writers, artists and film makers. As a result

**of these multi-pronged cultural practices a sort of new Cultural State is being sought by partly dismantling the existing one that has evolved in the last seventy years under the banner of secularism.**

**In today's India, due to the deepening of cultural divide between Hindus and Muslims, the moral and ethical visions of even the most ideologically neutral individuals are not considered above suspicion by the political parties. Three years ago, the forces professing the idea of 'Hindu Nation' have acquired a position of political dominance by getting about 31 percent of the total votes in the country. Their governments are in power in majorities (29) of the Indian states. But it is still faced with the serious problem: how to translate this dominance into societal hegemony by winning over lower castes and sections of the Muslims, especially women. Only that position could allow them to perpetuate their rule at the Centre in a liberal democratic polity. How far they have actually travelled down that road as far as country as a whole is concerned would be clear only after the general elections of 2019. The BJP is still far from acquiring a cultural status, moral sagacity and political disposition where the majority of the nation is willing to accept it as a trustworthy hegemonic power with a degree of stability and certainty of cultural consolidation. In October 2001, Narendra Modi became Chief Minister of Gujarat.**

**Because of BJP's longstanding struggle to acquire a solid and stable mass base in this part of India, some journalists have dubbed it as a laboratory of Hindutva. The election results on December 16<sup>th</sup> 2017, have shown that BJP will be forming its Government for the sixth time.**

**It is in Gujarat that the project of Hindu Rashtra has reached a fairly advanced stage but it still continues to be shaky and unstable because of the challenges posed by large sections of the lower and agrarian middle castes in rural Gujarat who are dissatisfied with**

**the unfulfilled promises of BJP regarding the creation of jobs and relatively high prices for their produce, especially cotton. In fact, this is a pan-Indian problem, inseparably linked to a deepening crisis in the vast agricultural sector: as a result of this crisis thousands of poor peasants have committed suicide throughout India. The BJP has successfully eroded the hegemony of the Indian National Congress but at the same time it is not yet in a position to create an alternative Hindu hegemony by making itself acceptable to majority of the Hindus, especially in rural areas. In the coming two decades, the whole of India is headed towards a permanent social strife in the rural areas where majority of the population lives. It is in this context that all the politically aware Indians are looking towards the results of the Gujarat elections.**

**The diversity of India is constituted by several divisions based on caste, religion, language, class and region. Political parties have arisen out of these divides and shifting coalitions. Every party needs to create a coalition of vote-banks to win power at the Centre. The BJP has been obliged to woo wide variety of vote-banks, especially the lower castes known as Dalits. This is not easy, and the BJP has stumbled badly on the employment front. The current agitations by dominant rural castes —Patidars in Gujarat, Marathas in Maharashtra, Gujjars in Rajasthan and Jats in Haryana— for reservations in government jobs pits them against existing Hindu beneficiaries of reservations (Dalits, tribals, and other backward castes). Thus even an economic issue, like employment, gets converted in India into inter-caste rivalry that fragments the Hindu monolith that the BJP would love to create.**

**The inability of any democratic state to withstand fully or for very long the assertion of a majority culture was revealed of the Indian state from the outset. The natural corollary of this phenomenon was the necessity to tilt towards extra sensitivity to minority culture and the self-representations of leaders of the**



minorities. This was seen as the essential corrective to attempts by the ideologues of the majority to convert the upswing of cultural assertiveness into culturally aggressive projects striving to establish cultural domination over the minority. On the one hand, this tilt is what has been termed 'appeasement of minorities' by the ideologues of Hindu cultural dominance and on the other upheld as proof of its 'secular' stance by the state leaders of the Indian National Congress. This is how Shashi Joshi has formulated the conflictual trajectory of Political developments in India in 1994:

The battle between revisionist and dogmatic Hinduisms, to define a culturally Hindu India is in full swing under the banner of a confrontation between 'secularism' and 'communalism' whether all its implications are comprehend or not. However, a sizeable segment of Indians is implicated in the cultural hegemony of the West-through colonialism to post-colonial global influences. This segment may not be involved-at least actively or consciously in the old cultural contests of the past that hark back to ancient or medieval history. However, the desire to assert their own cultural significance vis-à-vis the 'west' grips increasing sections of affluent Indians (Hindus, Muslims, Sikhs, etc.) even as they adjust to and emulate Western lifestyles. In this context, a throwback to pre-colonial cultural contests becomes a natural corollary to efforts at defining a cultural 'we' apropos the Western world. The power struggles of today may be between the 'West' and 'India' but the defining of India revives power struggles of the past. The process of so defining becomes an act of power in itself- a strategy for forging the future. It is thus that the past continually intervenes in the present. (Joshi and Josh 1994: vol. 3/360)

For the Sangh Parivar, the 2002 post- Godhra riots marked the apotheosis of the campaign to establish Hindu Rashtra, a time of cultural war when dominance was violently imposed over the

**'Muslim other'. But many signs indicate that the twenty years of BJP rule in Gujarat has made the Muslims, ten percent of Gujarati society, completely invisible as the Congress, a party which has ruled over India in the name of 'secularism' was not campaigning in the Muslim areas for the fear of being dubbed as the Party of the minorities/Muslims. Neither has it put up Muslim candidates even as tokenism, an evidence of its 'secular' credentials. The leaders of the Congress Party have come to the conclusion that their Party lost the 2014 parliamentary elections because the BJP was able to convince the liberal Hindus, who have been supporting the Congress all along, that Congress was, in actuality, a Party of the Muslims. Thus the BJP has successfully forced the Congress leadership to abandon its earlier terrain of 'secular politics' and come to BJP's own terrain within Hindu cultural internality. This time the Congress too was fighting to get a bigger chunk of the Hindu votes. Thus, willy-nilly, the Congress has accepted the BJP assumption, the central plank of its project of Hindu hegemony, that it is only the Hindu communities that should matter to decide the nature of political rule in this country. It has agreed with the BJP in openly proclaiming: from now onwards we, both the parties, have agreed to disenfranchise the Muslim population. As a result of this, the Congress has been quick to take a "strategic Hindu turn." Rahul Gandhi was on a temple-hopping spree and has visited twenty-eight big and small Hindu temples. He offers *pooja* in an ostentatious way which Congress leaders never did before. By questioning Rahul's identity —"he must say who he actually is"— the BJP has challenged him to openly declare his religious affiliation. The implicit message is that Rahul does not deserve to ask for the votes of the Hindus in Gujarat because his Hindu credentials are questionable. Congress, on the other hand, released Rahul's photograph with a *janeu*-(sacred thread that is worn by Brahmins) to establish that he is a '*janeu-dhari Hindu*'.**

**This debate has disturbed many people who had come to believe that 70 years after independence, one's Indian identity matters less than one's religious identity in an election. The Congress Party, some feel, that keeping in view its claim to being a Secular Party, "should have loudly proclaimed that Rahul Gandhi is a true representative of multi-faith, diverse India. Look at his pedigree. His paternal grandfather was Parsi. His father, thus half-Hindu (Brahmin) and half Parsi, married Sonia, who is Italian and Catholic. Thus Rahul is a Hindu and a Parsi and a Christian Catholic...Has the Congress forgotten the meaning of secularism in its haste to adopt Hindutva line?" (Desai 2017). The Congress Party managers' argument was that Rahul would only play into the BJP's hands if he mentions 2002 Godhara riots or secularism. Wooing the Patidar community is a recognition that the Congress is coming around the view that only caste and not secularism can break the stranglehold of religion and defeat Hindutva. In this new experiment Congress is opposing BJP's Hindutva with its own brand of soft-Hindutva.**

**Today, Gujarat's religious partition is complete. Every city has a "border", an extension of the 'Radcliffe line' drawn in 1947, an invisible line dividing Hindu and Muslim areas. The BJP has reigned supreme in this urban 'apartheid' for the last two decades. It would be a futile exercise to blame the parties and their leaders to openly display their religious identity. The long-term consequences of the Partition have been constantly at work to create religious polarization in Indian society. In democracies, politicians often mirror the society and times in which they live.**

**There was another event which pushed the Congress to openly locate itself within the Hindu cultural internality. And that was the massacre of thousands of Sikhs in Delhi after the murder of Indira Gandhi in November 1984. The then Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi did nothing to stop these killings by the organized Hindu mobs. The**

wave of sympathy which had given him a massive victory was very deceptive. He was able to win 411 seats out of 542, the largest Lok Sabha majority to date. This wave was also responsible for the BJP's massive defeat when it could muster only 2 seats in 1984. Looking from another point of view, this temporary defeat was in actuality its finest victory as it showed, for the first time, the potential power and aggressiveness of the organised Hindu sentiment. All that was now needed, was its further consolidation and to yoke it to the agenda of Hindu Rashtra. Rajiv Gandhi had miserably failed to keep the Congress Party on its secular track and permanently tainted its ideology. He has done for the BJP which BJP could never have achieved through its own efforts. Let it be emphasized that political parties do not capture power of their own. They are always helped by their opponents and contestants in many ways.

### **III. PARTITION AND DILEMMAS OF INDIAN SECULARISM**

From the days of its foundation the leaders of the Indian National Congress had posited an *a priori* separation between 'Hindu cultural nationalism' and 'political nationalism' in order to build a composite anti-imperialist opposition —a nation in its embryonic form— of all the religious communities in the subcontinent. During the period of mass movements (1920-42) and even after independence and Partition the Congress continued to declare its commitment to this *a priori* separation. It seems, given the cultural diversity, it was difficult for the early nationalist intellectuals to imagine the shaping up of an all-encompassing Indian nation without upholding this assumption. But the kind of cultural issues that emerged and coincided with the establishment of the independent nation-state clearly showed that the relationship between Hindu cultural nationalism, political nationalism and the sphere of state politics was a complex one and the their professed

separation could not always be maintained. Some of these issues were the construction of the temple at Somnath, ban on cow slaughter, Hindi as the national language and the Hindu Code Bill which, inadvertently, further underlined the idea of Hindus being a separate community despite their internal differentiation.

Secular historiography has failed to note the important fact that for considerable sections of Indians and the Indian National Congress, '1947' meant not only a moment of political independence but also, to put it in the words of Vivekananda, the foremost cultural ideologue of Hindu nationalism, the end of 'a thousand years of slavery' (Embree 160). For them, it was also a moment of celebrating the cultural pride and glory of the Hindus. But there were others in the Congress, especially Jawaharlal Nehru and his followers, who were in serious disagreement with such attitudes, and considered it a manifestation of medievalism and 'communalism'.

The Government of free India adopted an approach which was not in opposition to religion but sought the removal of religion from public affairs, the separation of state from all faiths, the insistence on religion as a private matter for the individual with no bearing on civil rights and duties. This approach was not only a part of the 'modern outlook' but also 'the most practical approach' (Gopal 1992: 13). But it was easy to proclaim a theory which posited the *a priori* separation between 'religion' and 'state politics' than to effect it. A cursory survey of the contentious cultural issues raised immediately after August 1947 leads us to the conclusion that when it came to the crunch Nehru could not implement these theoretical principles and there was retreat from what he had considered to be desirable action on the part of the state. Between theory and practice, we are told, fell the shadow of 'hesitancy' (Gopal 1992: 15). But slowly the sphere of this 'hesitancy' began to expand and from a set of principles, actively guiding state policies and interventions,

**these principles of secularism retreated into ideals. But wherein lay the social roots of this 'hesitancy'?**

**Hindu sentiment was, and continues to be, a very complex one. If one end of the spectrum of this sentiment was articulated by political organisations such as the Hindu Mahasabha and the RSS, the other end, more subtle and less sharply etched out, penetrated extensively into the Congress ranks and its mass following. It is in this sense that Patel's above quoted remark about Gandhi's assassin ("one of us") and the RSS (our brethren) needs to be understood (qtd. In R. Gandhi 1990: 496). In this context, we must point out that organisations like the Hindu Mahasabha, the RSS and the Indian National Congress operated within the same cultural internality which generated a spectrum of common cultural sentiment. Even when individuals and groups shared the same cultural sentiment they could differ widely in their strategic responses and political goals. Though he seldom spoke of secularism, Patel was no proponent of Hindu rule. In February 1949, he spoke of 'Hindu Raj' as that 'mad idea' (Gandhi 1990: 497). Nehru was not emotionally in tune with the Hindu cultural sentiment and as a result could not establish communication with considerable sections of the Hindu population. Though Sardar Patel could be located within the Hindu cultural spectrum nevertheless he opposed the notion of the Hindu state. All the same, unlike Nehru, for him it was very important to understand the depth of this sentiment, disentangling its various shades and devising an adequate response to placate, diffuse and contain it. For people like Patel, Prasad and Munshi and many others in the Congress leadership it was not to be denounced and frontally attacked as 'backwardness' and lack of 'modern outlook'. An unmitigated opposition to this sentiment without comprehending the meanings of its various shades, apart from being unwise, could also prove to be costly to the Congress in terms of political power. Thus the**

necessity to stay in power and the commitment to the principles of secularism were not to be counterposed but to be reconciled with the hope that the forces of modernisation would work towards the eradication of this 'narrow communalism.'

Meanwhile, against the backdrop of partition the newly emerging India was to be saved from becoming a Hindu state by neutralising as well as accommodating some of the Hindu cultural practices into the state's rituals of power, state policies and decisions. Though put on the defensive from the very beginning, the principles of secularism and the ultimate goal of creating a secular society were not to be abandoned. In fact, the state-sponsored project of secular pedagogy of the nation was to be elaborated systematically in the domain of education and mass media involving the intelligentsia in this project in a big way. If not completely eradicated, at least, the tide of 'communalism' was expected to recede and be marginalised with the forging ahead of the combined onslaught of secular ideological indoctrination and industrialisation.

The campaign to renovate the temple of Somnath had started immediately after the country attained freedom on 15 August 1947 thereby underlining the fact that for a section of the national Congress movement the cultural impulse for temple renovation was umbilically linked with the political project of India's independence. On Diwali day, on 12 November 1947, Sardar Patel accompanied by Jam Saheb and Kaka Saheb, Gadgil, went to Junagarh. When was the idea of the reconstruction of the temple precisely mooted? K.M. Munshi records for us the 'birth' of this idea:

*We saw the temple, while Sardar and I (Kaka Saheb) were having a little walk on the beach, I said to Sardar: 'I think the Government of India ought to rebuild this temple'. He said 'Well, go ahead'. Then we two and the Jam Saheb came to the temple and there in the*

*presence of about 500 people, I announced: 'Government of India has decided to rebuild this temple and instal the deity. This Government has come to fulfil and not to destroy. The age of reconstruction is now on'. Immediately —after this, the Jam Saheb announced a donation of one lakh of rupees. Fifteen minutes later, a huge public meeting was held in Ahalya Bai temple where Sardar in his speech, said: 'On this auspicious day of the new year, we have decided that Somanath should be reconstructed. You, people of Saurashtra, should do your best. This is a holy task in which all should participate'. Jam Saheb gave the first donation of one-lakh rupees for the construction. Samaldas Gandhi representing the Junagarh administration followed with rupees 51,000. (Munshi 61)*

According to Munshi, though the Government of India sponsored the scheme, Patel decided that the government should not make any contribution in the form of money for the reconstruction of the temple.<sup>3</sup> In 1949, Patel appealed for public contributions to rebuild the temple of Somnath (Das xxii).

Sardar Patel, K.M. Munshi and their other friends were fully aware of the meanings of the emotion associated with the reconstruction of the temple. "In the beginning", writes Munshi, *some persons*, more fond of dead stones than live values, pressed the point of view that the ruins of the old temple should be maintained as an ancient monument. We were, however firm in our view, that the temple of So- manatha was not an ancient monument; *it lived in the sentiment of the whole nation and its reconstruction was a national pledge*" (Munshi 64. My emphasis).

Clearly, there was a tussle between 'some persons' and the 'we' before the decision for reconstruction was actually taken. When the proposal for the preservation of the ruins was pressed by the

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<sup>3</sup> This suggestion was first mooted by Gandhi at a prayer meeting on 28 November 1947.



Archaeological Department, Patel expressed his views:” the Hindu sentiment in regard to this temple is both strong and widespread. In the present conditions, it is unlikely that, that sentiment will be satisfied by mere restoration of the temple or by prolonging its life. *The restoration of the idol would be a point of honour of sentiment with the Hindu public*” (Munshi 64. My emphasis). Apart from the construction of the Somnath temple, the other important cultural issue which agitated the minds of the Congress leadership was the issue of cow slaughter. In a lengthy letter to Nehru on 7 August 1947, Rajendra Prasad informed him that the agitation demanding a ban on cow slaughter was spreading ‘with tremendous speed’ and had reached ‘practically all provinces and very large number of people’ (Chodudhary 1987: 7/91-92). ‘The Hindu sentiment in favour of cow protection is old, widespread and deep seated... It was almost impossible to now ignore it.’ ‘I think’, he Suggested ‘that the matter does require consideration and, we must take a decision whatever it is after due consideration’. The Hindu feeling on account of ‘recent happenings’ was very much agitated, he clarified, and this movement, like the movement in favour Of Hindi, was ‘bound to gain strength more rapidly than We can imagine.’

Nehru did not oppose the listing of the banning of cow slaughter as one of the directive principles of state policy in the constitution. All he did was to ensure that nothing came of it in practice (Gopaland and Parthsarthy 24). Holding out the threat of resignation was one of Nehru’s ways to resist the inner party pressures. His and Savarkar’s way of posing the question about the historically evolved reality —called India— was the same, though they gave contradictory answers: Was India a Hindu country? Or was it a composite country? For a large number of Congressmen and their followers it was difficult to answer the above questions in terms of a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no.’ For them the ‘composite’ character of

the country was not irreconcilable to its 'Hindu' character. But this third choice or possibility was denied to them by Nehru and he insisted that they must face the 'logic' of their choice squarely: "we must not function as a Hindu state but as a composite state in which Hindus, no doubt predominate" (qtd in Gopaland and Parthsarthy 190-191).

But what was meant by 'composite country' and 'composite state'? Nehru never felt the need to clarify it. Not only that, he labelled it as secularism and thereby generated a discourse of ambiguity. Now multiple interpretations of secularism could contend with each other, and, over time, one of them tended to become a truism: any act or policy of the state which did not conform to the articulate opinion of the Muslim community did not qualify for being characterised as 'secular'. In practice, Nehru implemented the notion of 'composite culture' in a way which went against the very idea of common citizenship and maintained the pre-partition conception of communities being fundamentally different from each other.

The third important issue, and this was a clear blow to Nehru's notion of 'composite culture', was the issue of the language of the republic. As suggested by Mahatma Gandhi, the Committee of the Hindustani Prachar Sabha, Bombay, at its meeting held on 29<sup>th</sup> July 1947, considered the resolution regarding Hindi with Devnagri script being adopted as the national language of India. This meeting of the Sabha adopted a memorandum which was sent to the President: 'We are very much surprised', declared the memorandum, 'to learn that the Congress Party members of the Constituent Assembly have decided that Hindi, written in Devanagari script, should be the national language of India' (Chodudhary). It noted that Mahatma Gandhi had definitely stated that Hindustani in both the scripts was the only medium through which millions of Indians could be brought together. The Sabha felt that it would be

**'a disastrous blow to the cause of national unity and harmony if leading Congressmen take a narrow and communal point of view.'** It warned the Congress that the decision to make Hindi as the national language would be an act of **'violation of the Congress Constitution and 'suicidal to the national spirit and tradition of the Congress.'**

On the question of Hindi-Hindustani, in his letters to concerned friends, Nehru said frankly that the move to oust Hindustani was unfortunate and undesirable. **'I have been trying to combat it, not with great success I am sorry to say. *Unfortunately this partition business has roused passions among the Hindus and they are acting in a narrow short-sighted way in many respects.*'** (Nehru 1987: 3/186).

The Congress Party, under the psychological pressures generated by the partition, was reflecting trends which were very unpalatable to Nehru. **'All of us',** he told Mohanlal Saxena in September 1949, **'seem to be getting infected with the refugee mentality or worse still, the RSS mentality. This is a curious finale to our careers.'** If, on the one hand, both Bidhan Roy and Patel were suggesting the expulsion of **'equal number of Muslims from Bengal'** as a retaliatory measure against the East Bengal Government's policy of forcing the Hindus to migrate, on the other, P.D. Tandon in Uttar Pradesh was calling upon the Muslims to adopt **'Hindu culture'** (Gopal 2: 92). **'Communalism has invaded the minds and hearts of those',** Nehru wrote to G.B. Pant in April 1950. **'who were pillars of the Congress in the past. It is a creeping paralysis and the patient does not even realise it'** (Gopal 2: 92). Even after Partition, Nehru as an individual continued to uphold the original separation between **'culture'** and **'politics'** as propounded by the discourse of nineteenth century Congress liberals.

Was the Congress turning into a communal organisation as asserted by Nehru? No. What was happening was that large

number of Congressmen were finding it difficult to maintain the strict division between 'culture' and 'politics' as required by the Nehruvian discourse of secularism. Because, in their heart of hearts, many were equally convinced that the Congress now could and should legitimately reflect the cultural pride of the Hindus without having pangs of guilty conscience. In their eyes, having a legitimate pride in one's own cultural traditions was very much a part of nationalism, i.e., 'cultural nationalism', and 'political nationalism' went hand- in-hand with it. But once the cultural aspirations were driven underground in the name of 'communalism' the Congress could not possibly be an adequate vehicle for their expression. Before the Partition many of these Congressmen could understand the rationale of keeping the discourse of 'culture' underground as the pragmatic need of the Congress policy of uniting with the Muslims demanded this. But now they could not but have perceived such attitudes as self-imposed censorship.

Under Nehru, Congress as an organisation ceased to become a vehicle of Hindu cultural identity. People like Shyama Prasad Mukherjee, the erstwhile President of the Hindu Mahasabha, realised that for people like him, there was no place in the Congress. This was the background which gave birth to an organisation such as the Jana Sangh (Baxter 1971; Graham 1990). But the problem with such a party was, and continues to be even today in its form as the Bharatiya Janata Party, that it could not evolve a more radical social programme of national development as compared to the Congress. Beyond a particular point, as we know, the cultural issues of identity begin to be intertwined with caste and class issues and power relations between those who are mobilised in the movement. Therefore the birth of Jana Sangh, purely on a programme of cultural identity, further deepened, though unwittingly, the party division in the spectrum of Hindu cultural nationalism. The moderate complex of Hindu identity continued to stay

underground within the Congress while the strong voices came to be articulated through the Jana Sangh.

The very logic of formation of a new political party dictated that if it was to acquire a position of power then it must claim to be the 'sole spokesman' of Hindu identity. It should make use of the Congress's inability to compete with it by accusing it as a party of the cultural minorities.

In fact, at moments, even for Nehru it was difficult to not mix cultural mythologies with secular politics. After the war with China Nehru was to assert that India's frontier was traditional and was associated with 'India's culture and tradition' (Embree 67). A White Paper prepared by the Historical Division of the Ministry of External Affairs quoted from the Vishnu Purana to support the argument that the country south of the Himalayas and north of the Ocean is called Bharat and 'all born in it are called Bharatiyas or Indians'. Similar references were given from *Rig Veda*, *Mahabharata*, *Ramayana* and other Sanskrit texts pointing to the cultural and political unity of India.

Against the backdrop of the partition and the formation of Pakistan as a separate state demanded in the name of Indian Muslims, the newly independent Indian state was faced with a dilemma. Was it to continue with the imperial model of secularism and act as an arbiter between various cultural and religious communities of India? Obviously, the question was to be decided by the newly unleashed ideological tendencies within the country, especially within the Indian National Congress, which had taken over the state and formed the new government. As the later history of ideological/political struggle within the Congress was to show, none of the two contending currents was in a position to completely defeat and marginalise the other. Through their struggle, they came to circumscribe and limit the influence of each other on administration and the policies of the state. Therefore, the on-

going battle for imparting a cultural complexion to the nation-State turned out to be a long drawn and complicated one. After the death of Patel and the political withdrawal staged by Tandon, Nehru had succeeded in establishing an ideological equilibrium within the country which was to be favourable to the forces led by him under the banner of secularism. This did not mean that the problem of cultural issues had been resolved. But he did succeed in removing what he called communal issues from the national agenda, and replaced them with a developmental agenda of economic progress, industrialisation and modernisation.

The censorship on the articulation of Hindu cultural sentiment imposed by Nehru created a split between the 'emotional make-up' and 'intellectual make-up' in the lives of a large number of Congressmen. Therefore, the 1950 Presidential election of the Indian National Congress, between P.D. Tandon and Acharya Kripalani, was primarily a struggle which embodied the logic of this 'split'. The alliance between Patel and Tandon should be looked upon as an attempt to seek recognition and respectability for the Hindu cultural identity within the official Congress discourse by underlining the fact that the Nehruvian view of agnostic spirituality was not acceptable to a large number of Congressmen. Paul Brass sums up the complex nature of this 'split':

Most Congressmen in Uttar Pradesh accepted both Nehru and Tandon as their leaders and saw no incompatibility between them. Congress in Uttar Pradesh intellectually recognised and accepted most of Nehru's political ideas as necessary for the development of the country, but it was Tandon who appealed to the emotional identification of Congressmen in Uttar Pradesh with their language, their culture, and their religion. (Brass 87; cfr. Weiner ch 4).

Nehru and many of his followers were embarrassed and mortified by the mention of a thing called 'Hindu sentiment'. Actually

this “split” was not and is not a simple one. Its complex composition embodies within it the impact of westernisation on the educated classes, especially, among the Hindus. In fact an unself-conscious maintenance of this ‘split’ is held by the westernised intellectuals to be central to the very definition of a modernized liberal individual. For many of them to uphold secularism and modernity is to uphold the psychological frame which denies the cultural needs of the ‘emotional make-up’.

In the aftermath of the Emergency, when the cultural ideologues of Hindu-ism sought to turn this psychological ‘split’ into a ‘sharp ideological contradiction by focusing the mass attention on the Congress’ practice of secularism, Mrs. Gandhi began to vacillate between the two poles. On the one hand, she added the words ‘secular’ and ‘socialist’ to the Preamble of the constitution by the 42nd Amendment Act, 1976<sup>4</sup>, while, on the other, she tried to win over the Hindu opinion by going to temples and sometimes even incorporating into her speeches and gestures parts of their discourse. This policy of vacillation was continued by Rajiv Gandhi, thereby, sending a public message that the Congress was being assailed by doubts and no longer confident when faced with the challenge to its professed ideology of secularism.

Historically speaking, the Congress has remained in power by adjusting and representing three sociological codes of mass consciousness, i.e., caste, class and community. Its encompassing vision of developmental nationalism cut across these sectional codes in order to bind them together into a unity. Unlike the Congress, the opposition groups/parties have derived their strength from more or less one of these single codes while simultaneously flirting with other codes, especially the code of nationalism and

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<sup>4</sup> *The fateful word ‘Secularism’ did not exist in the Constitution of India before 1976. The Indian Constitution is imbued with the spirit of non sectarianisms but to call it ‘Secular’ would be misnomer. In order to paper over this ambiguity many began to call “Indian Secularism.”*

**regionalism. This has split the opposition into three rivulets: Communist parties (class code), groups based on Lohia brand of ideology (caste code) and Jana Sangh or BJP (community code). But these codes, however important characteristics they might be of Indian social reality, in themselves cannot offer national level alternatives. Not only that, these codes cannot even unite without a political group which brings to bear upon these sectarian codes the overarching code of nationalism. This leads us to the conclusion that without the presence of the BJP-type party, which inherited the Hindu nationalism of Savarkar and S.P. Mukerjee, no alternative governments to the Congress could have come into being. Despite their best intentions anti-Congress tendencies cannot but lead the 'caste' and 'class' codes towards an open or tacit alliance with the ideologues of sectarian Hindu nationalism. The 'caste' and 'class' codes of mass consciousness are faced with a permanent dilemma. They are forced to incline towards the BJP in their search for an alternative to the Congress while their desire to uphold developmental and egalitarian perspectives pulls them towards the Congress.**

**If this is accepted as a realistic appraisal of contemporary Indian politics then the real struggle is, and continues to be, between organisations engaged in defining and redefining the nature of Indian nationalism through the actual mobilisation of the people on 'national issues' and not on 'caste' or 'class' issues. As this struggle sharpens the codes of 'caste' and 'class' would be under pressure to align with one side or the other. The politics of 'caste' and 'class' are forms of politics in this country that can be adjusted but they remain limited within the overarching umbrella of nationalism. Indian nationalism has always overlapped with Hindu cultural sentiment though the forms of its articulation have varied from time to time. Today, the struggle to convert Gandhian nationalism into a**



**Savarkarite nationalism and its search for mass articulation is going to define the nature of the nation-state in the years to come.**

**The imposition of Emergency proved to be a golden opportunity for the forces representing Savarkarite nationalism. For the first time, this helped them to champion the cause of democracy, get rid of their status of being political untouchables, and to a considerable extent erase the stigma of sharing the ideology which had inspired the killer of the Mahatma. From a position of political marginality, their secular allies (caste and class codes) helped them to place themselves in mainstream politics. Moreover, the Emergency had robbed the main secular party of its moral legitimacy thereby reducing it to the status of 'one of the many political parties'. Ironically, it was the opportunity provided by Mrs. Gandhi and the help rendered by the anti-Congress opposition which placed the votaries of *Hindutva* in the centre stage.**

**Mrs. Gandhi's debacle in 1977 owed a great deal to the alienation of both Muslims and Harijans from the Congress who, however, rallied to her support again in 1980. What happened during the Emergency, and the Hindu-Muslim killings in the early months of 1980 which had once again erupted in full fury, strained the relationship between her and considerable sections of the Muslim community. The communal strife at Moradabad lasted a whole month, taking a toll of 144 lives. Many of her critics have noted that for the first time in her political career, Indira Gandhi departed from the normal style of rushing to the scene of every major communal conflagration to condole with the bereaved. Though Moradabad was only a few minutes away from Delhi by helicopter, she just would not go there despite appeals by secular parties and groups. Was Mrs. Gandhi no longer interested in continuing the Congress's special relationship with the Muslim community? It is possible, that in the contest for cultural**

hegemony between the communities she may have wanted to be perceived as neutral. But her attempt to acquire a position of neutrality by correcting the 'historic tilt' could not but have been perceived by interested quarters as an attempt, however belated, to move in the direction of recognising and taking note of the rising wave of Hindu sentiment. Many had begun to read into her 'words' and 'departures' an effort at pandering to Hindu critics who had long grumbled that she, like her father, tended to 'pamper' Muslims and other minorities at the cost of the Hindu majority.

Rajiv Gandhi's case was simple. Being a naive modernist free from the burden of accumulated national experience he saw nothing wrong in doing contradictory things so long as his moves helped him to buy peace. He seemed to be totally unaware of the fact that developments in Kashmir and Punjab had stirred up deeper anxieties and memories of partition in large sections of the Hindu population. The Hindu community had begun to look upon these developments as a serious challenge to 'its' state. Caught in the cleft of cultural contest between the communities to influence the political complexion of the nation-state he first thought of pleasing the dominant Muslim opinion by staging a retreat on the Shah Bano Case. Once the other side reacted to this move very sharply, he now thought of unlocking the Babri Masjid thereby recognising and legitimising what had been considered till date as something disputable. Was it a conscious strategic move to recognise and incorporate the Hindu sentiment within the Congress discourse in order to outmanoeuvre the BJP combine? Or, was it just a thoughtless surrender? From the outset, the emergence of an aggressive Hindu cultural sentiment in the 1970s was considered by the BJP combine as its political monopoly.

Narasimha Rao's declaration from the Red Fort that the Congress was in favour of constructing a grand temple at Ayodhya, brought home the idea that the Congress, notwithstanding the

**constraints of its secular ideology, was actually competing with them to articulate the newly emerged and fast consolidating Hindu sentiment. Would they allow the Congress to outmaneuver them at this advanced stage? The question began to slowly sink into the minds of the BJP leadership and' of its cadre. This led many amongst them to a different conclusion: the rules of the 'game' were heavily loaded against them and the Congress would not allow them to occupy the seat of power so long the 'game' was played within the rules. Hence the rules of the 'game' must be changed. And this they did on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1992 by demolishing the Babri mosque. India can never be the same again.**

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***Amardeep Singh - Director, Executive Producer, Host: Amardeep Singh, a resident of Singapore was educated at The Doon School (India), Manipal Institute of Technology (India) and University of Chicago (USA). He worked in Financial Services for 25 years and was the Head of Asia Pacific for Revenue Management at American Express. In the year 2014, in the spirit of contributing to society, Amardeep made a bold decision to leave his successful Corporate Career and embarked on a path to bring to light the cohesiveness amongst fellow beings through the medium of art, literature and films. Backed with an in-depth understanding of diverse philosophies, cultures and history, Amardeep has spearheaded multi-faith teams in geopolitically challenging areas to produce works of inspiration. He has passionately furthered his vision through global interfaith dialogues to create awareness about social and personal benefits of consonance. He has authored two books titled 'Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan' and 'The Quest Continues: Lost Heritage, The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan', documenting the Sikh Legacy remnants across 126 cities and villages in West Punjab, Khyber Pakhtunkhwa, Pakistan Administered Kashmir, Sindh & Baluchistan. He has also created two documentary films on the historical sites of the Indus region which have become***

*inaccessible for the present generation of the erstwhile natives who departed from the region due to the divide of the Indian sub-continent in 1947 based on religion. 'Peering Soul' (52 minutes documentary) encompasses the tangible and intangible remnants of the Sikh spiritual heritage and 'Peering Warrior' (35 minutes documentary) covers the forts of the Sikh kingdom in the Indus region. These archival documentations are a rich source of anthropological research studies. These films have touched the hearts of many by allowing them to connect with their ancestral lands, culture and communities. Amardeep's most recent offering are the 24 episode documentary series in English, titled as "Allegory: A Tapestry of Guru Nanak's Travels" and its Punjabi version, titled as "sYnq, gurU nwnk dy pYNifAW dI rUhwnI Cwp".*

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## MEETING NOORI (JASWANTI) IN RAWALPINDI

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***Amardeep Singh***

**11 October 2014:**

Heading from Hassan Abdal to Rawalpindi, I was looking forward to meeting Noori.

In 1996, Kaka, a 28-year-old Pakistani from Mansehra, had visited Delhi under *Tablighi Jamaat*, to impart an understanding of Islam at the Hazrat Nizamuddin Centre of learning. Kaka, a devout Muslim has dedicated his entire life to the service of Islam. Years before partition, his father Isher Singh, born a Sikh had willfully accepted Islam, renaming himself Gulam Sarwar. In Delhi, Kaka decided to try and re-connect with his relatives, who had migrated to India in 1947. Having no connection within the Sikh community in Delhi, Kaka remained at loss where to start. While walking on the streets, Kaka started randomly reaching out to Sikhs, asking if they knew anyone who may have migrated from Mansehra.



***Hazrat Nizamuddin Shrine, New Delhi (India)***

By sheer luck, a stranger provided him a clue that there is a family from Mansehra running a shop at Azad market. The next day, Kaka was there, meeting every Sikh shopkeeper. Finally, he met Tejpal Singh, my second cousin from paternal lineage, whose father had

migrated from Mansehra. Tejpai being the same age as Kaka had heard stories about picturesque Mansehra and the holocaust of partition. He welcomed Kaka and took him home to meet his grandfather.

As Tejpai entered the courtyard of his house, he called out to his grandfather, "*Bhapaji*, look who is here."

Kaka, trailing behind Tejpai was shocked to hear his grandfather say, "He looks like Isher!"

Kaka was a splitting image of Isher Singh aka Gulam Sarwar. In sheer delight of having connected to a distant relative, Kaka raised his hands to thank Allah for his graciousness.

Having spent memorable time connecting with more of his distant relatives in Delhi, when Kaka was departing for Pakistan, Tejpai's father, Jaswant Singh told him with a heavy heart that his sister Jaswanti had been left behind in Pakistan. No one knew what had happened to her but he had a feeling that she may have survived.

Jaswanti was five years old when tribals from Waziristan had attacked Muzaffarabad on 22 October 1947. Jaswanti's parents, belonging to Mansehra, were at their second home at Muzaffarabad when tribals broke in. Seeing the violence inflicted on her parents, little Jaswanti ran out of the house in panic. A few hours later when she returned, there were blood stains all over the house. Looking for her parents, she headed out on the street, reaching the bridge on Jhelum River, where amongst many massacred corpses, she found the mutilated body of her mother.



***Bridge on Jhelum River, Muzaffarabad (Pakistan Administered Kashmir, Pakistan)***

**She was standing alone in a complete state of shock when Mansood, a local Muslim approached and comforted her. Numbed and too stunned to react, she simply followed him. As they climbed the hill, Mansood read the *Qalma*, encouraging her to recite it with him, which was a subtle confirmation of the little girl having accepted Islam. She was later renamed Noori. She was married at the age of 13, bearing five children but soon her husband died of tuberculosis.**

**After her husband's death, Noori decided to lead an independent life and moved to Abbotabad. With Sikhs having migrated, there was no biological family member to whom she could turn to. Dejected, having little choice but to live on to support her children, she continued to face challenges.**

**In the late 1970s, while visiting Mansehra, she noted a shop that she recalled having visited as a child with her father. She approached the owner, who happened to be Gulam Sarwar aka Isher Singh. She was overwhelmed with joy at meeting someone related to her biological parents.**



***Kaka, son of Gulam Sarwar aka Isher Singh, at the grave of his father at Mansehra (Pakistan)***

**On his return to Mansehra, Kaka was aware of Jaswant Singh's mention of his sister Jaswanti having been left behind in Pakistan. Finding her would be like looking for a needle in a haystack. He had no clue as to where to begin the search.**

**Two years had passed since his trip to Delhi and one day his sister asked if it could be Noori, whom their father, Gulam Sarwar had once brought home to meet the family in late 1970s? For personal reasons, Noori had not maintained in contact with their family for years. However Kaka's sister vaguely remembered her place in Abbotabad, where their father had once taken them.**

**Kaka now went in search of Noori, who by then had married a doctor and moved to Rawalpindi. Noori had three children from her second marriage. Getting Noori's address from her neighbour at Abbotabad, Kaka was able to locate her in Rawalpindi. Re-establishing the connection, Kaka suggested to Noori that she should allow him to link her with Jaswant Singh in India, as there existed a possibility the two might well be siblings. Noori being a victim of fate, preferred not to reopen old wounds and politely refused!**

**Kaka, having experienced the affection of Tejpal's family in Delhi, remained insistent. In search for Jaswanti for two years and nearly there, he did not want to give up so easily. He independently decided to sponsor Jaswant Singh's visit to Pakistan.**

**In 1999, when Jaswant Singh arrived, Kaka asked him to stay at Panja Sahib Gurdwara, while he would try to again convince Noori. In an emotional plea, Kaka asked Noori to respect Jaswant's feelings and meet him once as he had travelled all the way from India, just to meet her. Noori remained apprehensive but eventually yielded because of Kaka's persistence.**

**A day later, they left for Panja Sahib Gurdwara. The moment had arrived when the potential siblings were to meet after half a century but the dilemma was that having been parted at a young age, how could the relationship be validated?**

**Strange indeed are God's ways!**

**Just two months before the violence of October 1947 in Muzaffarabad, Jaswanti wanted her brother Jaswant to give her a ride on his new bicycle. As Jaswant cycled uphill, raising himself from the seat to push harder on the pedal, his foot slipped, jamming his right toe in the chain and severing it. That accident had remained imprinted in Jaswanti's childhood memory.**

**When the two finally met at the gate of Panja Sahib Gurdwara, Jaswant Singh was bare foot. As Noori approached, her eyes fell on his feet. The missing right toe jolted her memory and reunited them finally.**



***Gate of the Panja Sahib Gurdwara (Pakistan)***

**Hereafter, Noori visited India many times to meet her family. Fondly she would be called Jaswanti in India while she remained Noori in Pakistan.**

**At the age of 80 years, Noori breathed her last on 16 June 2020 at Rawalpindi (Pakistan).**

**Noori, aka Jaswanti, born a Sikh, accepted the 'Divine Will' and lived her entire life as a devout Muslim! Noori is my distant Aunt, whom I last met at Rawalpindi in 2018. In this meeting, when I showed her the book, '*LOST HERITAGE The Sikh Legacy in Pakistan*', which I had authored, she appeared disappointed that I did not show her picture in the chapter, 'Meeting Noori', which was dedicated to my first meeting with her in the year 2014. My reason was well-intended, to protect her privacy.**

**While expressing condolences over phone from Singapore to her son in Rawalpindi, when I shared my above interaction, he replied, "It is because of her Sikh blood that even as a devout Muslim, she remained fearless of her past being judged by anyone!"**

**Jaswanti, five years old, was left orphaned in the tribal attack on the city of Muzaffarabad in Kashmir on 22 October 1947. A well-**



**meaning local Muslim adopted Jaswanti, renaming her Noori. Years later, in 1999, Noori reconnected with her family who had migrated to India after the partition of the subcontinent.**

**She remained Noori in Pakistan and was called Jaswanti in India!**

**As a tribute, honouring her wish, I now share a picture of my first meeting with her at Rawalpindi in 2014.**



***Amardeep Singh (Author) with Noori aka Jaswanti at Rawalpindi (Pakistan)***

**May Allah & Waheguru bless us all with the most profound lesson from Noori's life – the acceptance of 'Divine Will'.**



### **Prof Hardev Singh Virk**

***Prof. Hardev Singh Virk was born in Kamoke Mandi, district Gujranwala (now in Pakistan) on 23rd Feb. 1942. He received his Masters in Physics from Aligarh Muslim University, Aligarh (1963) and Doctorate in Nuclear Physics from Marie Curie University, Paris (France) in 1972. He served in Punjabi University, Patiala (1965-79) and Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar (1979-2002). His research interests are manifold: Nuclear & Radiation Physics; Geochronology; Earthquakes & Environment; Ion Tracks & Nanotechnology; History & Philosophy of Science; Sikh Religion and Punjabi Literature.***



# **How the Dream of Sikh State was shattered in 1947?**

***Hardev Singh Virk***

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**Introduction:** The present paper is based on four different studies carried out by Historians of India, Pakistan and United Kingdom (University of Edinburg, Scotland). It is just a mere coincidence that they belong to different Faiths: Sikh, Muslim, Hindu and Christian. I don't find any bias in their studies based on their religions except in case of Thesis presented by Akhtar Hussain Sandhu, a Pakistani historian, who squarely blames the Sikh leadership for their failure to gain an independent Sikh state because of its lackadaisical attitude towards the Punjab Partition of 1947. They did not bother to prepare a Master Plan for achieving Sikh state which was their birth right as members of the Sikh nation with its moorings in Sikh history and culture over the period of last 500 years since the birth of Guru Nanak. Guru Gobind Singh created the Khalsa in 1699 to rule and protect the indefensible people on this earth. Sikhs recite in their daily prayers "*Raj Karega Khalsa (the Khalsa shall rule)*".

The Sikhs were sovereign power and rulers of Punjab under Maharaja Ranjit Singh for half a century (1799-1849). Punjab was the last province to be merged in British India. After the merger, the Sikhs served the British Empire as the loyal citizens fighting against the Germans during the World Wars and suffering casualties in millions. However, they failed miserably to get an independent homeland, call it "Sikhistan or more popularly, Khalistan" because of the follies and short-sightedness of their

leaders. Many scholars have studied the Partition of Punjab on the eve of British departure from the Indian sub-continent during 1947 and this process continues as there are some gaps to be investigated in view of Partition Documents released in Britain after 50 years of Indian independence.

Professor Puran Singh (1881-1931) was the first Sikh intellectual who felt concerned about the future of Sikhs in India. Puran Singh knew that if the principle of universal adult suffrage is going to be introduced in Indian Democracy, the Sikhs will be loser because of their lower numbers. So he was worried about the fate of Sikhs in democratic India.

I have come across a long letter of 27 pages written by Prof. Puran Singh to John Simon of Simon Commission on 21st October, 1928. Puran Singh laments about the fate of Sikhs in free India. His predictions about Indian Democracy, Self Government and Sikh issues are proverbial. He writes: *"Self Government in India means Government by the very few cunning and aggressive people who, once put in possession of the authority, would twist all letters of law and constitutions to their individual wills and make them work on the communal or the so called religious bias"*.

His views on Indian Constitution and Democracy are noteworthy: *"The truly Democratic Constitution should not allow one community to get into power and work mischief through the democratic institutions to crush the other. In the grant of your New Constitution, the right of all people should be equal in the eye of law. No Democracy can be made to work equitably in India"*.

Akhtar Hussain Sandhu [1] concludes in his paper *"Sikh Failure on the Partition of Punjab in 1947"*: *"The All-India Muslim League*

***achieved Pakistan, the Indian National Congress secured India but the Shiromani Akali Dal got nothing on the eve of the British departure in 1947 although the Sikh community had collaborated closely with the colonial power. The demand of the Sikh community for a separate Sikh state and accession of more territories to this state came to naught as a consequence of partition of Indian subcontinent. The decision of joining India by the Akali leadership enslaved this community to a mammoth majority in which they were only one per cent."***

Asia Samachar has published my articles (<https://asiasamachar.com/tag/hardev-singh-virk/>) , "Failure of Sikhs to gain an Independent State during Partition of India"; "The Sikhs and the Partition of Punjab – Conclusions from Crowe's MA History Thesis"; "Root Cause of the Sikh Problem: The Partition of India (1947)"; and "The Sikh State: Reasons For Its Failure" during 1920-21. This article is the compendium of all four articles in the series on Punjab Partition in 1947 and the Sikh failure.

### **A. Kirpal Singh, Historian of Indian Punjab**

The first article in this compendium is based on the investigation of Dr. Kirpal Singh, a well known Sikh Historian, who published his Ph.D. Thesis under the title "*The Partition of the Punjab*". His views on Partition of Punjab are summarized as under:

**1. The Idea of a Sikh State:** *The Shiromani Akali Dal put forth the demand of a Sikh State along with the Muslim demand for a sovereign Muslim State. It was based on the argument that "the Panth demands the splitting up of the existing province of the Punjab with its unnatural boundaries so as to constitute a separate autonomous Sikh State in these areas of the central, north-eastern and south-eastern Punjab in which the over-*

*whelming part of the Sikh population is concentrated and which because of the proprietors in it being mostly Sikhs and its general character being distinctly Sikh, is the de facto Sikh Homeland.” The proposed Sikh State was to consist of the territories of “Central Punjab with Divisions of Lahore, Jullundur, parts of Ambala and Multan Divisions with the area comprised of Sikh States and Maler Kotla with certain hills in the North and North-East” [2].*

**2. The Idea of Azad Punjab:** *In order to make their position clear, the Shiromani Akali Dal put forward the Azad Punjab Scheme [3]. According to this scheme a new Punjab was to be carved out after separating the overwhelming Muslim majority areas. It was argued that it was to be an ideal province with about an equal proportion of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs. In the event of partition of the country it was to remain in the Indian Union. Master Tara Singh explained the basis of this province in his letter to Sir Stafford Cripps [4].*

**3. Low Representation to Sikhs in Punjab:** *The Constituent Assembly proposed to be set up for Punjab, NWFP, Sind and Baluchistan (Provinces in Section B), the Muslim representatives were 22, Hindus 9 and the Sikhs 4. The Sikhs protested against this compulsory grouping and in a letter, dated May 25, 1946, to the Secretary of State, Master Tara Singh, the Akali Leader wrote, that “a wave of dejection, resentment and indignation has run through the Sikh community. The Sikhs have been thrown at the mercy of the Muslims” [5]. S. Baldev Singh, the Defence Member of the Interim Government, wrote to the Prime Minister of Britain, seeking his intervention to remedy the wrong done to the Sikh community [6].*

**4. Proposal for a New Sikh Province:** *In a memorandum submitted to the Cabinet Mission, the Shiromani Akali Dal stated, "As an alternative to the existing province of the Punjab, a new province may be carved out as an additional provincial unit in the united India of the future in such a way that all the important Sikh shrines (Gurdwaras) be included in it as also a substantial majority of the Sikh population of the existing province of the Punjab" [7].*

**5. Congress accepted the Partition of Punjab:** *But the division of Punjab could only be conceded after the Congress had reconciled itself to the creation of Pakistan. By this time, Mountbatten, the new Governor-General had discussed his tentative plan with the Congress leaders and Mr. Jinnah. The Congress high command, barring Maulana Azad, had tentatively accepted the partition of India. This laid the foundation of the Partition Plan, which was basically a Partition of Punjab, Bengal and Assam.*

**6. The Sikh Leaders accepted the Partition of Punjab:** *The Sikh leaders jointly with the Hindus as well as separately insisted upon the division of the Punjab and the Shiromani Akali Dal asserted that partition of the Punjab was "the only remedy to end communal strife"[8]. Master Tara Singh, Sardar Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh expressed similar views during their interviews with the Viceroy on the April 18, 1947 [9].*

**7. Jinnah offered a Sikh State within Pakistan:** *Consequently, meetings between Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan and the Maharaja of Patiala and Sardar Baldev Singh, the Defence Member of the Interim Government, were arranged. Since the Sikhs had already put forth the demand of a Sikh State, the talks naturally centered on that issue. Mr. Jinnah and Liaquat Ali Khan*

***agreed to the formation of the Sikh State with its separate military establishment within Pakistan, provided the Sikhs did not insist on the partition of the Punjab and agreed to join Pakistan [10]. The Sikh leaders demanded the right of opting out of Pakistan for the Sikh State to which the Muslim League leaders did not agree [11].***

**8. Sikh Leaders failed to bargain with Congress:** *Master Tara Singh told the writer that if Mr. Jinnah had agreed they would have negotiated with the Congress for better terms. It is difficult to visualize what better terms the Congress could have offered short of creating of an independent Sikh State in the portion of Punjab which fell to India's share. But Master Tara Singh and Sardar Baldev Singh or Maharaja of Patiala did not contact Congress after Mr. Jinnah's refusal to concede their demand.*

**9. Failure of Penderel Moon Mission:** *Mr. Jinnah wanted the Sikhs to join Pakistan and gave assurances of good treatment towards them. The Sikh leaders insisted on some constitutional rights when they met Jinnah in 1946 and 1947 which obviously Jinnah would not concede. The later failure of the Moon mission was from the very beginning foreseen. Mr. Jinnah's Islamic State had no place for zealous and aggressive non-Muslims.*

**10. Sikh Leaders were Confused:** *The Working Committee of the Shiromani Akali Dal and the Panthic Pratinidhi Board jointly passed a resolution on June 14, 1947, emphasizing that, "in the absence of the provision of transfer of population and property, the very purpose of partition would be defeated" [12]. Giani Kartar Singh, President of Shiromani Akali Dal, said on July 16, 1947, "The Sikhs will not rest contented till the boundary line is demarcated in such a way that it leaves at least 85 per cent Sikhs*

*in India and both the States of Pakistan and India are committed to facilitate the transfer of the remaining 15 per cent from Pakistan to India [13].*

**11. Baldev Singh committed a Blunder:** *S. Baldev Singh accepted the 3rd June Plan with partition of the Punjab on the basis of contiguous majority areas. Subsequently he said in a statement, "If the verdict of the Boundary Commission went against the Sikhs, they should be prepared to make all sacrifices to vindicate the honour of the Panth" [14].*

He did not foresee that actual boundary line could not be much different from the notional division included in the 3rd June Plan. *The issue of the Sikh shrines, the question of transfer of Sikh population and the exchange of the property for which the Sikh leaders struggled subsequently should have been pressed before agreeing to the 3rd June Plan.* But the Sikh leader thought that for his consenting to the plan which affected the Sikhs adversely, the British Government would assert its influence to give them concessions.

**12. Partition was an ill-conceived Plan:** *According to Lord Ismay, the Mountbatten Plan was a case of "Hobson's choice" [15]. No one in India thought that it was perfect. Lord Mountbatten himself admitted this in a radio broadcast on the day of its announcement. He said: "The whole plan may not be perfect, but like all plans, its success will depend on the spirit of goodwill with which it is carried out [16]. The boundary between India and Pakistan, known as Radcliffe Line, was marked on 17th August, 1947, two days after the Partition.*

**13. Sikhs were recognized as Equal Partners with Hindus & Muslims:** *Though these (Hindus and Muslims) were the major*

*contenders for receiving power when it was likely to be transferred, yet the Sikhs had been recognized as the third important community for the transference of power, as it was stated in the Cabinet Mission proposals: "It is sufficient to recognise only three main communities in India, General, Muslims and Sikhs, the General Community including all persons who are not Muslims or Sikhs" [17].*

**14. Sikhs Failed to get Sikhistan:** *Author's interview with Major JM Short reveals his viewpoint: "You ask if I found the Sikhs liked that plan and if not, what did I do about it. My impressions on getting to Delhi on the 22nd July, 1947, were these: the Sikhs did not like the plan; they had only agreed to it to meet us more than half-way and to make it easier for us to go out of our way to meet their wish for some sort of Sikhistan [18]. I reported accordingly to our authority in Delhi. They felt as I did, too, that they could not now alter course; but in so far as they could trim a trifle to meet the Sikhs, they would. And so it was left".*

**15. Sikhs were losers on all Fronts:** *The Partition of Punjab was based on the census figures of 1941, with Muslim majority of 54 %, Hindus constituting 30% and Sikhs just 13%. Tehsil was considered as the basic unit for allocation of territory. The Sikhs had majority population in two tehsils of Tarn Tarn and Jagraon only. Hence, they were losers on population basis in Punjab vis a vis Muslims and Hindus.*

According to 1941 census figures, Gurdaspur district was a Muslim majority area by a small margin of 50.4%. Both Batala and Gurdaspur tehsils were clearly Muslim majority areas. The same was true for Fazilka, Zira and Ferozepur Tehsils. Muslim members of Boundary Commission (Justice Munir Ahmad & Justice Din



Mohammad) were dead sure of their inclusion in Pakistan. In private conversation, Tarlochan Singh (Ex-MP) explained to me that Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh prevailed upon Lord Mountbatten to cancel this allocation and make its transfer in favour of India at the last moment. However, there is no written record to establish this story. V.N. Datta [19] in his review of Kirpal Singh's book [2] refutes this claim. He writes: "K.M. Panikkar, the Prime Minister of Bikaner state, met Mountbatten on August 11, 1947. Panikkar told Mountbatten that the ruler of Bikaner (Sardul Singh, who was a friend of Mountbatten) wanted it to be conveyed that if the Ferozepur head works and Gang canal water on which Bikaner's existence depended were not allotted to India, then Bikaner would have no option but to join Pakistan. Thus the boundary in respect of Ferozepur and Zira was changed at the last stage".

16. Lord Mountbatten blamed the Sikhs for their Folly [20]: *"I must point out that the people who asked for the partition were the Sikhs. The Congress took up their request and framed the resolution in the form they wanted. They wanted the Punjab to be divided in two predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas. I have done exactly what the Sikhs requested me to do through the Congress. The request came to me as a tremendous shock as I like the Sikhs, I am fond of them and I wish them well. I started thinking out a formula to help them but I am not a magician. It is up to the Sikhs who are represented on the Committee to take up the case. It is not I who is responsible for asking for partition"*.

#### **B. Akhtar Hussain Sandhu, Historian of Pakistani Punjab**

Akhtar Hussain Sandhu [21] of Royal Holloway, University of London, in his paper *"Sikh Failure on the Partition of Punjab in 1947"* published in International Journal of Punjab

**Studies (September, 2012) has presented an incisive survey of the Sikh failure. The main points of this study are summed up as follows:**

- 1. *Sikh leaders lacked political vision, therefore the Akalis were simultaneously anti-government, anti-Muslim League, anti-Congress, anti-Unionist, anti-British, anti-Khalsa National Party and anti-Communist and other Sikhs who were not their allies.***
- 2. *The Sikh leadership sometimes would adopt aggressive approach but lost the fervour whenever some British agents approached them. Major Short and Sir Penderel Moon's activities prove this contention.***
- 3. *Sincerity of purpose was badly missing in the political creed of the Akalis. While dealing with the Congress, the Sikh leadership many times demonstrated compromising behaviour on political issues.***
- 4. *The Sikh leaders tried to purport themselves as nationalists which aggravated their confusion because their agenda in essence was communal. They were not clear what to do with the provincial and national politics. Nationalism did not suit the Sikhs and their political demands. Their struggle was purely of a communal nature while they kept on posing as nationalists.***
- 5. *Sikhism attracted the main bulk of the followers from Hinduism. The impact of this link remained intact and affected the political idealism of the Sikhs. The Congress repeatedly betrayed them on many issues but the Sikh leadership never thought to get rid of the undue influence of the Hindus.***
- 6. *The Congress gave word in the Ravi Pledge of 1929 during its annual Session held at Lahore that no constitutional package***

would be conceded by the Congress until the Sikhs approved it but practically they never honoured this pledge.

7. *At every crucial moment, the Congress ignored the Sikhs but the Akali leadership did not dare to adopt an independent direction in their politics. The acceptance of the Congress' influence proved pernicious for the Sikh future.*
8. *They supported and secured support of the Hindu Mahasabha in the Punjab in the name of enmity with the Muslims.*
9. Although Master Tara Singh repudiated the incident of brandishing kirpan on the stairs of the Punjab Assembly in a talk with Dr. Bhai Harbans Lal but he admits that his own lieutenants had misquoted it just to highlight the Akali courage and unremitting enthusiasm against the Pakistan scheme.
10. *The Akali policy to sideline and humiliate the Sikh aristocracy, Communists, Mazhabi Sikhs, Congress-supporting Sikhs, and other groups proved detrimental in the long run.*
11. Akali Dal itself could not avoid factionalism within the party. It was divided into Giani Kartar Singh and the Nagoke groups and the top Akali leadership had to back a specific group in the Gurdwara elections.
12. *The dual membership of many Sikhs was another problem as many were enjoying affiliation with more than one party. A Sikh was a Congressite and the Akali member at the same time or a Communist and Congressite .*
13. The political culture popularized by the Akalis convinced them that the sagacious policy for them was to support the Congress. Akalis won 23 seats, yielding 10 to Congress in the 1946 provincial elections in Punjab.

14. The Akalis brainwashed the Sikh masses through speeches and statements that the Muslims were their enemies and the Hindus were their friends.
15. Master Tara Singh undertook the anti-British stance while the Sikh community needed an opposite policy. He took the British advice and showed strong reliance on them but acted differently. The decisions and erratic postures at this critical moment meant a narrow role and a disaster for the Sikhs. Gurmit Singh [22] writes that 'Master Tara Singh lured by the false promises of the Congress leaders gave a wrong lead to the Sikh Community'.
16. Master Tara Singh remained unchallenged as the sole leader of the Sikhs during the period 1923 to 1947. The Sikh masses rendered their wholehearted support to him but at the most sensitive time he went into the background and left the Sikh *panth* at the mercy of Sardar Baldev Singh and Sardar Swaran Singh. One of the main causes of Master Tara Singh's aloofness was the severe opposition from within the Akali circles which convinced him to remain in the background for the time being as a deliberate tactic.
17. *He (Master Tara Singh) was headmaster of a high school who lacked the vision of a national or provincial political leadership.*
18. The Sikh demographic pattern was such a critical disadvantage which could not be adequately addressed by the Sikh leaders. They did not form a majority of the population in any district of the Punjab. When the Sikhs tried to take an independent course like the *Azad Punjab* scheme or *Sikhistan*, the Hindus opposed them and forced them to reverse their stand on the schemes pledged with their community.

19. In March 1946, Surjit Singh Majithia opposed the separate electorates and Sikh state on the ground that by accepting the principle of Pakistan, the Sikhs would weaken their position and the task of the League would become easier while the Sikh state would even then be a doubtful phenomenon.
20. Sikhs issued every statement that could undermine the Muslim cause whether it helped their own cause or not. The Sikhs had rejected the Cabinet Mission proposals but even then they were pursuing a change in the plan which testifies to their weak performance in the political contest. Therefore, the Akalis' pro-Congress politics as a one item agenda throttled the possibility of their being workable alternatives for the Sikh future.
21. Sikhs trusted Jenkins, the Governor of Punjab, a lot but he gave them nothing. By using his friendly relations with the Sikhs, he obtained information from them regarding their plans and dispatched it to the Viceroy. Sikhs shared information, desire and even their secret plans with Jenkins.
22. *Creation of a Sikh state or joining Pakistan or India were the main options available to the Sikhs but as freedom was coming closer the Sikhs started restricting their options. Their leaders were not talking to the Muslim leaders and were least interested in taking advantage of their bargaining position. They were pleasing the Hindu leadership by posing themselves as the champions of united India and protectors of the Hindus. They relied on the Congress which had betrayed them on every important political turn in their history. The Congress and the Hindu press gave a cold shoulder to the Sikhs but still they did not take the independent course in politics.*

23. *The third option was Khalistan or Sikhistan which had no concrete foundation due to the scattered population of the Sikhs and dissent within the community, the attitude of the Congress and the League which were the main stakeholders.*
24. *The Sikh leadership also became victim of their traditional weakness in political parleys. Moreover, they had to deal with the competent leadership like M. A. Jinnah, M. K. Gandhi and Jawaharlal Nehru which put them in a defensive position.*
25. **Attaining Khalistan was the best option; joining Pakistan would have been the second best option while joining India was never a good option for them but they went for it in 1947 without paying attention to the British advice and the concessions offered by the League leadership.**
26. **Sikh leadership, in the run up to partition, could not gauge the depth of the political issues confronting their community. They joined hands with the Congress and favoured united India in which they were only one per cent of the population. The main reasons behind this decision was their religious and cultural affinity to Hinduism, weak leadership, disunity, Mughal atrocities during the early centuries of the rise of Sikh tradition, and the Muslim onslaught in the late 1940s.**

### **c. Avinash Hingorani, Historian of Edinburg University of Scotland**

**The Third Study “*The Role of Sikhs during the Partition of India*” has been reported by Avinash Hingorani [23] in 2014. Avinash has identified the Sikhs as a separate nation and presented their case with full justification and sympathy for the Sikh cause. The main points of this study are summed up as follows:**

- 1. But there was a third religion which was the odd man out in this situation, and this, was Sikhism. When partition occurred in 1947, the Sikhs wanted their own state in the Punjab region. Unfortunately, the British Raj categorized the Sikhs as merely being a subdivision of the Hindus and never considered giving them their own separate nation.**
- 2. While the Sikhs shared many similarities to the Hindus it would be unfair to consider them as merely being a subdivision or a caste of Hinduism.**
- 3. In the Lucknow pact, "50 percent of seats were reserved for Muslims under this League-Congress pact and Sikhs were completely ignored." Sardar Gajjan Singh of Ludhiana, a Sikh representative recommended an amendment calling the addition of a similar pact that the Muslims had received but both Hindus and Muslims ignored his wishes. The Sikhs were vastly underrepresented in the Indian politics as they only had two Sikhs in the legislative assembly.**
- 4. In 1928, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, an apolitical Sikh organization believed the Sikhs should cooperate with the rest of India in creating a unified country, but still believed that the Sikhs needed to maintain their individuality. In response to this the Sikhs decided that they would be the first religious group in India to welcome a national government, which would be based purely on merit and not favour political leaders from a particular caste or religion.**
- 5. The British did not acknowledge the Sikhs grievances, and in 1943 it became clear that the Muslims would be given their independent state of Pakistan. In response to this Giani Kartar Singh called for a separate state called Azad Punjab, which was to be comprised of Ambala, Jullundar, Lahore, Multan, and Lyallpur divisions. Many Sikh leaders supported this independent state of Azad Punjab. Lahore was once the**

*capital of the Sikh empire and the Sikhs wanted Lahore most of all. Giani Kartar Singh asked "if Pakistan was to come out of compulsion because Mr. Jinnah's demand could not be resisted, why not give an independent state to the Sikhs also?"*

- 6. In 1944, Sikh leader and activist Master Tara Singh led the Sikhs in declaring their own independent state. Tara Singh believed that the creation of Azad Punjab would be necessary to protect Sikhs and Hindus from Muslim rule. Tara Singh believed that Azad Punjab could "take out the overwhelming majority of the Hindus and Sikhs from Muslim domination and get rid of the present Pakistan".*
- 7. Master Tara Singh feared that if Pakistan were created the Sikh community would be "lost forever". After making these comments Tara Singh was invited to a round table conference at Simla at the end of the Second World War by Governor-General Lord Archibald Wavell to represent the Sikhs of India and to quell the political relations between the different religious groups of India. Tara Singh argued that the "creation of Pakistan would be more injurious to his community than to any other community". He strongly encouraged against the demand of Pakistan by the Muslims and coincidentally made several Muslim enemies.*
- 8. Muhammad Ali Jinnah learned of Tara Singh's disapproval of Pakistan and decided to meet with him with to discuss their disagreements. At this meeting "Mr. Jinnah, who outwardly maintained an attitude of sullen and studious disregard towards the Sikhs, tried to cajole them privately. He knew in his heart of hearts that Sikh opposition to Pakistan was one real obstacle in his way and made several secret overtures to the leaders of the community. He chided them for being too subservient to Congress influence and held out all kinds of*



*allurements, including the formation of an autonomous Sikh area within Pakistan. Some British officers also conveyed similar offers to Sikh leaders.*

*9. It can be argued that the Muslims were able to achieve their own separate state from India because they were more assertive than the Sikhs. The Sikhs did not use violence against the other ethnic groups of India like the Muslims chose to do.*

*10. The Sikhs were ultimately the odd man out in India's partition and now had to make a difficult choice between India and Pakistan. For most Sikhs India seemed like the better option even if it meant leaving behind "their homes, their livelihoods, and their ancestral villages".*

*11. They also argued that an independent Punjabi Sikh majority state "was promised to the Sikh leader Master Tara Singh by Nehru in return for Sikh political support during the negotiations for Indian Independence".*

*12. This promise would finally be fulfilled on November 1<sup>st</sup>, 1966 and Punjab would finally become a Sikh majority state. Before 1966 Sikhs "constituted just over 33 percent of Punjab, after 1966, they made up a majority at 66 percent". The Sikhs finally had power again in the land of their ancestral history and even though Lahore was still a part of Pakistan, the Sikhs were at least once again the majority group in Punjab.*

#### **D. Amarel Crowe, Historian of Edinburg University of Scotland**

The exhaustive study presented by Amarel Crowe [24] as MA History Thesis in University of Edinburg reveals many new facets of Sikh failure to share the exploits of Partition of Punjab along

**with the Muslim League. Sikhs constituted less than 15% of Punjab population but they contributed more than 40 % revenue to the state exchequer and were the richest community in Punjab. During Partition of India, Sikhs were the worst sufferers of all. They not only lost their religious and cultural heritage but also the richest economy based on agriculture in Pakistan.**

**The main conclusions of this study can be summed up as follows:**

**Sikhs were caught unawares as they were not prepared for the Partition of Punjab. First they wanted Azad Punjab with 40% Muslim, 40% Hindu and 20% Sikh population. When this proved to be a utopia, then they passed a resolution in favour of an independent Sikh State. Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were their front rank leaders but they passed the baton to Baldev Singh and Swaran Singh. I consider this as a big blunder. Swaran Singh was a staunch Congressman and Baldev Singh was prevailed upon by Pandit Nehru to go with the Congress plan. He was the weakest link to present the Sikh case at London round table conference as his personal interests lay in joining India to save his business. Sikh masses were kept in the dark and Sikh elites were holding the reins of Sikh Panth. The elites (Baldev Singh, Surjit Singh Majithia, Ujjal Singh etc.) were in favour of joining India.**

**The Akali leadership was not united and had no clear cut policy to protect the interests of Sikhs. Master Tara Singh failed to provide leadership at this crucial juncture of history. He wanted to remain in the background and his nominees (Baldev Singh et al.) had personal political ambitions to join India. Sikh leaders' antagonism against Muslim League proved to be another hurdle in their decision making. Ultimately, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh**

and Giani Kartar Singh crumbled under the Congress pressure and together on 18 April 1947 met Lord Mountbatten to demand the Partition of Punjab into Muslim and non-Muslim areas.

Sirdar Kapur Singh [25] squarely blames Master Tara Singh for failure of the Sikhs to get an independent Sikh State in *Sachi Sakhi*. I feel his account is based on some half-truths. For example, there is no written document found in the archives of Partition where British offered some special status for the Sikhs.

### **Excerpts from the Report**

- 1. The end of the British Raj in India brought destitution, death and displacement for the north of the subcontinent. On 15 August 1947, the Indian people gained their independence; but the price was Partition, and the nation was divided in two.***
- 2. An agreement to partition the subcontinent was announced on 3 June 1947, a mere six weeks prior to its implementation.***
- 3. The potential for radical change in the political and social structure of India was undermined by elite politicians, who were predominantly interested in replacing the British at the top of a largely preserved hierarchical system.***
- 4. In contrast to the 'Quit India' campaign of 1942, which saw unprecedented mass participation rock the foundations of British rule, it was through political elites and colonial institutions that politics was reorganised in 1947.***
- 5. India Wins Freedom: An Autobiographical Narrative by Abul Kalaam Azad [26] outlines how Congress betrayed Muslim nationalists; Partition could have been avoided if it were not for some poor policy decisions from Congress high command.***
- 6. This stagnated response to the massacres of 1947 has had serious implications for social cohesion in independent India,***

*with the Sikhs arguing that they have been vilified and used as a scapegoat by the Hindu majority [27].*

*7. Up to and throughout 1947, the Sikhs continued to respond to a variety of concerns, with village, caste and class identities remaining powerful. This diversity within the Sikh community was not translated into pluralistic political representation; the Akali Dal became the sole voice of Sikhs as far as the negotiations for the transfer of power were concerned.*

*8. According to the 1941 census, the Sikh population was 3.8 million – 14.9% of undivided Punjab [28].*

*9. As a wealthy community, they contributed disproportionately to the economic and civil life of the region, with high representation in the armed forces [29]. However, this privileged position in the Punjab did not translate into influence in the transfer of power process because the constitutional arrangement of independent India was being decided at an all-India level.*

*10. Sir Evan Jenkins, the governor of the Punjab from April 1946 – 15 August 1947, complained that the dogmatism of the Congress and Muslim League high commands prevented any settlement of the political impasse in the region.*

*11. The British-Congress-Muslim League triangle in Delhi was intent on a swift transfer of power [30], which was not conducive to arriving at a settlement that took account of the particular conditions in the Punjab.*

*12. Between 1940 and 1946, Sikh leaders responded to the Lahore declaration with various proposals which attempted to avoid Sikh incorporation into a Muslim state. A week after the League's Pakistan resolution, the Khalsa National Party passed a resolution prophesying that 'the Muslim League has*

*created a situation which may mean a parting of the ways for Sikhs and the Muslims' [31].*

*13. On 15<sup>th</sup> June 1942, Baldev Singh signed a pact with Sikander Hyat Khan, the Muslim leader of the Unionist Party [32]. In the short-term this pact alleviated communal tension between Muslims and Sikhs and marginalised the Pakistan demand. Progress was disrupted by Jinnah's visit to the Punjab in November 1942, and Sikander's sudden death a month later [33].*

*14. The scheme was named 'Azad Punjab' and would comprise of Ambala, Jullundur, Lahore divisions, and out of the Multan division, Lyallpur District, some portion of Montgomery and Multan districts, with a population of 40% Hindus, 40% Muslims and 20% Sikhs [34]. It looked to create a situation where no single religious community could dominate over another [35].*

*15. In February 1946, Sikh leaders passed a resolution demanding the creation of a separate, autonomous Sikh state.*

*16. However, this new demand from the Sikh political leaders was not seriously acknowledged as a possibility by the British [36].*

*17. The Muslim League, after gaining just two seats in the 1937 elections, had become the single biggest party in 1946, winning 75 of the 175 seats [37]. This development was crucial because it was taken as a vote in favour of Pakistan, given that the League's main policy was a homeland for Muslims.*

*18. Sikh political leaders – drawing on a long history of oppression [38] – claimed that Pakistan was 'a matter of life and death for the Sikhs' [39].*

*19. The second development was the publication of the Cabinet Mission's proposals for the constitutional*

*arrangement of an independent India [40]. The proposals, which arranged India in compulsory groups in an effort to allay fears articulated by the Muslim League about Congress domination, did not include any safeguards for the Sikhs.*

*20. In a letter to the Secretary of State, Master Tara Singh asked: 'If the first consideration of the Cabinet Mission's recommendations is to give protection to the Muslims, why should the same consideration be not shown to the Sikhs? It appears that the Sikhs have been studiously debarred from having any effective influence in the province, a group or Central Union.'* [41].

*21. Baldev Singh was the preferred Sikh representative from the British perspective, who perceived him to be more moderate and characteristic of the wider Sikh community. He was the Sikh member of the Executive Council in 1945, and was invited to serve in the interim government in 1946 [42].*

*22. Master Tara Singh and other leaders of the Akali Party protested that Baldev did not consult with them on vital issues in the transfer of power process. For example, following Baldev Singh's acceptance of 3<sup>rd</sup> June Plan, Master Tara Singh complained of 'the total lack' of any provision in the plan to give the Sikhs 'any power or status anywhere, or for safeguarding their position and interests' [43].*

*23. Thus the power struggle within the Akali leadership was not conducive to a clear policy, based on the interests of Sikhs.*

*24. Concerns for the welfare of the Sikh community were intermingled with personal political ambitions. Ultimately, after weighing up the dangers of the incorporation of the whole of the Punjab into Pakistan, the Sikh political elite demanded the partition of the region, together with the exchange of population in order to consolidate the Sikh*

*community [44]. The decision was taken following a Panthic conference, and notably delivered to Mountbatten by Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh together on 18 April 1947 [45].*

*25. The demand for the partition of the Punjab and exchange of population and property of Sikhs in the west with Muslims in the east of the region [46] remains controversial.*

*26. Gyani Kartar Singh stressed to Mountbatten that the Sikh community had been 'placed in jeopardy' and 'every Sikh in whatever situation he is placed feels most acutely about it' [47]. However, oral testimonies and literary accounts contest this statement.*

*27. The main concerns which governed the Akali strategy were fear of Muslim domination and maintaining the integrity of the Sikh community.*

*28. These regular references to a history of oppression shaped the communal identity of Sikhs and instilled fear about living under Muslim rule in Pakistan.*

*29. Time and time again, survivors of Partition recall the harmonious relations they had with Muslims and blame political leaders for the division of the country.*

*30. The 3 June announcement to partition the Punjab thus left the Sikh leaders in disarray; this was principally because the plan had been agreed upon without a clear understanding of the factors on which a division of the region would be based [48]. Baldev Singh declared that 'the Sikhs had accepted the British statement of June 3<sup>rd</sup> but acceptance never meant they should acquiesce in decisions that threatened their very existence' [49].*

*31. Master Tara Singh announced 'the time has come when the might of the sword alone shall reign. The Sikhs are ready. We have to bring Muslims to their sense' [50].*

**32. The Sikh community is often particularly associated with the violence in the Punjab. It is asserted that their disproportionate involvement in the military, together with elements of the Sikh religion such as the carrying of a kirpan [dagger], result in a greater propensity to violence. Furthermore, the speeches of Akali Dal politicians were notable for their aggressive tone and implicit threats [51].**

**33. As early as 2 March, Tara Singh publically declared 'I do not see how we can avoid civil war. There can be no settlement, if the Muslims want to rule the Punjab' [52]. The following day, the Akali leader made a dramatic speech rejecting Pakistan and unsheathed his kirpan in front of a crowd, as he exited the Punjab Assembly. This bold display of aggression ignited the situation [53].**

**34. The provocation for the violence in March was principally political. The coalition ministry in the Punjab had left the biggest party in the region in opposition: the Muslim League's frustrated agitation, and the incitement from Master Tara Singh and his associates, was all that was needed to detonate the volatile situation.**

**35. Jenkins perceived politicians to be directly responsible for stimulating communal feeling in the Police and argued they were attempting to do the same with the army [54].**

**36. Sikhs were particularly affected by bias in the police force, because its composition was majority Muslim [55].**

**37. Akali leaders spread information about Sikh suffering in order to incite reprisals. One pamphlet entitled *The Rape of Rawalpindi* declared 'thousands of innocent Sikhs murdered in cold blood...Sikhs!'**

**38. Years of cohabitation degenerated into distrust and fear as news and propaganda of horrific violence debased the foundations of friendships.**



**39. Sikh politics was not one-dimensional; the dominant Akali Dal was not representative of the views of the entire community.**

**40. The Akali elites were given the power to decide the Sikh position in the transfer of power; however, this did not mean that the Sikh community blindly succumbed to their advice or leadership.**

**41. The boundary line was published two days after Partition, causing mass confusion, death and destruction.**

**42. The horror and trauma of the Partition violence has not been addressed by the state; politicians prefer the non-explanation of 'madness', which allows them to continue unperturbed with the 'nation building project' [56]. However, the experience of violence, dislocation and division – all supposedly as a result of religion – has left its mark on the population of the Punjab.**

**43. At no time was this more apparent than with 'Operation Blue Star' in 1984 and the subsequent attacks on Delhi's Sikh population. Indira Gandhi's military operation to tackle Sikh guerrilla activity involved the siege of the Golden Temple and the rounding up of 'militants' in the surrounding villages.**

**44. This triggered the outbreak of anti-Sikh riots in Delhi, where 3000 Sikhs were killed (as per official figures).**

**45. Joyce Pettigrew argues that 'it is an irony that the Sikh people, after fleeing the establishment of a religious state in 1947, should be murdered in such large numbers, almost forty years on, in what they, until the army entry into the Darbar Sahib, had regarded as their own home – secular India' [57].**

**46. The leaders of the Akali Dal did not attempt to conglomerate the diverse concerns and attitudes of the Sikh population. Instead, they articulated an elitist policy which aimed to ensure that the privileged position of wealthy Sikhs**

***would not be undermined by submission to Muslim rule or the fragmentation of the Sikh community, with devastating consequences.***

## **E. Conclusions**

**1. Sikhs were caught unawares as they were not prepared for the Partition of Punjab. First they wanted Azad Punjab with 40 % Muslim, 40 % Hindu and 20% Sikh population. When this proved to be a utopia, then they passed a resolution in favour of an independent Sikh State. Master Tara Singh and Giani Kartar Singh were their front rank leaders but they passed the baton to Baldev Singh and Swaran Singh. I consider this as a big blunder.**

**2. Swaran Singh was a staunch Congressman and Baldev Singh was prevailed upon by Pandit Nehru to go with the Congress plan. He was the weakest link to present the Sikh case at London round table conference as his personal interests lay in joining India to save his business.**

**3. Sikh masses were kept in the dark and Sikh elites were holding the reins of Sikh Panth. The elites (Baldev Singh, Surjit Singh Majithia, Ujjal Singh etc.) were in favour of joining India.**

**4. The Akali leadership was not united and had no clear cut policy to protect the interests of Sikhs. Master Tara Singh failed to provide leadership at this crucial juncture of history. He wanted to remain in the background and his nominees (Baldev Singh et al.) had personal political ambitions to join India.**

**5. Sikh leaders' antagonism against Muslim League proved to be another hurdle in their decision making. Ultimately, Master Tara Singh, Baldev Singh and Giani Kartar Singh crumbled under the Congress pressure and together on 18 April 1947 met Lord**

**Mountbatten to demand the Partition of Punjab into Muslim and non-Muslim areas.**

**6. Sardar Kapur Singh squarely blames Master Tara Singh for failure of the Sikhs to get an independent Sikh State in *Sachi Sakhi*.**

**7. Lord Mountbatten blames the entire Sikh community for its failure during the Partition of Punjab in 1947: "*It must be pointed out that the people who asked for the partition were the Sikhs. The Congress took up their request and framed the resolution in the form they wanted. They wanted the Punjab to be divided in two predominantly Muslim and non-Muslim areas. I have done exactly what the Sikhs requested me to do through the Congress. The request came to me as a tremendous shock as I like the Sikhs, I am fond of them and I wish them well*" (quoted by Dr Kirpal Singh in [20]).**

**8. It is evident from the letter of Prof. Puran Singh and other studies based on documents retrieved from the British archives that there was neither a strong case presented by the Sikh leadership nor any offer made by the British to divide India into three parts just for accommodating the Sikhs as equal partners with Hindus and Muslims.**

**9. Out of all options available to the Sikhs, joining India was considered to be the most viable option by the Sikh leadership due to their cultural affinity with the Hindus.**

**10. It is no use fighting for the lost opportunity during the Partition of Punjab in 1947 by raking up the issue of Sikh State (Khalistan). "It is like beating a dead horse", as the saying goes.**

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## **Pains of Partition – Revisited**

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1. In the middle forties, the air was thick with sordid stories of Second World War as well as some rumblings of increasing communal strife between Hindus/Sikhs and Muslims in Punjab. As a child, I could sense the widening divide and mounting tensions between these communities. In my early childhood, I had observed great bonhomie among the two communities as I would see my father and other relatives mixing freely with Muslims. My father's best friends were Muslims and they freely exchanged gifts on festive occasions. My invalid mother's most trusted hakim Mir Ali was a devout Muslim and we had great faith in his healing touch. On Eid and Baisakhi, there was genuine happiness and exchange of fresh and dry fruits, clothes etc. I remember that the Muslim friends of my father were very appreciative of my mother's cooking but never touched any meat dishes being "jhatka" and vice versa by us who shunned "halal". Though the relations appeared very cordial at individual level, one could sense an undercurrent of increasing tensions between the two communities due to communal divide at the national level. Traditionally, Muslims lived in separate mohallas, had separate schools, eating places etc.

2. 1947 was a watershed year in history of India. Simmering tensions between the two communities broke into sporadic riots in early 1947 which soon became regular and violent with increasing arson and killing. Muslims being in vast majority, the Hindus and Sikhs were the main target. Schools, shops, offices



etc. were closed and people could not venture out of their mohallas. Life virtually came to halt. We could see rising flames during the night when houses and shops of minorities were set on fire, accompanied by loud war cries of "Allah ho Akbar", evoking a robust response of "Bole So Nihal" and "Jai Shri Ram" from the outnumbered and fear stricken minorities. The situation appeared to be getting completely out of hand with almost total absence of law and order enforcement authorities. Police forces were dominated by Muslims and bias appeared obvious. Most males of the Hindus and Sikhs of their mohallah would gather at night in the tall buildings with whatever arms, shot guns and swords they could gather and bravely shout religious war cries to deter the enemy and save themselves from the rampaging rioters.

3. These were still pre-partition days around March-April and with increasing loss of life and property. The Hindus and Sikhs sensed the inevitable and started moving to safe havens on Indian side. But many brave souls stayed back, not willing to abandon their roots and sincerely hoping that this insane mayhem will not be able to destroy the age old deep- rooted friendship between the two communities and life will become normal soon even if country is divided.

4. Our family was residing in Rawalpindi which was the next important city after Lahore. My father S. Kartar Singh Bindra was working with the Imperial Bank of India (renamed State Bank of India after partition), a very prestigious banking institution. In early 1947 he was transferred from Rawalpindi to a rather remote and unknown small hilly place Abbotabad near NWFP, notorious for communal strife, later made world famous by Osama Bin Laden who was hiding there until he was killed by U. S. commandos.

5. Abbotabad was even then a completely Muslim town except for a few Hindu and Sikh families. We had vaguely heard about it

since we occasionally visited Haripur (another small town near Abbotabad) which was the native place of my mother. Incidentally, Osama reportedly stayed hiding in this town also for some years before he shifted to nearby Abbotabad. My father had moved to Abbotabad alone so as not to disturb our schooling in Rawalpindi. When summer vacations came after examinations in April 1947 and the situation was not too dangerous to travel, our family decided to spend some days with our father in the cool climes of Abbotabad and then returned to Pindi which was relatively safer.

6. Soon after our return, the communal situation worsened. We had to abandon our spacious house on the main road and move to a gated cluster of small houses where most Hindu and Sikh families had taken shelter. Almost all the NWFP and Punjab was engulfed with anti-Hindu-Sikh riots even before the Partition. There were fires and killings all around and it was dangerous even to venture out. There was no question of going back to Rawalpindi now. We had come to Abbotabad to spend a few weeks of school holidays with some limited clothing and items of personal use leaving everything behind including all valuables in Pindi. Now with no prospect of returning there, we were already left bereft of our most valuable possessions.

7. Hindu-Sikh families had already started leaving Abbotabad for India and it was time to say goodbye to our ancestral land, which made us, particularly our parents, very sad and emotional. There was a major problem. My father was unable to leave Abbotabad because he was the joint key holder along with the Agent (Sr. manager) of the Strong Room where all the cash and valuable assets were kept. The Bank could not function without the presence of both of them. The Agent was an Englishman quite safe from rioting Muslim mobs. But my father being a Sikh was the most vulnerable target and his life was at

extreme risk. He was perhaps the only Sikh left in the entire area and was constantly being advised by friends and administration to leave immediately. But such was the sense of duty ingrained in him that he refused to leave till his successor was posted. He did not want to take even one day off to take his family to nearest refugee camp as he loathed the idea of crippling the functioning of Bank even for a day. Despite many efforts, the Bank could not find a substitute as no Hindu or Sikh was willing to risk his life in such a dangerous area. Nor was any suitable and qualified Muslim or even Englishman available to do the job.

8. Meanwhile the situation was getting more and more risky for us to stay in these most volatile conditions, so my father had no option than to send us to India routed through refugee camps as traveling on our own meant inviting certain death. It must have been the most difficult decision of his life as he could not come with us and practically had to put the lives of his family in the most dangerous and choppy conditions, and also to put his own life at tremendous risk. So on one fateful day in July, 1947 my mother whom I had always seen in poor health since my childhood, my two sisters, one in early teens and other a small child along with me were dispatched with minimum luggage of a small suitcase and a couple of bags to a nearby refugee camp in Wah army cantonment.

9. My father was advised by bank Agent to shift into Bank premises which was guarded by the army for protection of government treasury. The refugee camp was teeming with large number of displaced Hindus and Sikhs who had fled their houses to save their lives. All had come without much luggage and money, leaving their belongings and valuables behind in their houses which were then looted and occupied by the rampaging mobs. At the camp, we were put up in a large empty barrack, without any cots or any other furniture. We made our beds on the

floor and spent most of time doing nothing. Those who had money could buy some provisions from makeshift shops within the camp. Others were given free frugal meals. There was nothing to do and life was very boring. Going out of the small confines of the camp was out of question. Though living in the camp was relatively secure, sometimes hostile mobs succeeded in raiding and looting, either due to the negligence or the connivance of military guards.

10. Life was naturally very uncertain, not knowing when and how we will be sent to India. Refugees were usually sent either by road in open trucks or by train. This travel carried its own risks as we often heard of refugee trains and trucks being attacked enroute by armed mobs killing, looting and even kidnapping of young woman. The escorting troops, usually Muslims, were often complicit and even partners in loot and kidnapping. Such reports were very upsetting and parents kept on praying to their Gods for safe journey for them and their children. Interestingly most prayers were for granting protection escort from a Gorkha battalion which meant a safer journey, which unfortunately happened rarely.

11. There was thus great tension among camp inhabitants. No one knew when we would leave for India or what fate awaited us after leaving the camp. All kinds of depressing reports were floating around which created many apprehensions among the refugees. No one knew what tomorrow would bring. A typical case of no news is good news! On top of all this, there was no contact with anyone outside the camp. And no communications with any relatives anywhere, whether they have perished or survived. We did not hear even once from our father after leaving Abbotabad. Nor did he from us. We were completely unaware of his whereabouts as was he about ours. Anything could have happened in those murderous conditions. This made our life more miserable and this being the case with most other inhabitants

also, the parents went into deep depression and thought if life was worth living after all.

12. It was in these desolate environs that rumours started about our moving from the camp as soon as some kind of transport could be arranged by the camp authorities. Trains as well as trucks were not easily available due to large movements of refugees in both directions as well as troop movements for law and order, though violent mobs appeared to have free run everywhere.

Finally, after about a month's stay, it was confirmed that we will be moving next day by train to India. There was some excitement on leaving the camp, but more anxiety about what fate awaited us enroute to our freedom. Nobody knew if he will reach the destination unharmed. More individual prayers and community religious discourses were held throughout the night to ward off evil forces and ensure safe journey in such perilous times, with special prayers to God for Gorkha army escort.

13. With such great apprehensions, we were dispatched to railway station next day. Our hearts sank on seeing the "train". There were no bogies or compartments but a row of open roofless wagons used for transporting cattle. No protection from sun, rain or rioters' bullets. All this caused great commotion and some feeble protests from hapless refugees. But there was no choice, with "take it or leave it" attitude of camp authorities. Taking it meant exposing ourselves to vagaries of nature and bullets of armed attackers. And the question of "leaving it" did not arise. The doors of the refugee camp were closed to us to make room for new influx, and staying elsewhere meant certain death. So, the option of uncertain death appeared more attractive than certain death, and we were all herded into the "cattle" train with lurking fear in our minds and silent prayers on our lips. Nor were our overnight prayers for Gurkha escort granted. What we saw with

horror was the deployment of armed Balouchi personnel, more known for their ferocity than protection.

14. Soon the "train" started and we left our safe haven of the refugee camp for a dangerous journey into the unknown. It was a torturous travel exposing us to elements of sun, rain and strong wind blasts in the open wagon on the running train. And worst of all, these wagons had neither any water supply nor any toilets, further adding to our bad plight. While water pots were being carried by many, the absence of loo put everyone at wits end. With so many men and women, young and old, along with children in each wagon, the crisis can better be imagined than described.

15. The journey was rather slow and torturous. We were completely exposed to the elements on the running train with no roof. There were many abrupt and short halts, scheduled and unscheduled. But no food or water was available. No one had the courage to get out of the train. He would first have to jump out of the side-walls of the cattle rake as there was no opening or stairs for coming out. And then it was extremely risky to go to the platform with so many people around watching, with as much curiosity as hostility, and a very remote chance that any stall would sell any food or water to Kafirs who deserved no help or mercy. So whatever eatables and water was brought while boarding by the refugees was being conserved strictly and rationed out sparingly to children, old persons and the rest, in that order. It was in this famished and fearful conditions that the train halted at Wazirabad station, which sent waves of fear in our minds, for this city was notorious for manufacturing sharp long knives (something akin to Rampuri variety). This ominous coincidence made everyone nervous, and fearing the worst, our minds again turned to fervent prayers for safe journey.

16. Soon a crowd started collecting and shouting threatening slogans. Everyone in the train was now fearing for their life and

expecting an armed attack by the violent mob. This time though, our prayers were answered and the train started moving out of the station. All of us felt a sigh of relief and thanked our stars for escaping near death from a marauding mob. But our luck did not hold for long and again the train halted with sudden jerks near an outer signal. This created another panic wave, expecting the worst. And it did not take long in coming. Soon guns started booming with bullets and pellets flying around, coming directly from the attackers perched on high buildings near the train track. Our open-to-sky wagon gave no protection and bullets were finding the targets easily. With no roof on their head, the hapless passengers were crouching under their baggage, particularly the thick bedding hold-all. The tin trunks were lined up against the inside wagon wall to stop bullets penetrating inside. Obviously, there were many casualties and no hope of any medical aid. There did not appear to be any resistance from our protecting military guards, who as most of us feared, may have been collaborating with the attackers. The biggest fear then was that the mob may storm the train any moment. These fears were well-founded. It was common knowledge that such communal mobs first softened their captive targets with gun fire and frightening slogans and then attacked them mercilessly, killing and looting them. The women and young girls would be molested and kidnapped in front of their helpless parents. Nothing was more humiliating and shameful. Then something unexpected happened. Firing stopped suddenly. Was it a lull before a bigger storm? Everyone was holding their breath and there was an eerie silence. But neither any more firing nor any attack occurred. And soon we could see some soldiers who were detailed to guard us but were inactive so far, surrounding the train and thus averting mass murder, abductions and looting of whatever valuables we were carrying.

**17. The train did not move for long time, increasing the fear and suspense of not knowing what is coming next. The relieving factor was that guns were silent and no more sloganeering and shouting by the mob. Though much relaxed mentally, now there was hunger and thirst to contend with. The elderly were in no mood to eat as though sense of impending disaster had killed the appetite, but the children and the weak needed to be fed and whatever food was available was given to them. More than the food, the bigger problem was non-availability of water. Whatever little was left was rationed strictly on need basis since prospect of replenishing were almost nil as the train was standing virtually in wilderness. Since there were no further salvos of firing and the mob appeared to have melted, some brave young souls dared to raise their heads and furtively looked outside the wagon. We were in a deserted area with nothing available within sight. Then they noticed a stagnant poodle of dirty water just outside the wagon. A wave of hope spread all over the wagon as if we have found a pool of filtered water. Soon some turbans were tied to make a long rope and a couple of buckets were lowered into the poodle to draw water, which though stinking, proved like mana to the parched throats of long-thirsty victims.**

**18. Meanwhile the train did not move at all and the suspense continued with fear heightening every moment. The inside walls were further fortified with thick hold-alls and iron trunks to act as buffer against bullets. Faces of young girls were blackened with soot and mud from the dirty poodle to mask them from the lusting eyes of attackers. Long hair of young Sikh children were kneaded into plaits to pass them off as small girls. The night was spent in complete silence under shadow of death, expecting deadly attack from mob any time under cover of darkness. But till dawn nothing happened and train started moving again. A few hours later the train touched Gujranwala city.**



**We were all ordered to disembark and taken to a refugee camp in heart of the town.**

**19. Unexpectedly this camp was much better than the last one, consisting of a cluster of houses vacated by Hindus and Sikhs who had already migrated to India. Most of the houses were well furnished, obviously belonging to well-to-do people. Our family shared a big haveli type house of some affluent family with a few other refugee families. After many difficulties, deprivations and dangerous situations, this was a welcome break. Though a refugee camp, it was like a community with every family having separate accommodation in a mohallah type environment. Our room was good and comfortable. Camp authorities and army guards were not very intrusive and inhabitants mixed freely. Food was served in a nearby Gurudwara, which could be supplemented from street vendors if you had the money. It was like an open camp where movement was unrestricted but venturing outside the camp limits was forbidden and could be suicidal. No one knew when we will resume our journey to India. After about a month's stay, we were informed that next day we will be moving again, this time by road. Though happy, all were very apprehensive about what fate lay ahead. Looking at our past bitter experiences, nobody was sure that we will reach India safe or in one piece. But all were anxious to leave and take their chances as there was no other alternative.**

**20. The day of departure was quite eventful and depressing as this time again we were herded in open trucks and not buses as we had hoped and prayed for. There was a complete chaos as time given to board the trucks was very short and we were not allowed to take our luggage except some handy items like some water, eatables and a "gathri" (small makeshift cloth bag). But the worst was the scenario when troops started pushing refugees into the trucks haphazardly and families got separated. There was great**

hue and cry, people shouting and searching for their family members. There were not enough trucks for the large crowd and people were jostling and struggling to climb into them. Children and women were in great distress and victims of this great chaos, being pushed and lifted roughly into the vehicles in panic lest they get left behind.

21. Soon the trucks started moving slowly with people packed like sardines. While young and agile climbed easily, many old men and women were left out in the prevailing chaos and were running desperately behind the trucks, being pushed or pulled by relatives to get them on board. My own mother who was sick and weak was trying to climb when truck started moving. We were all gripped in panic and started shouting for help lest she be left behind. But thanks to some kind souls, she was virtually lifted and deposited in the moving vehicle. The whole scenario was so traumatic and depressing with many people crying, shouting and chasing the moving vehicles. Eventually almost all were on board in the open trucks and hopefully on our way to freedom under army escort, though fear of the worst happening was haunting all of us. The journey was uncomfortable but uneventful except some stone pelting by locals while passing through the bazaars of the famous Lahore city. I count it as my first and last visit to this cultural capital of united Punjab though under the most trying conditions.

22. It was almost at midnight of the cold November when we crossed Wagha border into India. There was palpable relief and instantaneous joy in having escaped misery and death. The frozen silence during the fateful journey was suddenly shattered by loud cries of "Jo bole so nihal" and "Jai Shri Ram". People were hugging each other and crying, happy that they escaped almost certain death and were lucky to get a second life. From Wagha our convoy was taken to Khalsa College, a stately old building in the outskirts of Amritsar where a makeshift overnight transit camp

was opened to receive migrants from Pakistan. This was our first night in Independent India. Suddenly all the fears and tensions of extreme ordeal in a hostile country which till recently was our own motherland disappeared and we felt a sense of relief on escaping almost certain death. For the moment, having a new lease of life was a blessing and everyone was praying and thanking their Gods. After a frugal hot meal, we had our first night of peaceful and sound sleep in tents pitched in the open grounds of the college.

23. Next morning brought a new set of worries. Life was safe but future very uncertain with no house to stay, no clothes, no money, in fact hardly any belongings, and a very hazy idea of what to do and where to go. Even more worrying was that there was no news of our father ever since we left Abbotabad months ago, causing deep concerns about his safety in Pakistan. And there was no way to find out even his whereabouts just as he was unaware of our existence. But our courageous mother, though chronically ill, did not despair and decided to move to Golden Temple in the morning to pay our obeisance and also to plan our future. We did not have any near relatives or known friends in India where we could take temporary shelter, so the only course left was to surrender to the will of God.

24. Coming to Golden Temple was a new experience. I had never seen such a huge Gurudwara, and that too in center of a big sarovar (holy pond). The child in me was very fascinated by the grandeur of gold plated building. But my mother was engrossed in other thoughts and worried about our next move. Feeling hungry, we first took a dip in the Holy pond and then went the sanctum sanctorum of the Gurudwara to pray and pay our heartfelt thanks to our Saviour. After a hearty meal in langar, we settled down in a corner of "parikarma" and soon enveloped by sound sleep. But our mother was wide awake and weighing various options, made

more difficult in absence of my father who possibly would have known someone in this city.

25. The Gurudwara was teeming with a large number of people, both local and refugees. My mother struck conversation with some local people to find out the location of Imperial Bank in the hope that they may extend some help to the family of their employee who is faithfully doing duty stuck in Pakistan. To our great relief, she found out that one of our distant relatives was now working in this Bank, whom we had not met, except her. It was evening by then and not easy to find his address. But our luck held and soon she saw him in the Gurudwara. He told her that his family comes daily to see if any relatives had crossed over the border and need any help. He soon took us to his house where we found some other relatives already taking shelter in his big house and bigger heart. Though highly relieved on getting a warm welcome and some temporary shelter, our thoughts were with our father whose whereabouts were not known causing extreme anxiety and constant worry about his safety in the most hostile area of Abbotabad. There was complete breakdown of communications and absolutely no way of finding whatever may have happened. My mother was going daily to the Golden Temple to pray for his safety. Again our prayers were answered and after about a month he walked into the house to our great relief and joy. On reaching Amritsar, he went straight to the Bank and found out our location as he knew this relative already.

26. How he ultimately escaped almost sure death in the most notorious area of NWFP in Pakistan all these six months is another frightening story. Cutting it short, he was advised to vacate his house and move into safe premises of the Bank which was guarded by the army as it housed government treasury. Such was his sense of loyalty that though he was the only one Sikh left in this most dangerous province, he stuck to his post of duty till one

day the English Deputy Commissioner came to know about his presence in the Bank and ordered his immediate evacuation to Army cantonment in Rawalpindi. As the land route was not at all safe, he was airlifted to Ambala in an Air Force Dakota from where he headed straight to Amritsar and next day reported for duty at the Bank. So, a family was united after about six months separation not even knowing whether we were all alive or dead.

27. Thus ended the sordid saga of most painful and bloody migration from a hate-filled new country to a truncated India. Though about a million or more lives were lost and men, women and children murdered, raped and looted, and over 15 million people were uprooted from their homes, the impression got around was that it was a peaceful and nonviolent achievement of freedom. Since the carnage was largely confined to two provinces of Punjab and Bengal, to the rest of India it appeared a bloodless partition. The enormous price paid by these two states caused an everlasting trauma but escaped notice of unaffected states which enjoyed the fruits of freedom without undergoing such pain.

28. BUT, the moot question still haunts us is whether all these sacrifices by millions of people have given us real freedom—freedom from fear, corruption, exploitation, hunger, poverty and above all never-ending political avarice.



## **Letter from the Chairman's Desk**

### **By Sunil Bhatia PhD**

**Sir Shahnawaz Mamdot was president of the Punjab Muslim League and Bhim Sen Sachar was representing Gujranwala as a Congressman. The latter spoke at a public gathering that "Mamdot is a *Gunga pahalwan* (Mamdot is a dumb wrestler). His statement created a furor but it reflected Sachar's foolishness as he was from Gujranwala -the city of wrestlers. The best wrestler never boasted but quietly devised a strategy to win the game using strength, actions, cleverness, and presence of mind. That sort of dumb wrestler emerged winner in the creation of Pakistan.**

**It is a basic Hindu character that enjoys running down others and rarely misses an opportunity in projecting others as inferior. This, in fact, is a Brahminical feature that makes one feel highly intellectual and knowledgeable, and lives with an inflated superego as 'no race is comparable to ours and we are divine and the best race'. Such people forget that there is nothing special about them. Every tribe or cluster of people from primitive times has been boasting about their 'unmatchable and divine scriptures and divine music' while projecting their gods as omnipresent and omnipotent. Even though a Brahmin is illiterate, poor, and earns living by performing rituals, still he believes that he is unmatchable. That sort of false ego hinged on one-upmanship that played a larger role in the Partition.**

**Sir Sikander Hayat, Punjab's Premier once said that Hindus in Punjab were more educated and in financial matters more intelligent compared to Muslims. The latter should not do anything that made the former feel hurt and alienated.**

**Hindus believed they were highly intellectuals and educated compared to other communities of Punjab. They opened the schools as per the British education system earlier than others and tried to compete with Bengalis in modern education. Bengal was the first province where the British government opened its institutes for preparing the local manpower for administering India. The Sikhs too felt that they should not be left behind in education and their religious organizations did marvelous work of imparting modern education for all. The majority of the local population preferred Hindu or Sikhs managed schools and wherever it was not possible they did not hesitate to send their wards to far-off places. My father was a student of the Khalsa School of Gujranwala and he was thankful and gave all credit to his school and teachers who had not only impacted his mind but also attuned his thinking process to the progress in life. He used to tell that there was neck-to-neck competition between Hindu and Sikh schools for imparting the best education to their students where Islamic institutes were lagging behind in imparting quality education. The British Government, however, tactfully recruited less educated Muslims at the local level of operational administration but educated Hindus were placed in higher positions in the administration. The brutality of lower administration was witnessed at the time of Partition in absence of high-level Hindu administrators who left western Punjab for India. The British practice in the Madras presidency was astonishing as they recruited higher caste people as Police and the police cruelty on local lower caste people was unimaginable**

**which forced the government to enact a Special Police Act to check the police highhandedness.**

**The British government was aware of the role of the community leaders and raised them to the position of icons who had served as a great uniting force. Such icons were properly listened to and followed by the masses. So, the British selected and promoted a few people from Muslims, Hindus, and smaller communities as high intellectual and popular leaders of the masses. Highly respected and wise philosopher poet Allama Iqbal was originally a Kashmiri Brahmin who went abroad for higher education. Lala Hardayal, who was a Kyastha Hindu went to the USA for higher studies and became a scholar of Sanskrit from there. The majority of the freedom fighters and the political leaders were foreign-educated like Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, and even Savarkar. The British cultivated them by favoring their advice and made them first-rank leaders for establishing easy rapport with them. This helped the British in avoiding conflicts. Indian masses accepted these leaders as intellectuals and thought they are the best lot for negotiations with the British and for making decisions on their behalf. The British rulers even sponsored the Unionist Party of Sir Sikandar Hayat, Sir Manohar Lal, and Sir Chotu Ram for dividing the rich agrarian landlords and the marginalized peasants. The Unionists stood like a wall in a time of crisis and defended the British. However the intention of these selected and promoted leaders of British was beyond doubt for making Punjab a progressive state and they worked hard heart and soul for making it so. The biggest drawback was that all were first-timer in learning the game of democracy and were naïve to comprehend the concept of democracy as it germinated in India under the guidance of the British. Their growth in understanding democratic governance was not natural but was cultivated by the British.**



**Their experience and feudal mindset were always overlapping the democratic thoughts and gave rise to conflicts which were visible in the negotiations at the last leg of the transfer of power from the British. The religious factor was another biggest stumbling block. There was a clash of personalities too that came from the Hindu way of proving superiority. In fact, there was a race of proving superiority over the opponent that resulted in the creation of the two-nations theory in India. It would be wrong to dismiss that conflict emanating from the projection of superiority was nothing but a race between the power-hungry leaders. Otherwise, those leaders were genuine fighters who worked hard in driving away the British. I feel like standing up to salute them for this.**

**The British cultivated an artificial rich class, by giving it huge lands, that in return, created a source of revenue for the Government. It served a dual purpose as it helped local administration against any unrest among the masses as well as provided a channel for revenue collection. Hence the feudal system got promoted to the benefit of both the Government and the feudal lords. Thus the first-rank Nawabs were created on the lines of the Mughal administration for revenue collection. Nawabs were more focussed on the Madrasa education in the hope that the Mughal Empire would be re-established as the British left the country. As princes and Nawab expressed their inability for financial support, the British government created second-rank landlords who were pressurized to fulfill the deficit revenue. The British were masters in cultivating a false super ego among leaders of the communities making them feel that they were not lesser in any sense than the leaders of other communities.**

**The Brahmins who had embraced Islam were known among the masses as Syeds but they could not come out of the perception**

that they were superior socially and otherwise among the Muslims. The Sikh gurus principally eliminated the caste system among the followers and dissuaded them not to tag their caste with their names. Every Sikh man should be Singh and Sikh woman be Kaur and nothing else. But through a very careful plan, the British introduced caste among the people who were first-generation converts to Sikism. The British also promoted the Brahmin-backed Sikhs as leaders of the community.

These leaders, thus cultivated with false egos and did not deserve to represent the real masses. Anyhow, such leaders became negotiators for freedom and ultimately the transfer of power from the British to the Indians. Indian rulers were assured that they would continue to rule as long they wished because the opposition also carried the same mindset. The British did not think that new world power was emerging and pressurizing to free India as earlier as possible. But the British themselves were in hurry to quit as they were rendered militarily and economically incapable of holding their colonies after the Second World War. Their hurriedness was visible in the appointment of Cyril Redcliffe for drawing the line of Partition which entailed the killing of a million people and the uprooting of ten million families. The British were, however, assured that the Brahmin mindset that they had projected and promoted as the protector of the Indian masses, would be twisted as they wished at the appropriate time. Although some leaders had embraced new religions they continued to have a soft corner for the religion of their forefathers. They, thus, were not true followers of the adopted religion. Such leaders despite their outwards religious appearance to the otherwise, could not shed away the subconscious impact of the religion of their forefathers on minds. This was a damaging

**factor for the culture of Punjab and that helped create the Partition.**

**The Sikh-Jatt farmers were more attached to agriculture compared to Hindus and Muslim farmers. Being traditionally cultivators, they acquired more farming land during Maharaja Ranjit Singh's rule. Some of them were rich and big farmers holding huge land. Their lifestyle was comfortable and they acted as a mediator helping the British in controlling the sudden eruption of conflicts. The mediators always supported maintaining social harmony for the protection of their wealth. Such people were confined to close relations at family levels and had been indifferent to the freedom struggle. Generally, they were religious people who respected others' religions and in reciprocation found the same. Partition of Punjab never occurred to them even in their dreams. Partition, in fact, was the demand of the Muslims from Central provinces who had been the rulers for five centuries. And under the British, they suffered a lot at the hands of the upper caste of Hindus who had come closer to the foreign rulers in administration and other related areas.**

**The majority of the Muslim population was landless laborers who came from the untouchable classes and they remained in the same social and economic position till the Partition and thereafter. They were common people who were not benefited from any preceding ruling regimes. They had no voice in the Partition which was accepted by so-called intellectuals of the upper castes. Rather, they suffered much during Partition and gained nothing at the religious, social, community, financial, and family levels. Even otherwise, an overwhelming majority of the population belonging to all religious denominations suffered heavily on the eve of**

**Partition. Was it not a violation of the basic principle of democracy when the majority got overruled by a tiny minority?**

**The middle-level Hindus were busy cashing the new opportunity that came with the British's modern education and also secured better jobs being educated ones. This is why that section of people was indifferent toward the freedom movement which brought Partition in its wake.**

**The rising British colonial power ended the six-century-old Muslim rule including the mighty Mughal Empire in India. The Hindus were nowhere in the picture compared to the Muslim aristocrat ruling class, who were catapulted smoothly to the ruling circles by the British. The awakened Hindus visualized that the new concept of ruling– DEMOCRACY– would provide an opportunity for the majority and also to sideline the other minorities in the process of grabbing power from the British. The intention of the Hindu leaders was clear, they did not want to politically accommodate the Muslim minority. In their attempt to consolidate the majority rule the Hindu leaders too decided that let the Muslims go away wherever they were in the majority, let that territory be sliced off from the Indian mainland and let Hindus should migrate to India from the areas where they were in minority. That arrangement was best suited to the British rulers who thought they would never be able to settle the communal conflicts before their departure. Another factor emerged that the traditional rich Muslim elite was attempting to regain their lost glory in the British period but the neo-rich promoted by the British turned to ugliest riots during the Partition.**

**Thanks to the introduction of democracy that replaced feudal and rich people's rule in India. It is another issue that now the**

**democracy in India has become a majoritarian rule with the propensity to assume dictatorial proportions. The introduction of democracy helped end foreign rule in India. Ideally speaking, democratic governance everywhere in the world is the best-suited option for the common people who get the opportunity to elect the leader of their choice. The minority ruling which could be in the shape of either a king or a dictator and military establishment has always been a ruthless dispensation. This feeling was visible among all sections at the time of the Partition**

**It is a great honor for us that Prof Hardev Singh Virk has accepted our invitation and suggested the theme of the issue will be 'Partition of India 1947'. He has invited authors and contributors of his choice for the issue . His energy and style of working is no match with our generation. He is scientist of nuclear physics but his contribution is not less in Punjabi culture. He enjoys good respect in scientific world as well in Punjab intellectuals. I feel honor working under him**

**Enjoy reading**

**With regards**

**Dr. Sunil Bhatia**

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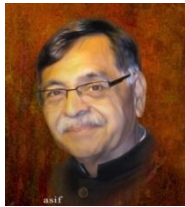
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## Forthcoming Issues

**October 2022 Vol-1 No-7**



**Dr. Shyam Sunder Deepti**

**Psychology of human needs and Baba Nanak's words**



**Prof Dr Ronki Ram**

**The global form of Punjabi language, literature and society**



**Dr SS Bhatti former Principal, Chandigarh College of Architecture, Chandigarh, India**

**CREATIVE MYSTICISM: An Architect's View of Guru Nanak's Japuji**



**Prof Malwinderjit Singh Warrich**

**Jouney to nowhere**

**November 2022 Vol-1 No-8**



**Prof Kamlesh Mohan will be Guest Editor for November 2022 special issue and she will focus on 'Partition: Ways to heal and grow.**

**December 2022 Vol-1-No-9**



**Prof Kamlesh Mohan will conclude the theme of Partition 1947: ways to heal and grow**

**January 2023 Vol-2 No-1**



**Dr. Kuldeep Kaur Pahwa, Department of Punjabi, Sri Guru Tegh Bahadur Khalsa College, University of Delhi, India will focus on Punab, Punjabi and Punjabiat**

## **February 2023 Vol-2 No-2**



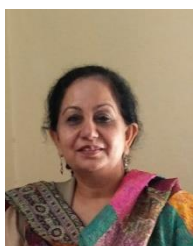
**Prof Dr. Raj Kumar Hans, Retired Professor of History, The Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat will be Guest Editor**

## **March 2022 Vol-2 No-3**



**Prof Dr Ronki Ram, Punjabi University will focus on minority role in Partition and their political social status**

## **April 2023 Vol-2 No-4**



**Amandeep Bal, Professor, Jallianwala Bagh Chair, Guru Nanak Dev University , Amritsar, Punjab, India has special interest in Indian National Movement , Revolutionary Movements and Punjabi Diaspora will be the Guest Editor and theme will be Jallianwala Bagh**



## **May 2023 Vol-2 No-5**



**Prof Dr. Surinder Kumar Deweshwar, M.A. (Punjabi & History); M. Ed., Ph.D, Emeritus Fellow , University Grants Commission, New Delhi, 2017-2019 will be Guest Editor and special issue theme will be PUNJABIAT.**

## **June 2023 Vol-2 No-6**



**Harvinder Singh , family migrated from Bar area of Lyallpur, Pakistan to Patiala during the partition of 1947**

**MA economics from Punjabi University from Patiala. After that, he was appointed by the state government through the Punjab Public Service Commission Posted as an officer in Finance and Planning Department and Joint Director**

## **July 2023 Vol-2 No-7**



**Asstt. Professor Amir Hamza Virk, Pakistan**

**Ustad Daman( 1911-1984) A voice of the People**



**Kuldeep Kumar, Retd Banker**

**Brahman: The Mastermind mind of India?**



**Tahir Sandhu, M.Phil student, Pakistan**

**Wand**

## **APPEAL:**

**We are publishing monthly issue of Salahiyat in English, Shahmukhi and Gurmukhi and authors are contributing article in their comfortable language and we need to translate in other two languages.**

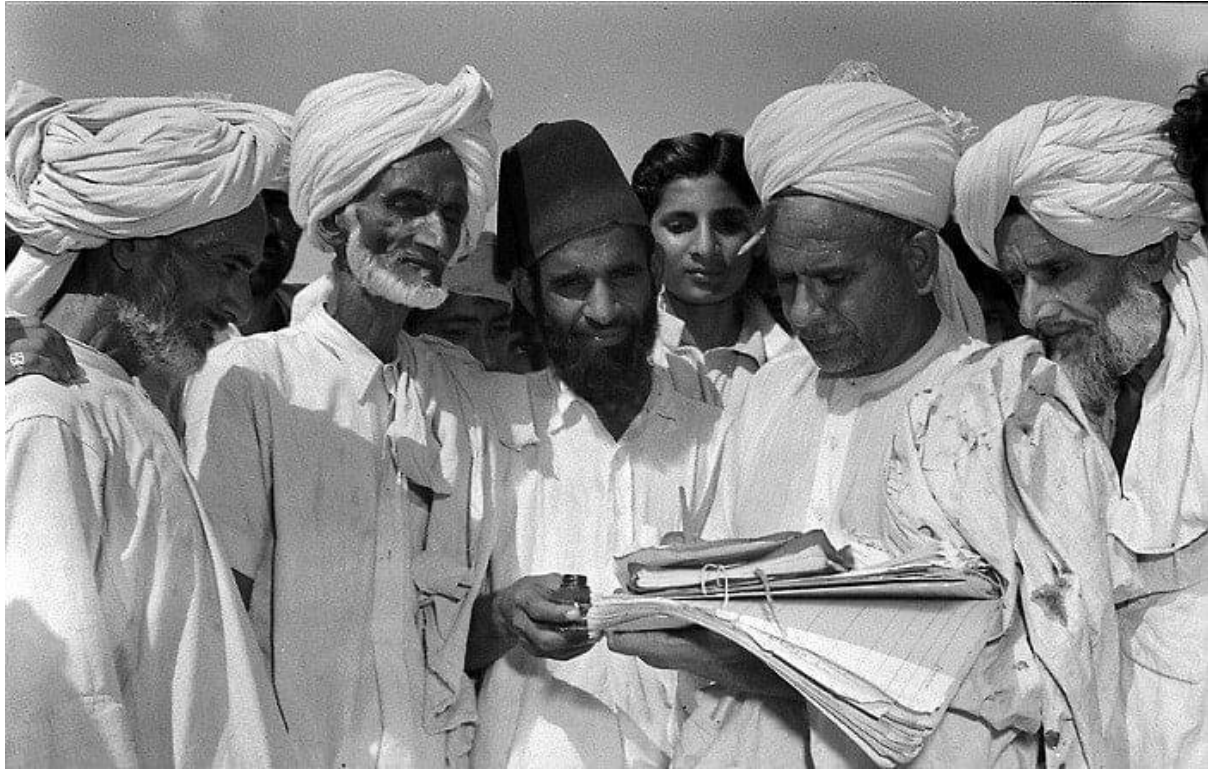
**It is our appeal for volunteers to register with us for translating articles at email:**

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**It will be great service for Punjabi Culture.**

## **Protagonist of Humanity:**

### **The Tapiala Dost Muhammad Village Peace Committee**



**A village located in Sheikhpura district of Lahore, Tapiala, had a largely Muslim population with a small community of Khatri Hindus and Sikhs. Wary of the rising violence, the village residents organised a peace committee to protect their Hindu-Sikh neighbours in case of any attack.**

**In August 1947, Tapiala was attacked by some 1500 armed outsiders. Two houses, in which a few non-Muslim families had barricaded themselves, were set on fire before the peace committee's efforts to repel the attack succeeded. In the following days, three more attacks were launched against the survivors sheltered in the village but each was repulsed by the peace committee, which was now better prepared. If not for this community effort, many more lives would have been lost in the mindless violence that gripped this region during the Partition.**

## **Word of the month: Bathing**

**Nohana,**

**ashnan,**

**tari,**

**do dabey dal kay aundi,**

**nauna,**

**pendey tey paani pana ,**

**Ragad ragad kay nauhana,**

**chidi ashnan,**

**duniya tey aya,**

**hosh aya,**

**kahl machi si,**

**gotta,**

**dubbi,**

**puja honi**

**tapp**

**tab**

**Loth or mayiat nu nahuna(to bathe the corpse)**

**Nuluna**

**Khare Charuhna( to bathe the bride before the marriage ceremony)**

**wazu karna,( ceremonial bath)**

**Gusal**

**Gusal Khana, sakawa( cold water bath room)**

**Bagino( warm water bath room),**

**hamam**

## **Personality of the month:**



**Zia Fatehabadi: (Mehr Lal Soni)**

**Mehr Lal Soni (9 February 1913 – 19 August 1986), better known as Zia Fatehabadi, was an Indian Urdu ghazal and nazm writer.**

**Zia Fatehabadi was born on 9 February 1913 at Kapurthala, Punjab. He was the eldest son of Munshi Ram Soni (1884–1968), a Civil Engineer by profession, who belonged to the Soni (Khatri) family .**

**Zia Fatehabadi's father was an exponent of Indian Classical vocal and instrumental music, who often invited musicians and singers to his residence, was himself fond of singing and playing musical instruments, and a good player of chess.**

**Even when Zia Fatehabadi was a college student he was a respected name in the Urdu world. After the publication of his first book, Tullu, which had received some disheartening criticism, he had thought of giving up writing .**

**His education began at Khalsa Middle School, Peshawar (1920 to 1922). However, he completed his schooling from Maharaja High School, Jaipur, Rajasthan (1923 to 1929), after which he obtained**

his B.A.(Hons) degree in Persian in 1933 and M.A. (English) degree in 1935 as a student of Forman Christian College, Lahore.

As the then editor of the Urdu section of the college house magazine Zia Fatehabadi was instrumental in getting the first-ever Urdu short story "Sadhu" by Krishan Chander published in 1932. At that time, Krishan Chander was interested primarily in his English writings and edited the English section.

It is also in evidence that Zia Fatehabadi was infatuated with a Bengali girl named Meera, who was also studying in the same college at the time, and addressed almost all his love-poetry to her. Her name figures unreservedly in several of his writings. In an interview, he had once disclosed that she was that very Meera Sen who had actually inspired Meeraji to write superb poems and adopt her name as his takhallus. Zia Fatehabadi had met Meeraji for the first time when the latter accompanied by Upendranath Ashk, a friend of Zia Fatehabadi, visited the office of Moulana Salahudeen, Editor and proprietor of 'Adabi Duniya', Lahore, where Meeraji was employed at that time. Krishan Chander, Meeraji and Zia Fatehabadi were good friends.

It was during his college days that Zia Fatehabadi came into contact with Shabbir Hussain Josh Malihabadi and Samad Yar Khan Saghar Nizami. He developed a very close lifelong relationship with them, which both influenced as also helped shape his literary life.

In 1936, Zia Fatehabadi joined the Reserve Bank of India, from which he retired in 1971 as Deputy Chief Officer. He married Raj Kumari in 1942 (1919–2003), daughter of Murli Ram Berera of Lahore. Before joining the Reserve Bank of India, while seeking suitable employment, Zia Fatehabadi was interviewed for an



editor's post with All India Radio, which went to Majaz. However, Majaz and Zia Fatehabadi remained close friends.

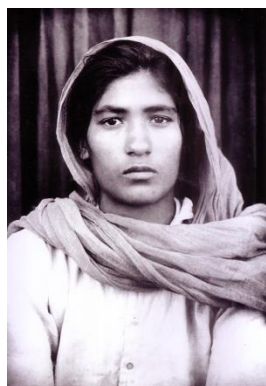
Zia Fatehabadi died on 19 August 1986 after a prolonged and painful bout with illness. He had once said:

*" Kyaa gham agar qraar-o-sukun kii kamii rahii "*

*" Khush hoon ke kaamyaab merii zindagii rahii "*

(I grieve not for the lack of unrest or for the lack of peace (in my life). I am (gratefully) happy to have led (a contented and) a successful life.)

## **Illustrious family of the Punjab:**



### **Gulab Kaur**

**Gulab Kaur was an Indian freedom fighter. She was born around 1890 and died in 1941. Born in the year 1890 in the village Bakshiwala in Sangrur district of Punjab, India. She was married to Mann Singh. The couple went to Manila, Philippines, intending to migrate to America ultimately.**

**Her political career began at Manila and she joined Ghadar Party, an organization founded by Indian immigrants with the aim to liberate the Indian Subcontinent from British Rule.**

**She hid identity and kept vigil on party printing press and posing as a journalist with a press pass in hand. She distributed arms to the Ghadar Party members. Gulab Kaur also encouraged others to join the Ghadar Party by distributing independence literature and delivering inspiring speeches to Indian passengers of ships.**

**Gulab Kaur with about fifty other freedom Ghadriles of the Philippines joined the S.S. Korea batch and sailed for India, changing at Singapore from S.S. Korea to Tosha Maru. After reaching India, she with some other revolutionaries were active in the villages of Kapurthala, Hoshiarpur and Jalandhar to mobilize the masses for armed revolution for the cause of the Independence of the country.**

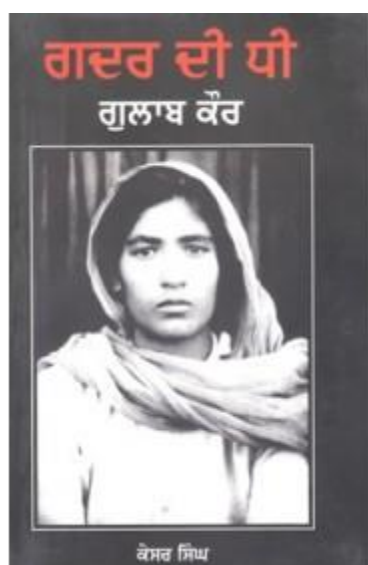
**She was sentenced to two years in prison in Lahore, then in British-India and now in Pakistan, for seditious acts. There is a book available about Gulab Kaur titled Gadar Di Dhee Gulaab Kaur in Punjabi written by Kesar Singh published in 2014.**

**The Forgotten Woman Who Left Her Husband & a Safe Life to Fight The British. Somehow, history tends to forget its heroines, their faces are forgotten, and their bravery remains unsung. Gulab Kaur is one such heroine, a woman whose exceptional courage and sacrifice deserve to be remembered by the country she fought for.**

**One of the things she did closely was distribute literature linked to the freedom movement, maintaining a tight vigil on their revolutionary printing press.**

**Besides engaging with anti-British public sentiment, she also distributed arms and ammunition to members of the Ghadar Party, fronting as a journalist, besides encouraging scores of others to join the Ghadar Party.**

**Unfortunately, the British authorities caught up with her and arrested her under sedition charges. She was imprisoned for two years at Lahore's Shahi Qila, where she underwent serious abuse and torture. She eventually passed away sometime in 1931.**



## New Book:



Sunil Bhatia

### Punjabi Stumbling and falling words Punjabi Diggdey Dhaindey Bol

Punjabi Roman English

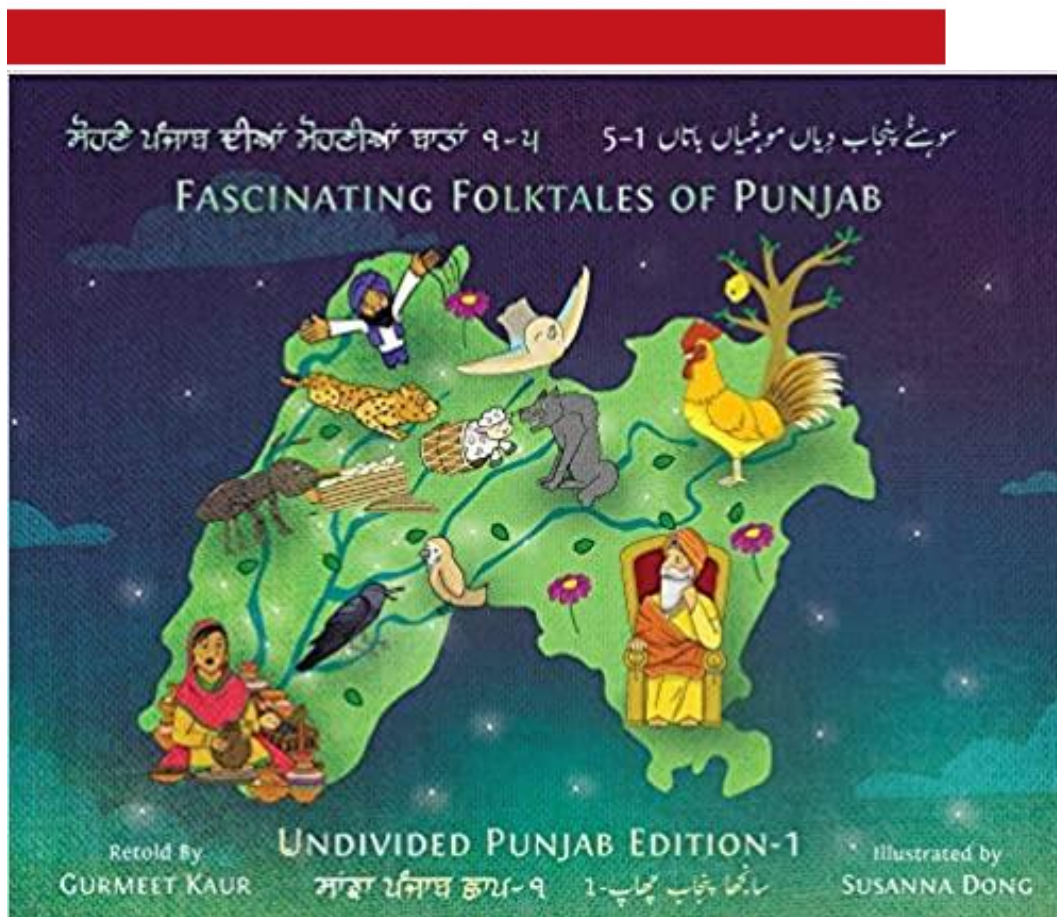


Sunil Bhatia is Ph.D in Quantum Mechanics and has more than three decades of teaching experience, delivered lectures in national and international conferences, editor of international monthly publication of DESIGN FOR ALL since 2006 and has authored recently published international book "Design For All, Drivers of Design".



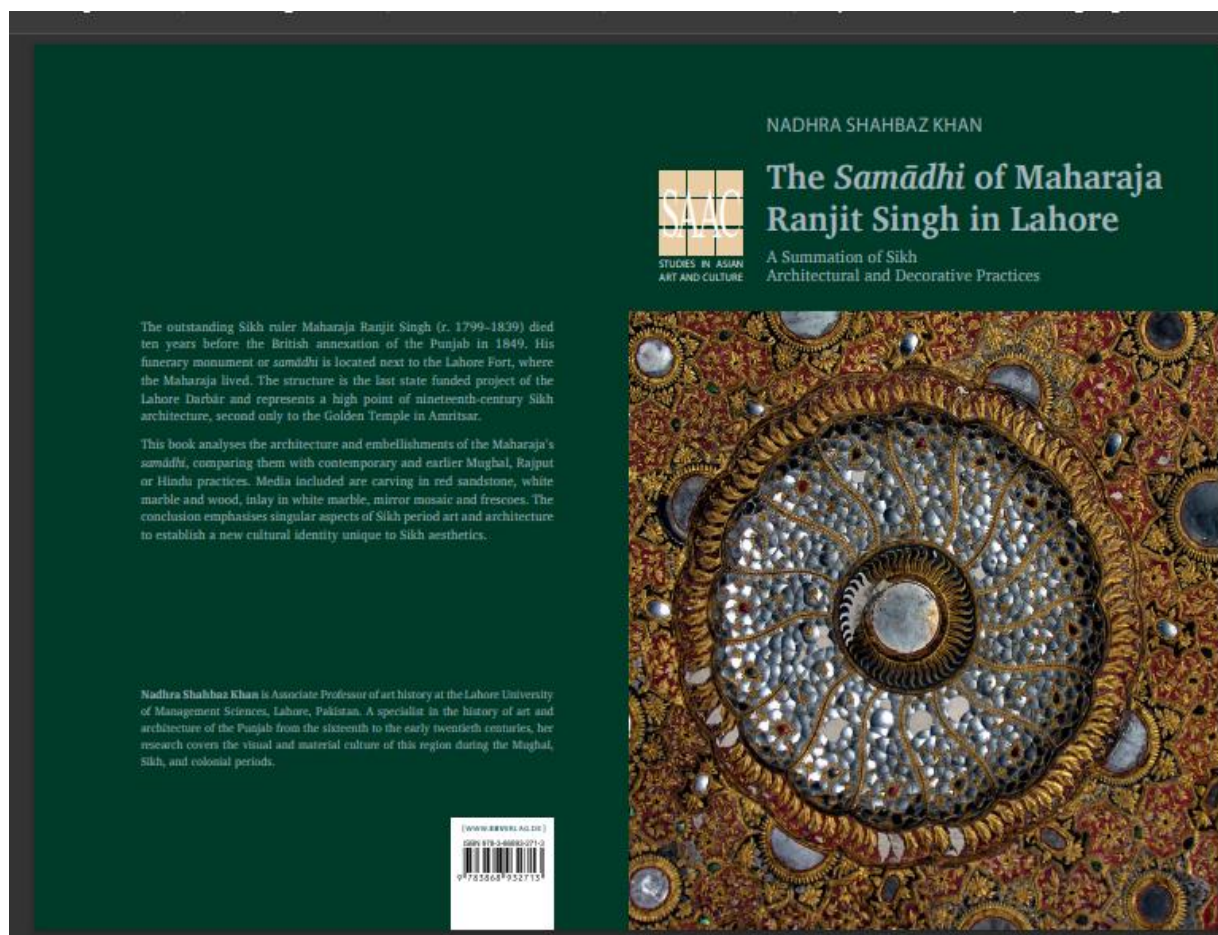
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### ***The Samādhi of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in Lahore: A Summation of Sikh Architectural Features and Ornament***

Maharaja Ranjit Singh (r. 1799-1839) was the last significant Sikh ruler of the Punjab before its annexation by the British in 1849. His funerary monument or *samādhi* was begun by his eldest son Kharak Singh and completed several years later under the British rule. The Maharaja's *samādhi* is located next to the Lahore Fort, where the Maharaja lived during his



reign of forty years, and was the last state funded grand project of the Lahore Darbār before annexation. As the high point of nineteenth century Sikh architecture in the Punjab, second only to the Golden Temple at Amritsar, it has fine examples of carving in red sandstone, white marble and wood, *pietra dura* inlay in white marble with colored and semi-precious stones, mirror mosaic and frescoes, almost all preserved in their original forms.

The focus of this book is on the architectural embellishment of the building and is divided into three sections. Section 1 has three parts: the first traces the *samādhi*'s prototypes in the subcontinent, the second describes the phases of its construction, and the third discusses its location and plan, and gives an overview of the entire structure.

Section 2 gives a formal and contextual analysis of the architectural motifs, carvings, inlay, fenestration, and dome formation. Each motif found on the *samādhi* is described and analyzed along with a study of its variations on contemporary Sikh architecture and an investigation of its Mughal, Rajput or ancient Indian prototypes. The discussion starts with the *samādhi* gateway, moves on to the exterior of the main building, and then shifts to the architectural ornament in the interior. The exterior of the *samādhi* displays superb *pietra dura* inlay in the white marble main doorway, as well as frescoes flanking the entrances on three sides. The marble archways of the interior, in a *bāradarī* form, show fine carving. A marble *chhatrī* in the centre once displayed the symbolic marble lotus knobs of the Maharaja and his household who immolated themselves on the imperial pyre. The section ends with a study of the glass and mirror mosaic embellishment on the ceilings of the circumambulatory around the *bāradarī* as well as the dome that crowns the central double-height hall.

Section 3 deals with the forty-eight frescoes in the *samādhi*'s interior. Twenty-four iconic images are painted in the zone of transition (Level I) and another twenty-four narratives on the intrados of arches that form a gallery on the first floor (Level II). The frescoes are significant for at least three reasons: they are dateable, carry elements of change in the painting style of the period, and reflect socio-religious practices of the nineteenth century Punjab. The last chapter presents the conclusion of the overall research.

This study shows that although the basic repertory of the artisans remained similar over the centuries, modifications occurred with changes in patronage and circumstances. More importantly, it identifies distinct Sikh period features, proving that Sikh architecture is not an

idle imitation of previous styles but a definite development with unique characteristics of its own.

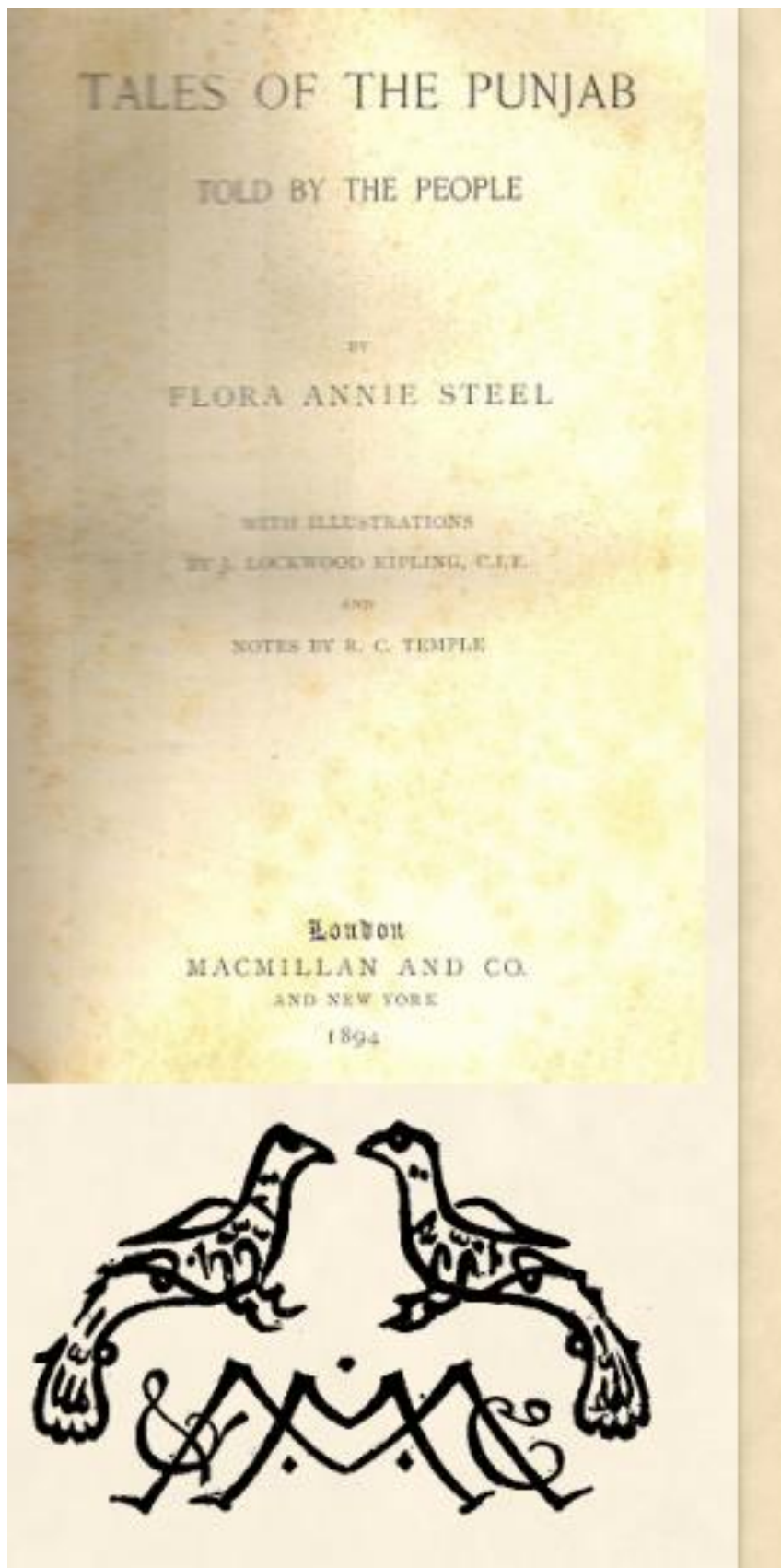


### **Author's Short Bio:**

Dr Nadhra Shahbaz Khan teaches art history and serves as the Director Gurmani Centre for Languages and Literature at the Lahore University of Management Sciences, Lahore, Pakistan. A specialist in the history of art and architecture of the Punjab from the sixteenth to the early twentieth century, her research covers the visual and material culture of this region during the Mughal, Sikh, and colonial periods. Her publications, conference papers and other research activities spread over more than a decade, especially her book titled *Maharaja Ranjit Singh's Samādhi in Lahore: A Summation of Sikh Architectural and Decorative Practices* and a website (<https://www.sikhvirsa.org.pk/home/>) that features Sikh artefacts in the Lahore Fort's Sikh Gallery, have successfully brought Sikh art and architecture at the forefront of Pakistan's heritage discussions and conservation activities.

She has held research fellowships at SOAS, London (Charles Wallace 2010–2011), INHA Paris (2015), Princeton University (Fulbright 2014–2015), Oxford University (Barakat Trust 2014–2015) and the Lakshmi Mittal South Asia Institute, Harvard (2021-2022). She has also been the recipient of the highly competitive CAA-Getty International Program travel grants thrice: 2012, 2019 & 2021. Her association with the Aga Khan Cultural Service–Pakistan as Consultant Historian for their Lahore Fort project goes back to 2016.

## Treasure Book:





ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਯਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ  
ਲਾਇਬ੍ਰੇਰੀ

ਲਾਹੌਰ ਵਿਖੇ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਦਾ

ਸੂਚੀਪੱਤ੍ਰ

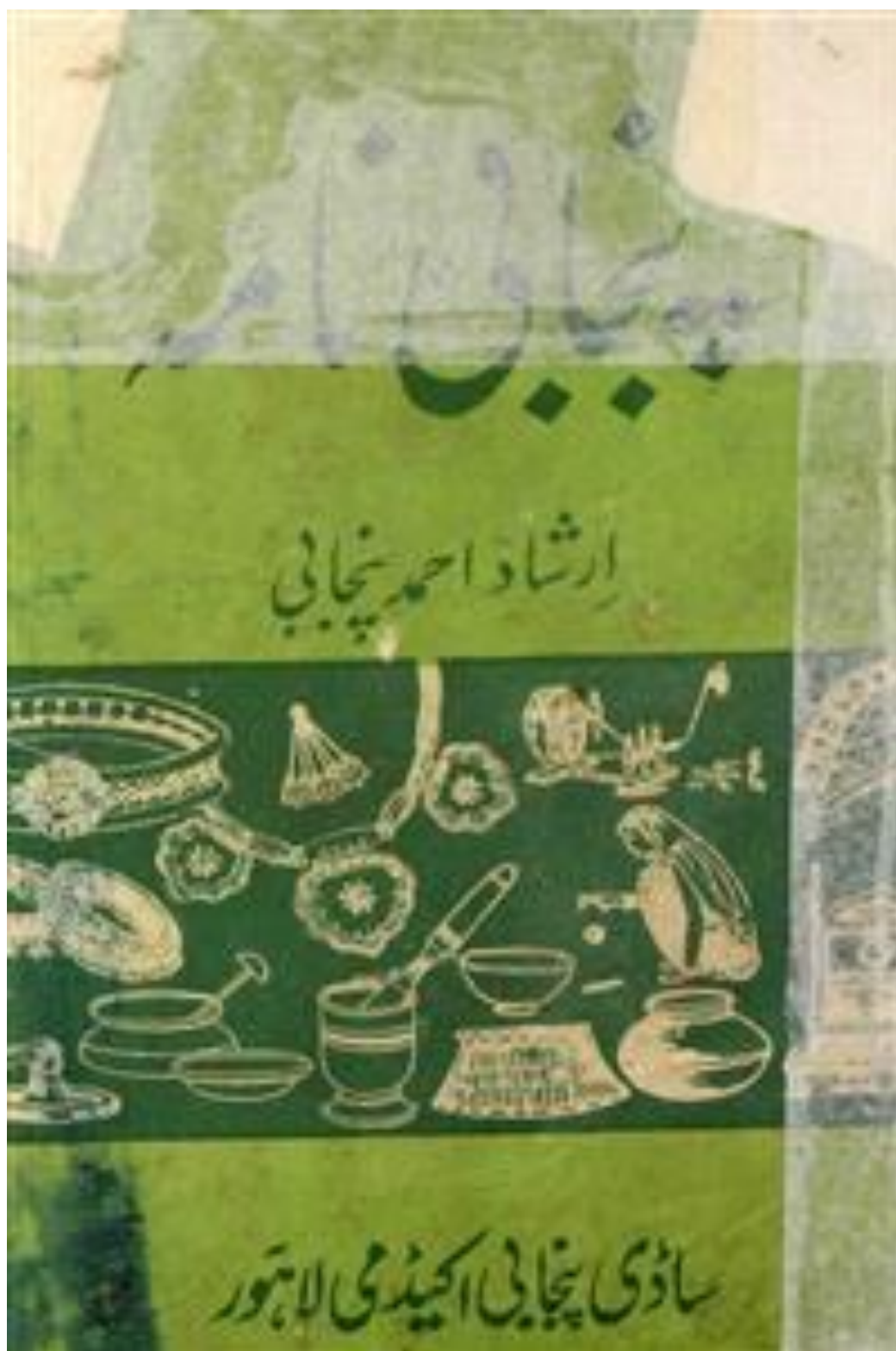
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## Treasure Newspaper:



# News:

1.

**A celebration of opening of inaugural issue of April 2022 Vol-1 No-1 was held at Chandigarh and distinguished Guests and literary people gather for showering their blessings for this great occasion. There was Punjabi print press as well television covered this function.**

## ਸਾਹਿਬ ਏਸ਼ੀਆ ਰਿਸਰਚ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਆਫ਼ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਦਾ ਲੋਕ ਅਰਪਣ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ

**ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ 'ਮਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ' ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ, ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ : ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ**

ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ, 1 ਮਈ (ਅਜਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਐੱਸ.ਐਲ.)— ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ ਵਿਖੇ ਅੱਜ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਏਸ਼ੀਆ ਰਿਸਰਚ ਸੈਂਟਰ ਆਫ਼ ਇੰਡੀਆ ਦੇ ਪ੍ਰਕਾਸ਼ਨ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਨੂੰ ਲੋਕ ਅਰਪਣ ਕੀਤੇ ਜਾਣ ਸਬੰਧੀ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ ਕਰਵਾਇਆ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ 'ਤੇ ਇਹ ਗੱਲਾਂ ਐਮ.ਐਸ. ਨਾਗਰਾ, ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ, ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ ਆਦਿ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਭਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ, ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਰਕਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਲੇਖਕ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਭਾਟੀਆ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ (ਸਿੱਖੀ) ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਏ, ਉਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਛਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰੇ ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਵੰਡ ਨਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਵੰਡ ਦਾ ਖਾਮਿਆਜ਼ਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇਰੇ ਭੁਗਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦੀ ਤਿੰਨ ਧਾਰਾਵਾਂ ਦੀ ਗੱਲ ਕਰਦਿਆਂ ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੋਲਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ, ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ ਆਦਿ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਭਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ, ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਰਕਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਲੇਖਕ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਭਾਟੀਆ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ (ਸਿੱਖੀ) ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਏ, ਉਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਛਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰੇ ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਵੰਡ ਨਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਵੰਡ ਦਾ ਖਾਮਿਆਜ਼ਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇਰੇ ਭੁਗਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ

ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੇ ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੋਲਦਿਆਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ, ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ ਆਦਿ ਵਲੋਂ ਸਾਂਝੇ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਨਿਭਾਈਆਂ ਗਈਆਂ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ, ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਨੇ ਵੀ ਸ਼ਿਰਕਤ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰਾਨ ਲੇਖਕ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਭਾਟੀਆ ਨੇ ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਤੇ ਸਾਹਿਤ (ਸਿੱਖੀ) ਦੀ ਸਾਂਝ ਪ੍ਰਤੀ ਆਪਣੇ ਵਿਚਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਏ, ਉਥੇ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਰੋਜ਼ਾਨਾ ਦੀ ਜ਼ਿੰਦਗੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚ ਆਉਂਦੇ ਨਵੇਂ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਜਨ ਨੂੰ ਸਵੀਕਾਰ ਕਰਦੀ ਰਹਿੰਦੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਸੁਭਾ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੇ ਹਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਨਾਲ ਲਛਮਾਂ ਤੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਵਲੀ ਸਮਝਣ ਦੀ ਵੀ ਗੱਲ ਕੀਤੀ। ਇਸ ਦੌਰੇ ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਜੇਕਰ ਵੰਡ ਨਾ ਹੁੰਦੀ, ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਸਾਡੇ ਹੋਰ ਵੀ ਮਜ਼ਬੂਤ ਹੁੰਦੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਵੰਡ ਦਾ ਖਾਮਿਆਜ਼ਾ ਅਸੀਂ ਅੱਜ ਦੇਰੇ ਭੁਗਤ ਰਹੇ ਹਾਂ। ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ

ਦਾ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਹਲ-ਗਡ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ ਵਲੋਂ 'ਚ ਆਏ ਵਿਦਵਾਨਾਂ ਤੇ ਲੇਖਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਗਮੀ ਘਨਵਾਦ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ-ਨਾਲ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਤਕਸੀਮ ਦਰ ਤਕਸੀਮ ਜਾਰੀ ਹੈ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਇਹ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ 19 ਕਰੋੜ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੀ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਬੁਝਾਨ ਮਰ ਰਹੀ ਹੈ, ਕਿਉਂ ਕਲਚਰ ਤਕਸੀਮ ਹੋ ਗਿਆ। ਸ. ਚੀਮਾ ਨੇ ਇਹ ਵੀ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਬੁਨਿਆਦੀ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ 'ਮਾਂ ਬੋਲੀ' ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ ਤਾਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਸੱਚ ਨਹੀਂ ਬੋਲਦੇ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਵਿਚ ਕੋਈ ਫਿਕਸ਼ਨ ਨਹੀਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਹੋਰ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਵੀ ਲੱਭ ਸਕੀਏ। ਅਸੀਂ ਕੋਈ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦਾ ਵਿਕਾਸ ਨਹੀਂ ਕੀਤਾ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਵੰਡ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਲੈਣ ਤੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਖਿੱਤੇ ਤੇ ਬੋਲੀ ਨੂੰ ਸਮਝ ਲਵਾਂਗੇ। ਇਸ ਸਮਾਰੋਹ 'ਚ ਵਰਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪ੍ਰ. ਬਲਵਿੰਦਰ ਚਾਹਲ, ਨਵਰੰਜ ਸਿੰਘ, ਆਲਮ ਬਕਸ਼ੀ, ਗੁਰਨਾਮ ਕੰਵਰ, ਨਵਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ, ਪਰਮਜੀਤ ਕੌਰ ਤੇ ਪਰਮਿੰਦਰ, ਜਸਵਿੰਦਰ ਕੌਰ, ਡਾ. ਮਨਦੀਪ ਕੁਮਾਰ, ਇਬਾਦਤ ਕੌਰ, ਉਸਾ ਕੰਵਰ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਨੀਲ, ਰਾਜਵਿੰਦਰ ਰਾਹੀ, ਏ.ਐਸ. ਪਾਲ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਨਾਲ ਆਤਿਸ਼ ਗੁਪਤਾ, ਕਰਨਲ ਡੀ.ਐਮ. ਐਸ਼ਾ, ਮਲਕੀਤ ਨਾਗਰਾ, ਕਰਮ ਸਿੰਘ ਵਕੀਲ ਤੇ ਪੁਲਾੜ ਸਿੰਘ ਆਦਿ ਸ਼ਾਮਲ ਸਨ।



ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸ਼੍ਰੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਵਿਖੇ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਦੇ ਲੋਕ ਅਰਪਣ ਮੌਕੇ ਸ. ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ, ਐਮ.ਐਸ. ਨਾਗਰਾ, ਗੁਰਦਿਤ ਭਾਟੀਆ, ਪ੍ਰ. ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਜਸਪਾਲ।

ਤਸਵੀਰ : ਕਮਲਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ

ਅਜੀਤ  
02-May-2022  
Page: 5  
http://epaper.ajitjalandhar.com/edition/20220502/9/5.cms

## ਡ੍ਰੈ-ਭਾਸ਼ੀ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਲੋਕ ਅਰਪਣ

ਲਹਿੰਦੇ ਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ 'ਚ ਵਧ ਰਹੇ ਵਖਰੇਵਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਪ੍ਰਗਟਾਈ

ਟ੍ਰਿਬਿਊਨ ਨਿਊਜ਼ ਸਰਵਿਸ  
ਚੰਡੀਗੜ੍ਹ, 1 ਮਈ  
ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ 'ਚੋਂ ਕੁੱਲਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮੁੜ ਉਭਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੋਸ਼ਿਸ਼ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਲੇ ਡਾ. ਸੁਨੀਲ ਭਾਟੀਆ ਵਲੋਂ ਸੰਪਾਦਿਤ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਉਰਦੂ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਗਰੇਜ਼ੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਅੱਜ ਇੱਥੇ ਕੇਂਦਰੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਭਾ ਵਿੱਚ ਕੇਂਦਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਰਿਲੀਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਗਿਆ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਵਿਸ਼ੇਸ਼ ਤੌਰ 'ਤੇ ਪਹੁੰਚੇ ਸੰਵਾਮੁਕਤ ਸੈਸ਼ਨ ਜੱਜ ਐਮ.ਐਸ. ਨਾਗਰਾ, ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ ਰਾਜਿੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਚੀਮਾ, ਜਸਪਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿੱਧੂ, ਪ੍ਰ. ਮਨਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਖੁਸ਼ਹਾਲ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਪਿਆਰੇ ਲਾਲ ਗਰਗ, ਡਾ. ਸੁਖਦੇਵ ਸਿੰਘ ਸਿਰਸਾ, ਗੁਰਮੁਖੀ ਸਿੰਘ ਅਤੇ ਐਨਐੱਸ ਨਾਗਰਾ ਨੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ 'ਚ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੇ ਵਖਰੇਵਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰ ਕੀਤੀ। ਡਾ. ਸੁਨੀਲ ਭਾਟੀਆ ਨੇ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ 1947 ਵਿੱਚ ਦੇਸ਼ ਦੀ ਵੰਡ ਦੇ ਨਾਲ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵੀ ਵੰਡਿਆ ਗਿਆ, ਜਿਨ੍ਹਾਂ



ਮੈਗਜ਼ੀਨ 'ਸਲਾਹੀਯਤ' ਲੋਕ ਅਰਪਣ ਕਰਦੇ ਹੋਏ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀ।

ਨੂੰ ਸਰਕਾਰਾਂ ਵੱਲੋਂ ਨਜ਼ਰਅੰਦਾਜ਼ ਕੀਤਾ ਜਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਲੋਕਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਪੰਜਾਬੀ ਦੇ ਕਈ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਅਤੇ ਮੁਹਾਵਰੇ ਭੁੱਲਦੇ ਜਾ ਰਹੇ ਹਨ। ਅਜਿਹੇ ਸ਼ਬਦਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਮੁੜ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਕਰਨਾ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੀ ਮੁੱਖ ਲੋੜ ਹੈ। ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਰੱਖਣ ਲਈ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਦਾ ਜਿਉਂਦਾ ਹੋਣਾ

ਲਾਜ਼ਮੀ ਹੈ। ਸਮਾਗਮ ਵਿੱਚ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਬੁੱਧੀਜੀਵੀਆਂ ਨੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ 'ਚ ਵੱਧ ਰਹੇ ਵਖਰੇਵਿਆਂ 'ਤੇ ਚਿੰਤਾ ਜ਼ਾਹਿਰ ਕੀਤੀ। ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਕਿਹਾ ਕਿ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਪੰਜਾਬਾਂ ਦੀ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਅਤੇ ਸੱਭਿਆਚਾਰ ਵਿੱਚ ਖ਼ੁਦਾ ਫਰਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਦੋਵਾਂ ਬਾਵਾਂ 'ਤੇ ਭਾਸ਼ਾ ਨੂੰ

ਮੁੜ ਉਭਾਰਿਆ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਦੇ ਮਨਾਂ ਵਿੱਚ ਆਪਸੀ ਸੋਹ ਵੀ ਵਧੇਗਾ। ਇਸ ਮੌਕੇ ਪ੍ਰ. ਮਨਦੀਪ ਸ਼ਰਮਾ, ਡਾ. ਹਰਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ, ਡਾ. ਜਤਿੰਦਰ, ਪ੍ਰ. ਬਲਵਿੰਦਰ ਚਾਹਲ, ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ ਅਸ਼ਵਨੀ ਬਖਸ਼ੀ, ਐਡਵੋਕੇਟ ਸੁਰਜੀਤ ਸਿੰਘ ਤੇ ਹੋਰ ਪਤਵੰਤੇ ਹਾਜ਼ਰ ਸਨ।



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