

1st January, 2019

Dear SES Team and Members,
Sat Sri Akal

Congratulations for holding a meet to chalk out programmes to mark the 550th Parkash Purab of Guru Nanak Dev ji. Few things could be considered at Colleges' level, and some others at the State, National and International level, which, given the esteemed stature the SES enjoys, can be considered to be undertaken in collaboration with other premium institutions, as the cause is common to Sikhs worldwide. [To name a few – SGPC, Amritsar; DSGMC, Delhi; International Sikh Confederation, Institute of Sikh Studies, Kendri Sri Guru Singh Sabha, Chandigarh; Chief Khalsa Diwan, Amritsar; United Sikhs, UK; American Sikh Council; World Sikh Organisation, Canada; The Sikh Centre, New Zealand; Australian Sikh Council; Sikh Council, UK; et al,]

In addition to holding Seminars and Events of Painting, Poetry Recitation, and Slogan and Essay writing, etc., at various levels worldwide, kindly find below a list of some other activities/ actions to be considered/ pursued with the concerned Authorities:

College Level

- Publish a Coffee-Table book on Guru Nanak;
- Make groups of students to visit the blind, the handicapped, old-age homes, victims of crimes, etc., to inculcate empathy, social responsibility in them;
- Organise marches, ensuring no inconvenience to public, to raise awareness about ills of society - Pollution, Rapes/ Gang Rapes, Female Foeticide, Honour Killing, Farmer Suicides, etc., carrying Posters/ Placards along with Quotes from Guru Granth Sahib to promote, Equality, Dignity, Brotherhood, Communal Harmony, Gender Equality & so on;

SGPC, DSGMC Level

- Create a broad-based Research Wing to not only assess the drafts of books to be published under their name but also Rebut the misrepresentations/ distortions of Sikh History and Ideology appearing in any media, anywhere, from time to time;
- Accountability must be fixed about the controversial publications produced so far, including school textbooks; And, any blunders committed in the past must be admitted, and put on record, so these may never be quoted in any future publications;
- Fix the Birth date of Guru Nanak; Constitute a Committee of scholars on the Nanakshahi Calendar issue, and resolve the same in a transparent manner;
- Undertake a time-bound Project to prepare an approved, standardised version of Punjabi Translation of Guru Granth Sahib by a group of scholars to ensure that the right Sikh concepts get propagated, when the same gets further translated into other languages of the world;
- Create and Fund on-going Projects for uplifting Vanjaras, Sikligars, Lobanas, *et al*;
- Create Libraries/ Inter-Faith Libraries in villages/ cities under their jurisdiction;
- Promote *Sikhi* Value-System, and spread the same through practice and example;
- Address the issue of gurdwaras established under different Castes/ Factions, etc.;
- Channel *langars* State-wide for maximum reach to where it is needed the most;
- Seek inclusion of Punjabi words conveying concepts specific to *Sikhi* into English language/ Oxford Dictionary, such as, *Miri-Piri*, *Waheguru*, *Panj-Piarey*, *Akal Takht*, *Gurmat*, etc.;

- Create a Think Tank to provide views on Sikh affairs, based on the Guru's Ideology;
- Offer to mediate among communities, which are at odds with each other, at the national and international level;
- Prepare a Gift(s) for Heads of all States of India and for Heads of all Countries, Nations of the World. [say, a *kirpaan* and/or a plaque with *Mool Mantar* and its translation in English plus the language of the respective State/ Country/ Nation]. A group of local Sikhs, with children in the lead, could present the same;
- Promote "*gagan meh thaal...*" as an international poem/ anthem for the Planet Earth;
- Promote "*na ko bairee nahi begana...*" as Sikh Concept of World Peace and Prosperity;

State Level

- Undertake steps to Promote Punjabi Language;
- Fund a Project for preparing a standardised version of English Translation of Guru Granth Sahib by multiple scholars, in collaboration with SGPC and at least one well-established apolitical Sikh organisation;
- Introduce Guru Nanak's Ideology in school textbooks;
- Introduce Gurbani words in common usage by incorporating these in text books of all levels of education; Also, prepare a Dictionary of such words, explaining these with reference to Gurbani quotes;
- Establish a Chair in the name of Guru Nanak in the Punjab University, Chandigarh, dedicated to Universalism;

National Level

- Establish an Institute in the name of Guru Nanak to carry out research on all the Contributors of Guru Granth Sahib – Sikh Gurus, and Hindu and Muslim Saints;
- Fund a multi-scholar Project to translate Guru Granth Sahib into all Major, Official Languages of India, to be carried out in collaboration with SGPC and at least one well-established apolitical Sikh organisation;
- Connect all places visited by Guru Nanak, and name the Route after the Guru;
- Invite essays on Guru Nanak from scholars worldwide - across Countries, Faiths, and prepare a prestigious publication on the Guru;
- Strike a Coin to mark the Occasion;

International Level

- Seek declaration of Guru Nanak's Birthday as an International Day for - say, Universalism or Universal Brotherhood/ Sisterhood/ Siblinghood, the Global Citizen/ or the like;
- Thank the Governments of India and Pakistan for the Corridor to Kartarpur Sahib, and seek a similar status for Nankana Sahib and Panja Sahib;
- Seek from the United Nations translation of Guru Granth Sahib into its six Official Languages, in collaboration with SGPC and at least one well-established apolitical Sikh organisation;
- Contact Governments of all those Countries visited by Guru Nanak, and request them to make/ upgrade and link, and name the routes along which he travelled after the Guru;
- Collaborate with the United Nations to eradicate malnutrition/ starvation in the world;

- Seek membership of United Nations for the Sikhs as a people/ *quom*/ Nation, so the Universalism in the Guru's Ideology, may play a role in the destiny of the human race;*
- Strive to transform Punjab into Beigumpura - a place without sorrow/ fear, where Guru Nanak's Ideology is in practice;** And so on...

Best regards,
Birendra Kaur

NOTES

* *There are many a Nations, i.e., a large group of people(s) of the same race, who share the same language, traditions, and history, and do not all live in any particular geographic entity/ country of their own, like the Kurds, Tibetans, Tamilians, Catalans, Balochs, Andalusian, the Hong Kong people, etc., that exist across the globe.*

It is ironic, indeed, that in spite of this organisation being termed "United Nations", no Nation is included herein, and only countries/ states are its members! It is, important, therefore, that Nations also find representation in the United Nations, as their wisdom should neither be under-estimated nor lost to the world. They too must participate in policy-framing and play a role in international relations/ affairs.

** *Sikhs have always had the opportunity since 1947 to create an Ideal Place of Punjab, as they have been in power here since then. And, they enjoy all the rights enshrined in the Constitution of India, as these are the same for all Indians. The feeling of alienation is misplaced, because even a cursory look brings out that the Constitution itself is based on Sikh values, such as, equality, dignity, freedom to profess religion, equal before law, and so on. Dowry, female foeticide, sati, child marriage, discrimination of any kind, etc., are also banned. Moreover, the Constitution provides special features for Minorities, whereby they handle their own religious and cultural affairs as also maintain their educational institutions themselves. They are also given incentives, such as, free education for all up to PhD. Further, Sikhs' right to wear kirpaan is specifically mentioned in Article 25, and Sikhs are the only citizens to find a mention thus in the Constitution itself. It may also be noted that although Explanation II of 2(b), herein is mis-drafted, it does not impinge upon the rights of the Sikhs to propagate, practise and profess their religion freely, which is the aim of this Article.*

The major complaint that Sikhs are being governed by Hindu laws is technically misplaced, because the provisions of the Hindu Code too are in line with the Sikh concepts, and Sikh customs and ceremonies are honoured herein. The misleading and incorrect, and therefore objectionable, part is the use of the term "Hindu" in the titles and texts of the Acts (Hindu Marriage Act, Hindu Succession Act, Hindu Adoptions and Maintenance Act, Hindu Minority and Guardianship Act.), which govern civil matters of not only the Sikhs but also of Jains, Buddhists and some Tribals, in addition to the Hindus. It may be noted that any amendment in these Acts shall impact all equally, be it the majority community or any of the minority communities.

Thus, although Sikhism is recognised as an independent religion in the Constitution itself, the use of such a nomenclature/ terminology in all Acts of the Hindu Code does lead to a denial of an independent existence to Sikhs (as also to others), because they are either termed 'Hindu' in documentation(s) issued by the Government, or are required to sign as one in legal paperwork/ proceedings. And, since such a usage of the term 'Hindu' negates the very spirit of the Constitution, therefore, the same should be sought to be amended, through the legal route. A Case to this effect has already been admitted in the Supreme Court of India - Civil Appeal 4188 of 2014, and Jains and Buddhists have also intervened therein. (see: www.drkharaksingh.org.in). Legal recourse should be the first option to address all outstanding issues of our Community.

If we have not succeeded in creating an Ideal Place for ourselves so far, then we, as a Community, need to ponder, introspect. If our actions/ approach are based on Guru Nanak's Ideology, then a true model of Beigumpura can be created – for the world to see, and adopt

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