



THE SIKH MESSENGER

A QUARTERLY MAGAZINE OF THE
NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS, U.K.



Sikhs from Guru Nanak Darbar Dubai visit Local Mosque

IN THIS ISSUE:

- **Address to 2015 Parliament of World Religions Salt Lake City USA
By Editor Sikh Messenger**

AUTUMN / WINTER 2015 - £1.50

With Compliments

to

The Network of Sikh Organisations

from

Guru Nanak Trust

Jasvinder Singh Kohli
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From Amar Subhag Kaur and
Sundeep Singh Maker
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The Lord first created Light :

*From the Lord's play all living creatures came,
And from the Divine light the whole creation sprang.*

Why then should we divide human creatures

Into the high and the low?

G G S p 1349

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THE SIKH MESSENGER QUARTERLY

Autumn / Winter 2015

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EDITORIAL

CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

EDITOR: Lord Singh of Wimbledon

The growth of a disturbing and medieval version of Islam in the Middle East is a serious threat to peace and stability. The reaction of western society disappointingly varies between imagining that it is all the work of a few extremists and it will all go away, to believing that a dangerous ideology can be beaten by throwing more and more bombs on the long suffering people of Syria. Public reaction to the brutal behavior of ISIS or Daesh, coupled with disturbing ignorance of the difference between faiths has led to criticism of religion per se, with mistaken identity attacks on members of other religions, particularly Sikhs.

Today's concerns about what passes for religion are not dissimilar to those at the time of the birth of Guru Nanak. Beheadings and forced conversion were common, as was the derogatory treatment of women, and the segregation of people into higher and lower social orders. Guru Nanak boldly articulated the concerns of the common man, speaking out against the derogatory attitude to women, then commonly found in different religions, and the iniquity of the Hindu caste system. He was appalled by brutality of the Muslim conquerors and their determination to forcibly convert the majority Hindu community to what they believed to be the one true faith. He wrote:

*The age is a knife, kings are butchers
Righteousness has taken wings and flown*

He taught that the One God of us all is not interested in different religious labels but in how we live and what we do for wider society. He condemned the caste system and emphasized the equality of all members of the human race, including the full equality of women.

Guru Nanak's compassionate teachings were considered a breath of fresh air by both Hindus and Muslims. When he died it was said of him:

Nanak Shah Fakir
Hindu ka Guru Mussalman ka Pir

That is that he was regarded both the Guru or religious leader of Hindus, but also the Pir or religious leader of the Muslims. Today, we need the same breath of fresh air to counter both religious extremists, and the over-obsession with self and material gain of secular society. As Sikhs we have the blueprint for a safer, saner and more responsible society. The challenge for Sikhs today is study the blueprint and live the teachings, whilst making others aware of their healing

potential for many of the ills of our modern world, not easy.

There are many reasons why Guru Nanak's universal message is not reaching the wider world. Perhaps the greatest of these is our failure to understand that the Gurus' message was not meant for a tiny corner of Punjab, but for the rest of India and beyond.

Instead of looking outwards and doing what our Gurus taught, in helping wider society, some, ignoring the teaching of Guru Gobind Singh to consider the teachings of the Guru Granth Sahib as the only true guidance for all Sikhs, absurdly give undue deference to the so-called Dasam Granth. This compendium compiled by Hindus some 70 years after Guru Gobind Singh, contains some verses that could possibly be those of Guru Gobind Singh and are in consonance with the teachings of the Gurus, but in the main it almost wholly a collection of folklore, sexual exploits and the denigration of women.

Others, mixing the Guru given concept of Miri Piri, which reminds us to keep spiritual attitudes to the fore in working to create a better and fairer society, give exaggerated importance to the Akal Takht created on the site where Guru Hargobind first enunciated this important principle. The Akal Takht is an important religious building, sometimes peopled by those with Sikh interests at heart, but of late, sadly by employees of self-seeking politicians who constantly issue ill-thought injunctions to the Sikh community.

The Guru Granth Sahib is comprehensive guidance for Sikh. We need no other. If we live true to its guidance working constantly for tolerance, peace and justice for all people, we will be doing what our Gurus taught and making a real contribution to a wider society that in many ways has lost its sense of direction.

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Guru Granth Sahib - the only Sikh Canon

Fresh Look at the Text and History of the so-called Dasam Granth and the attempts to distort the teachings of the Gurus and the Guru Granth Sahib

Jasbir Singh Mann M.D., California.

The lineage of personal Guruship was terminated on October, 6th Wednesday 1708 A.D. by the 10th Guru, Guru Gobind Singh Ji, after finalizing the sanctification of Guru Nanak's Mission and passing the succession to Guru Granth Sahib as future 'Guru' of the Sikhs. This was the final culmination of the Sikh concept of Guruship, capable of resisting the temptation of continuation of the lineage of human Gurus. The Tenth Guru while maintaining the concept of 'Shabad Guru' also made the Panth distinctive by introducing corporate Guruship. The concept of Guruship continued and the role of human Gurus was transferred to the Guru Panth, and that of the revealed word to Guru Granth Sahib making Sikhism a unique modern religion. This historical fact is well documented in Indian, Persian and Western Sikh sources of 18th century.

Indian sources: Sainapat (1711), Bhai Nand Lal, Bhai Prahlaad, and Chaupa Singh, Koer Singh (1751), Kesar Singh Chhibber (1769-1779Ad), Mehama Prakash (1776), Munshi Sant Singh (on account of Bedi family of the Ulna, Unpublished records), Bhatt Valhi's.

Persian sources: Mirza Muhammad (1705-1719 AD), Sayad Muhammad Qasim (1722 AD), Hussain Lahauri (1731), Royal Court News of Mughals, Akhbarat-i-Darbar-i-Mualla (1708).

Western sources: Father Wendel, Charles Wilkins, Crawford, James Browne, George Forester, and John Griffith. These sources clearly emphasize the tenants of Nanak as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib as the only promulgated scripture of the Sikhs. There was no trace of any Granth with compositions as noted in Sodhak committee version (1897 AD) in Punjab or Delhi

There were 32 'Dasam Granths' circulating in Punjab area by 1895 A.D., including some printed versions. The currently published Dasam Granth (1900, 1902) was created by the Sodhak Committee, composed of British Raj supporters (Gurmat Granth Parcharak Sabha a wing of Amritsar Singh Sabha) in 1895-1896. An earlier Granth was published in the late 18th century with the help of Nirmalas of Patna. The manuscript of this earlier Granth was placed in the East India Library by Colebrook & Charles Wilkins, which was later used by John Malcolm in 1810, as a reference in his book "Sketch of the Sikhs".

Devnagri Dasam Granth (Presently in the British Library, London) was written in February 1847 after the Sikhs lost the first Anglo-Sikh War (Second treaty with Lahore December 16, 1846 at Bhairawal when the British became virtual masters of Punjab). The treacherous Sardar Tej Singh was the chief of the Regency Council when this Devnagri Dasam Granth was created. In recognition of his services, the title of Raja was conferred on him on August 7, 1847.

The story of Mani Singh supposedly compiling a Dasam Granth at the request of Mata Sundri during his stay at Amritsar between 1724 to 1736 has its own uncertainties, as the Dasam Granth reported to be compiled by him with the separate Bani of all Gurus and Bhagat's was found only in 1818. The Gurus' Bani part of this manuscript is a Bano version of Guru Granth Sahib, therefore this granth cannot be the composition of Mani Singh who compiled the Damdami version of Adi Guru Granth Sahib earlier in 1706 AD. The story of Mehtab Singh and Sukha Singh slaying Massa Ranghar and reward of successful mission keeping the various parts of Dasam Granth as a single volume cannot be supported by any historical evidence. No such Dasam Granth has been seen anywhere.

Historical analysis shows that many 'granths' may have been compiled during the time of Guru Gobind Singh, as noted in 18th century Gumukhi literature: namely Smudsagar / Avtarlila / Vidyasagar Granth Vidyadar Granth / Bachitar Natak / Satsai Granth (Chhibar-1769-1779 AD and Mehma Parkash -1776AD). Chhibar & Sarup Das Bhalla does not make mention of the contents or any arrangement of these Granths. No Such original manuscripts of these Granths are available as they were reported to be lost either in rivers and/or warfare. Recognized academic parameters to prove authenticity of any literature must be as follows;

- (a) Date of document (when it was written),
- (b) History of the document,
- (c) Who is the scribe, and,
- (d) Internal consistency,

There are many unanswered questions relating to the compilation of present Dasam Granth prepared under the direction of the Sodhak Committee in 1897:

(A) Why did not the Committee accept the anyone original version?

(B) The compositions shown underneath were deleted by the Sodhak committee but were originally present in many hand written and published manuscripts.

The question arises as to why the Sodhak Committee deleted the following compositions, and who authorized the committee members to do so?

1. Sansahar Sukhmana - 43 stanzas Few praising Hindu Deities and betraying Sukhmani by 5th Guru,
2. Vaar Malkauns - 11 Pauris, Nanak Jo Prabh Bhawangey, Harji Harmandar Awangey
3. Vaar Bhagouti Ji Ki - Different from Vaar Durga Ki - Bhagat Bhagouti Tis Ki, Jo Jan Dhir Dhre 4- Sri Bhagwant Gita Bhakha Sri Govind Singh Kirt
4. Raag Asa & Raag Sorith Patshai Das
5. Asfotak Kabits (Published by Randir Singh in Dasam Granth at Punjabi University) Sadd-three verses recited in lakhi Jungle
6. Majh Patshahi 10,
7. Chhaka Bhagauti Ji Ka.

Lahore Singh Sabha, with 118 associations, did not recognize the new Dasam Granth in 1897. Three articles were published in Khalsa Akhbar Lahore against the Sodhak Committee on October 4 and 25, and November 1st, 1895.

The following points add weight to the likelihood that the Dasam Granth published by the Sodhak Committee has little religious significance to Sikhs, as it is not mentioned by Akali Ran Singh in his book about Dasam Granth (1905) Kahan Singh Nabha in Mahan Kosh (1931) does not mention 1897 Sodhak Committee report or Dasam Granth published in 1900 & 1902 AD. He talks only about two Birs one by Mani Singh and another by Sukha Singh, and requests more thorough work on this issue.

The SGPC authorized SRM gives no importance to Dasam Granth Published by Sodhak Committee. Historical records show that Banda Singh Bahadar, Nawab Kapur Singh, Jassa Singh Ahluwalia, and Sardars of Sikh Misals of the 18th century did not revere Dasam Granth. Baghel Singh built eight historical Gurdwaras in New Delhi in 1784: No evidence of installation of any Dasam Granth anywhere in 1784 AD at newly built Delhi gurdwaras.

Based on academic parameters guidelines, the history of Sikh British relations and the history and texts of various Dasam Granths available between 18th-20th centuries It becomes clear that the earliest authentic version with the title of Granth as 'Dasmi Patshahi Ka Granthi' written in Devnagri is (BL MSS Punjabi 5D) donated to British Library by Colebrook.

The teachings of the Bani of the Guru Granth Sahib are the sole Guru for Sikhs. Based upon above doctrine, Banis of 10th Guru that are accepted in Sikh Rahat Maryaa got sanctified by Guru Panth (1927-1936) as final and unquestionable are: Japu Sahib, 10 Swaeyas (swarg Sudu Waley 21-30 Akal Ustit), Chaupai, Ardas, Dohra and Sweeya in Rehras (as sanctioned in Rehat Maryada). Additionally, others compositions including Akal Ustat (except Chhand 201-230), Khalsa Mehma, 33 Swaeyas, Shabad Hazarey and Zafarnama are Banis are considered writings of 10th Guru as their interpretation matches with idea, content and message of SGGS.

Based on the review of history and text of the current Dasam Granth, we see that it was used by the British to divide the Sikhs for gaining political power to expand into North, as well as for missionary expansion in Punjab in early 1800 AD. Dasam Granth since 1947 has become a handy tool for the Brahmanical ideology to use to promote division among the Sikhs and dilute the unique Sikh ideology enshrined in Sri Guru Granth Sahib.

It appears from evidence that British intention was to create a distorted view of Sikhism by changing: (1) date & concept of creation of Khalsa and Five Kakars (2) Diminish the Sikh Belief in SGGS by educating the Sikhs through Nirmalas & Shahids to ensure the Vedantisation of Sikh community and ensure better political control as they moved into Punjab. For details read "Sketch of Sikhs" published by Malcolm who laid the foundation of British Historiography in India 1810, 1812. All Successive British Historiographers followed him without any personal verification.

Malcolm writes:

"The tribes of Acalis (immortals) who have now assumed a dictatorial sway in all the religious ceremonies at Amritsar, and Nirmala and Shahid, who read the sacred writings, may hereafter introduce some changes in those usages which the Sikhs revere: but it is probable that the spirit of equality, which has been hitherto considered as the vital principle of the Khalsa or commonwealth, and which makes all Sikhs so reluctant to own either a temporal or spiritual leader will tend greatly to preserve their institutions from invasion; and it is stated in a tradition which is universally believed by the Sikhs, and has, indeed been inserted in their sacred writings, that Guru Gobind Singh when he was asked by his followers, who

surrounded his death bed, to whom he would leave the authority? Replied 'I have delivered over the Khalsa (commonwealth) to God, who never dies. I have been your guide; and will still preserve you; read the Granth and attend to its tenets; and whoever remains true to its guidance, him will I aid'.

CONCLUSION,

Research confirms that Sikhism is an integrated religion with unity of Sikh thought between the first and tenth Guru. The Tenth Guru sanctified only one Granth, which is SGGS in 1708 AD well documented in all Indian, Persian, and European contemporary and near contemporary sources. Sikh Gurdwara act in 1925 AD reinforces this Section 2 dealing with definitions, and Section 134g dealing with powers of the Committee to dismiss office holders. Ministers & office holders must perform duties per teaching of SGGS. SGPC approved SRM (1925-1936) again endorses only one Granth Sri Guru Granth Sahib for all Sikhs

Visit to Amritsar

*☞The place is enchanting
And Beautiful is the Pool
The waters are ambrosial
And full is the Pool*

*At daytime the holy Granth
Was enthroned and read
It was laid to rest at night
After prayers were said*

*The much cherished Granth
Became central to the Sikh way
The Guru and the Granth
Are our guide night and day ☞*

*A poem from the book 'Sikh Gurus' by the
late S Jaswinder Singh Chadha*



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Parliament of the World's Religions 2015 Salt Lake City USA

The Editor Lord Singh of Wimbledon was invited to be the keynote Sikh speaker and gave the following addresses.

1. Address to Plenary

Opening Recitation from the Sikh Holy Scriptures the Guru Granth Sahib

The Lord first created Light:
From the Lord's play all living creatures came,
And from the Divine Light all creation sprang.
Why then should we divide human creatures
Into the high and the low?

Brother, be not in error:
All Creation emanates from the one Creator
Evident in all creation,

The Lord's Spirit is all-pervading!
The Lord, the Maker, hath moulded one mass of clay
Into vessels of diverse shapes.
Free from taint are all the vessels of clay
Since free from taint is the Divine Potter.

Guru Granth Sahib page 1349

The allusion to the different vessels of clay and the one Divine Potter, reminds us that despite apparent differences, we are all equal members of our one human race.

This verse or shabad taken from the Sikh Holy Scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, in many ways encapsulates both the thrust of Sikh teachings and the central theme of this historic Parliament, in its emphasis on the absurdity of all man made distinctions of birth, class or creed. Other verses in the Guru Granth Sahib also stress the full gender equality.

Sikhism is one of our different paths towards a summit of understanding of our common responsibility to the Creator, to work for the benefit of our fellow human beings. Sikhs believe our different paths are not mutually exclusive, but frequently merge to give us both a heightened understanding of our own faith and our common responsibilities.

Our Gurus emphasized respect for other ways of life in many different ways, Guru Arjan, the fifth of our 10 founding Gurus incorporated some uplifting verses of Hindu and Muslim poets into the Guru Granth Sahib, including the one I've just read, to show that no one religion has a monopoly of truth, and all faiths should be respected.

To promote this reaching out to others, the Guru asked a Muslim saint to lay the foundation stone of the historic Darbar Sahib at Amritsar, commonly known as the Golden Temple. In furthering the world's first major move to interfaith understanding, the Guru placed a door at each of its four sides to signify a welcome to all from any spiritual or geographic direction. The 9th Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur, took this further by giving his life defending the Hindu

community's right to freedom of worship against a policy of forced conversion by the then Mughal rulers. In doing so he gave practical utterance to Voltaire's famous words: 'I may not believe in what you say, but I will defend to the death your right to say it.'

I am delighted that the 2015 Parliament has set its goal as the reclaiming of our common humanity. It is a recognition that religion has largely failed to move minds to what Sikhs call a gurmukh or Godly direction by making concern for others central to all we do. Instead of recognizing the common thrust of our different faiths, we have set barriers of belief between them smugly, and sometimes violently, proclaiming our superiority and exclusive path to God.

Our failure to give a clear ethical lead centered on compassion and concern for others, has led to a society obsessed in searching for contentment through material possessions, creating a selfish society in which the vulnerable suffer. Our common task is then to reclaim the heart of society by working together to create a society that makes responsible and compassionate living central to all we do. I am confident that this Parliament will help us explore ways to do just this.

2. Role of Religion in a Secular World

Friends, it is a real pleasure to be invited to talk to you on a key concern-namely the role of our different faiths in a secular world. Today, we look with bewilderment and disbelief at brutalities inflicted on the suffering people in Syria, Iraq and much of the Middle East and in many other parts of the world. Killing in the name of religion is nothing new. Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith was himself a witness to the Mughal invasion of India and the atrocities against a mostly Hindu population. The Guru, reflecting on the killings and atrocities, put the blame firmly on the divisive packaging of competing faiths, as superior and exclusive paths to God, with claims to be inheritors of God's patronage and 'final revelation'.

It's this bigotry of belief with God on our side, applauding all we do in his name, that led to conflict in the past and today, is used to justify killings and atrocities against thousands of innocents across the world.

Guru Nanak, in teachings rooted in compassion and common sense, argued that the one God of all humanity does not have favourites and is not in the least bit interested in our different religious labels but in what we do. He saw different religions as different paths to responsible living, and taught that all such paths should be respected.

Guru Arjan the fifth of Guru Nanak's nine successor Gurus, emphasized this need for respect between different faiths by asked a Muslim saint Mia Mir to lay the foundation stone of the Golden Temple to show his respect for Islam, In the world's first major move in inter faith dialogue, he included verses of Hindu and Muslim saints in our holy scriptures, the Guru Granth Sahib, to underline the central Sikh teaching that no one religion has a monopoly of truth; a concept, that in my view, is essential if our different faiths are to play their true role of giving meaning and direction to compassionate and responsible living.

It is important to remember that misplaced religious zeal is not the only cause of conflict in our troubled world. Stalin, Hitler and Pol Pot were not particularly religious. A few years back, I did some work for the Human Rights organisation Amnesty International, looking at genocide and human rights abuse in a number of different countries; abuse which often involved unbelievable depravity. Almost as bad as the abuse, was the realisation that those

who we learn to trust are often the perpetrators: police and soldiers, and, even worse, priests and teachers and previously friendly neighbours. Why do people behave in such ways?

The sobering conclusion is that our human family has only a thin veneer of civilisation that differentiates us from those we call savages; a veneer that is all too easily shed at times when, either through misplaced religious zeal or the simple pursuit of power, we are persuaded to see others as lesser beings.

How can we move our wayward human race into what Sikhs would call a Gurmukh or Godly direction? Why has organised religion lost its sense of direction?

The problem, is that the ethical teachings of our different faiths, are extremely easy to state, but difficult to live by. It is hard to put others before self; it is hard to forgive. Lust and greed have their attractions. So, in our perverse, way we develop surrogates for true religious teachings. If, once a week, we sing words of ethical guidance in beautiful hymns and chants, perform rituals, build beautiful places of worship, fast, and go on pilgrimages, we can easily convince ourselves, that we are following the main thrust of religious teachings.

Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith was not too impressed with such practices. He taught:

Pilgrimages, austerities and ritual acts of giving or compassion

Are in themselves, not worth a grain of sesame seed

It's living true to ethical imperatives that count. It's much easier to look to the trappings of our different religions, than to their actual teachings. Sikhism is a fairly new religion and we haven't had much time to develop rituals to take the place of ethical imperatives. But sadly, we are doing our best to catch up, with interminable arguments over the holiness of sitting on the ground as opposed to chairs or buffet, in the meal that follows Sikh services, and in other ways that confuse peripheral arguments with true religion.

The vacuum created by this failure to focus on key religious teachings was quickly filled by the pursuit of material wealth. Society rightly rejected the so-called religious view that taught spiritual improvement and at the same time countenanced poverty, disease and suffering. Unfortunately, the pendulum has swung too far and mankind is engaged in seeking happiness and contentment through the blind pursuit of material wealth to the neglect of the spiritual side of life.

To me as a Sikh, much of the unhappiness in the world today stems from our basic failure to recognise that life has both spiritual and material dimensions, and if we neglect either of these, it will be to our ultimate neglect. This fundamental truth has, as you all know, long been recognised by our religious founders.

Sikhism gives the story of the miser Dunning Chand who spent all his time amassing wealth until he was given a needle by Guru Nanak to take into the next world. On another occasion, the Guru gently chided some so-called holy men who had left their families to go in the wilderness in search of God. The Guru told them that God was not to be found in the wilderness but in their homes in looking to the needs of their families and others around them.

The Guru taught that we should live like the lotus flower, which having its roots in muddy waters, still flowers beautifully above. Similarly we should all live and work for the benefit of society, but should always be above it meanness and pettiness.

Today in our preoccupation with things material, we have forgotten the importance of balance between material and spiritual and, as a result, have previously unheard of prosperity side by side with escalating crime, rising alcoholism and drug dependency, loneliness, the homeless and broken homes and other disturbing evidence of social disintegration.

How can we move to more balanced and compassionate living? How can we make ours a more cohesive and caring society? Voluntary effort and increasingly government and other statutory effort are becoming more alert to social ills in our society. But in focussing on problems, rather than more holistically on causes, we sometime tend to look through the wrong end of the telescope, and seek to treat spots and sores of social maladies, rather than look further to underlying causes.

If problems resulting from drug abuse take up too much police time, the call is legalise drug use and free the police, rather than question why the use of drugs has risen so dramatically. Increasing alcohol abuse? Let's extend or abolish licensing hours to spread the incidence of drunken or loutish and drunken behaviour. Result - a rise in binge drinking. Too many people ending up in prison? Let's build more prisons. Extend this thinking, of looking to the wrong end of a problem, to the behaviour of little junior who greets visitors to the house by kicking them in the shins. Solution: issue said visitors with shin pads as they enter the front door!

It is important to differentiate between two levels of behaviour. The first is behaviour that keeps us out of trouble. For the small child it not throwing food about, or not kicking aunts and uncles in the shins. For adults it's being reasonably polite to those around us, and complying with those in authority and the rules and laws of society, unless we know we can get away with it!

Is religion necessary for promoting such conformity? Of course not, no more than it's necessary to involve religion in teaching a dog to stand on its hind legs or a dolphin to perform tricks. Sanction or reward in the teaching of social norms are sufficient motivators. Hindsight however reminds us that accepted social norms of the day, like acceptance of slavery or discrimination on grounds of gender or ethnicity can later be seen cruel and oppressive.

The teachings of our great religious leaders on the other hand, frequently challenge social norms. Religious teachings have nothing to do with unthinking conformity, or, equally importantly, individual or material advancement. Instead, they look to spiritual and ethical advancement for both the individual and society as a whole.

Religion takes us away from obsession with self, to active concern for others. As Guru Nanak taught, where self exists there is no God, where God exists there is no self. Or as a Christian theologian put it 'it's the 'I' in the middle of 'sin' that makes it sin. Ironically, a recent edition of the Journal Experimental Psychology after detailed recent studies underlined the same important truth. Religion then, is fundamentally different from civics or citizenship education; in that far from conforming, it has its own standards that often can and do, challenge existing unjust and discriminatory social norms.

This is particularly important because politics and the democratic process are geared to pandering to short-term popularity, and this can result in populist policies that harm our long-term interests. In a debate in the British House of Lords, a speaker argued that 'religion was out of step with society'. I replied that to me this was like saying, my satnav is not following my directions.

Sikhs believe that our different religions should work together and take the lead in addressing the real causes of our social ills - starting with the role of the family. We see marriage, fidelity and the family as central to the health and wellbeing of society. It is easy to allow understanding, compassion and support for those in different situations to blind us to the importance of an ideal. TV comedy, in which infidelity is seen as something of a giggle, blinds us to the hurt that transient, adult relationships, can cause to children.

A short true story makes the point better than any words of mine.

Two small boys were fighting, hammer and tongs in the school playground. With great difficulty, a teacher finally managed to prise the two apart demanding to know what it was all about. Looking at the teacher, with eyes swollen with tears, one of the children said it was because the other's dad had taken his mum away. While we should not condemn those who chose different lifestyles, there is a need for clearer highlighting of responsibility and the benefits of stable family relations. Both those in political life and leaders of faith communities have much to do here.

Today, in our yearning for peace we know the direction in which we have to go. Yet, rooted in material greed, bigotry and selfishness, we continue in a direction that is bound to lead to further conflict. We talk of a common brotherhood yet are prepared to accept our brothers and sisters and their children being killed by bullets and bombs manufactured by us and other developed and developing countries. Even India, the land of Mahatma Gandhi, boasts that it is now a major exporter of arms

Most industrialised nations see the arms industry as an important earner of foreign exchange as well as a means to political leverage on the less 'developed' world, often regardless of gross human rights abuses in recipient countries. The current situation in the Middle East is a case in point. We criticise Russia for supporting President Assad, a dictator without a democratic mandate. Yet, in the name of strategic interest, the West sells billions of dollars of arms to Saudi Arabia, a country that ferments unrest in the region, a country that barbarically beheads hundreds of those who dissent from its dictatorial rule every year, and amputates the limbs of many others. A country that oppresses women and does not allow Sikhs and other faiths to openly practice their religion. Yet, with Britain's help, Saudi Arabia today **chairs** the UN Human Rights Council!

Unbelievably, when I questioned, in the House of Lords, the morality of a government statement that human rights should not be allowed to get in the way of trade with China, I received a reply to the effect that strategic interest must trump human rights!

When a government Minister spoke of the need for an international inquiry into human rights abuse in Sri Lanka, I congratulated the government, and asked if they would support a similar inquiry into the widespread killing of Sikhs in India in 1984, I received a short, sharp reply: 'that is a matter for the Indian government' - a much bigger trading partner. It was the great Human Rights activist, Andrei Sakharov who wisely reminded us that 'there will never be peace in the world until we are even handed in human rights abuse.

As our children and grandchildren look back on today's times, I am sure that they will do so with loathing and revulsion at a generation prepared to countenance and continue the suffering of millions for its own economic prosperity. Today, the dominant creed in much of the world is that individual happiness and so-called strategic interest are all that really matter. What do we need to do to change to promote greater social justice both at home and abroad?

In 'do it yourself' activity, there is a saying that when all else fails, look at the instructions. In the past, religion failed to give true ethical direction because it looked more at the packaging than on far seeing guidance. Arrogant secular society isn't, as we've seen, doing much better and it is the responsibility of our different religion to get it to look and act on the ethical instructions for sane peaceful and responsible living contained in the teachings of our different faiths

The first step in doing this is to move from hostility and suspicion of one another, to true respect and tolerance. Not the sort of tolerance that grudgingly puts up with others, but a tolerance that says, in the words of Voltaire, 'I may not believe in what you say, but will defend to the death your right to say it'. A sentiment translated into action by Guru Teg Bahadur, the 9th Guru of the Sikhs, who was martyred defending the right to freedom of worship of the Hindu community, against Mughal persecution.

The second step would be drastic spring-cleaning of religion. Today there is an urgent need for us to discard rituals, superstitions and dated customs and practices that have nothing to do with teachings of the founders of our different faiths. Practices that have over years become falsely attached to religion, and simply serve to distort teachings. Practices and customs that have no relevance to life today. We need to look at guidance in the context of today's times rather than the particular social or political circumstances of earlier days.

At the same time, we have to knock down the false barriers of belief and exclusivity between religions. When, in the course of redevelopment, a building is demolished in a familiar area, we see the surrounding landscape in a quite different light. In the same way, when false barriers of bigotry are demolished through dialogue and understanding, we will see our different religions as they really are: overlapping circles of belief, in which the area of overlap is much greater than the smaller area of difference. In that area of overlap, we find common values of tolerance, compassion and concern for social justice: values that can take us from the troubled times of today, to a fairer and more peaceful world.

Editors Note

Both the plenary address and the lecture were warmly applauded and appreciated by delegates from around the world.

GLOBAL SIKH COUNCIL

The next meeting of the Global Sikh Council will take place in Paris on March 18-20. The conference involving delegates from 12 countries will continue the work, begun in London last year, to improve governance and decision making in the Sikh community. The sad absence of leadership from Amritsar, factional politics and threats to independent Sikh identity make it essential that Sikhs worldwide unite to address urgent issues

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS UK

ETHICAL TEACHINGS OF DIFFERENT RELIGIONS

A QUIZ FOR ALL YOUNG (AND NOT SO YOUNG) SIKHS

RELIGION	EQUALITY OF HUMANITY	GENDER EQUALITY	BELIEF THAT GOD DOES NOT HAVE HUMAN ATTRIBUTES LIKE FAVOURITISM & JEALOUSY	SERVICE TO OTHERS	STANDING UP FOR THE BELIEFS & RIGHTS OF OTHERS	TOLERANCE & RESPECT FOR DIFFERENT FAITHS & WAYS OF LIFE	CONCERN FOR FUTURE	ADVICE AGAINST MISLEADING RITUALS & SUPERSTITIONS
BUDDHISM								
CHRISTIANITY								
JUDAISM								
HINDUISM								
ISLAM								
SIKHISM								

Place ticks or crosses in the above boxes to show commitment to the above ethical principles. Research the teachings of different religions and give examples of supporting ethical teachings, **embedded in religious texts or founders lives**, for each tick placed in the above boxes. Exclude subsequent cultural/social changes.

Editor's Note: The idea for a table showing differences and commonalities between different faiths came from talks and discussion with young Sikhs in the USA who were often uncertain of the value of their heritage. The problem is that we cannot value anything in isolation. Tall or short, rich or poor have no value without comparison. It is difficult to value what we have without comparison.

Researching the key teachings of different religions and completing the table will help young Sikhs and others understand the true value of the positive guidance of Sikh teachings on our journey through life.

Please circulate table to all gurdwaras.

Talk to Westminster School

Assembly 23-11-15

Indarjit Singh

My thanks to Rev Gavin Williams for inviting me and to my grandson Devan whose intelligent questioning helped me frame my talk.

In the last 10 days we've seen horrendous massacres in Paris and more recent killings in a hotel in Mali. Killing in the name of religion is nothing new. Five and a half centuries ago at the time of the birth of Guru Nanak, the founder of the Sikh faith (whose birthday falls this week), Catholics and Protestants were at each other's throats in Europe, and in India, there was violent conflict between Hindus and Muslims.

Guru Nanak, reflected deeply on this bigotry of belief, and, in the world's first major move to dialogue and respect between religions, courageously declared: that in God's eyes, ***there was neither Hindu nor Muslim, and by today's extension, neither Christian, Sikh nor Jew.*** That the one God of us all is not impressed by our different religious labels but in what we do to create a better and fairer society.

Guru Nanak taught that neither Hindus nor Muslims, nor anyone any other faith, had a monopoly of truth, and he urged all communities to focus on common ethical imperatives to create a fairer society. In the Sikh view, ethical teachings are a satnav for a meaningful, responsible and enriching journey through life. These include: a belief in one God of all humanity, the equality of all human beings including the full equality of women. Then there is a commitment to work for greater social and political justice and to stand up for the rights and beliefs of others, and importantly, put the needs of other before our own. Adherence to such values is in the Sikh view, a far better way to community cohesion than government programmes like 'Prevent' that regard religion as a problem rather than a solution.

Nine successor Gurus translated Guru Nanak's teachings into daily living, often in dangerous and difficult circumstances. The fifth Guru, Guru Arjan, included uplifting verses from Hindu and Muslim saints in the main Sikh scriptures the Guru Granth Sahib, to show commonalities between beliefs. He also invited a Muslim saint, Mia Mir to lay the foundation stone for the famous Golden Temple at Amritsar to show his respect for Islam. Sadly, the bigoted Mughal rulers saw this as an attempt to undermine their teachings, and the Guru was tortured and martyred for his beliefs. When the ninth Guru, Guru Teg Bahadur stood up for the right of Hindus to worship in the manner of their choice, he too was tortured and then publically beheaded by the bigoted rulers.

Today there is an urgent need for us all to stand up for such fundamental values which, in the Sikh view, should be central to the way we live, move and have our being. I see all of us falling into a bell shaped curve, or normal distribution, on one extreme there are, what I call the mess makers-people who ignore their responsibility to others, and leave the world a worse place for their having been born. Then in the large centre of the distribution, we have the majority of people who simply get on with their own lives leaving the world neither better nor worse. At the other extreme there are the 'tidier uppers', people who Sikhs call gurmukhs; people who make the world a better place by living true to the ethical values found in our different faiths. From what I've heard about Westminster School, I'm confident that all of you will go on to be gurmukhs or 'tidier uppers' in all you choose to do.

Sikh Perspectives in Parliament

1. Address on Freedom of Speech in Universities

By Editor

My Lords, everyone agrees that freedom of speech is essential for a functioning democracy. Unfortunately, it means different things to different people. To me it is the right to criticise the actions of those in authority, governments and powerful institutions including religions and those in religious authority. Freedom of speech does not carry a right to gratuitously offend. Actions deliberately causing fear and distress are rightly against the law. While we should all uphold true freedom of speech, we also need to be on guard to ensure that it is not used as a force to harm or silence the weak and vulnerable.

While I have real concerns about the banning of speakers who sometimes challenge conventional thinking, my main concern today, is about the treatment of, religion and religious expression, in universities.

Despite government programmes like 'Prevent', extremist preachers all too frequently use freedom of speech to incite hatred against others, or to undermine democratic institutions, or the rights and beliefs of others. At the same time, they are the first react with bluster and threat to criticism of their actions. University authorities seem loath to act against such bullyboys.

Raising concerns about the behaviour of young Muslims who bring disgrace to their faith, carries the risk of being labelled islamophobic. The smear islamophobia is often used to stifle even the mildest questioning. Another argument advanced by both people of religion and others in secular society is that religion is a personal matter and therefore beyond questioning and criticism. I strongly disagree with this view.

My Lords, religion is not some sort of endangered way of life that excludes it from legitimate questioning and debate. If religions claim to hold eternal truths and the solution to many of the ills in society, they must open themselves up to robust challenge and questioning. Freedom of Speech must include the right to challenge, without fears of instant smears of anti-Semitism or islamophobia, or other religious phobia.

Religions should allow and encourage the querying of their teachings on social issues which to some, may seem to be out of kilter with accepted norms and at times, even common sense. In speaking to Sikh and other faith groups I always say, that if a practice seems to go against common-sense, it must be challenged; in places of worship, universities and other walks of life.

Universities are ideal places to conduct discussions affecting society; it can and should be probing, but it must be conducted in courteous terms, and never to demean belittle or silence.

NOTE: Many in the House applauded the Talk as a carefully balanced approach to the importance and limits of free speech.

2. Question to Foreign & Commonwealth Office: Asked by Lord Singh 8 December 2015

Overseas Trade: Human Rights

Written Question: To ask Her Majesty's Government, further to the reply by Baroness Anelay of St Johns on 7 December (HL Deb, col 1310), what assessment they have made of whether the statement that they "never allow issues about our economic relationship to get in the way of upholding international law and international humanitarian law" is consistent with the remarks in June 2014 by the then Minister for Small Business, Industry and Enterprise, Michael Fallon, that "we should not allow" concerns about human rights "to get in the way of a very important trade relationship".

Answered by: Baroness Anelay of St Johns (Answered on: 16 December 2015) As the first country to produce a National Action Plan on Business and Human Rights we have advocated the view that the promotion of business and respect for human rights go hand in hand. We see these as mutually reinforcing. The degree of influence we have with a country, including on human rights issues, depends on many factors; as a general rule we have more influence with countries with whom we have a strong trade and investment relationship.

3. Question on Visit to UK of Egypt President

Peers discussed Anglo-Egyptian relations following a recent question about the 'appropriateness' of President Al-Sisi's visit to Britain.

Baroness Kennedy of The Shaws (Lab) tabled a question asking Her Majesty's Government whether President Al-Sisi's visit was appropriate in view of the state of the rule of law and human rights violations in Egypt. In response, The Earl of Courtown (Cons) said Egypt is important for Britain's national interests adding, "We must work together on the immediate issues facing us, such as bringing stability to Libya, combating ISIL and countering extremism."

Appalled by the Minister's reluctance to speak on human rights abuse, Lord Singh of Wimbledon (CB), the Director of The Network of Sikh Organisations said,

"My Lords, we have recently lavished hospitality on the President of China, where, as we heard in the answers to an earlier Question, there are gross abuses of human rights and where the ruling clique presumes to tell people how many children they can have." He went on, "We will shortly be lavishing similar hospitality on Narendra Modi, who until recently was excluded from this country and the United States for possible genocide against the Muslim community in India. We are rushing around trying to sell arms to Saudi Arabia, which is one of the most barbarous regimes in the Middle East. "

To much laughter and applause he concluded that 'it would be discriminatory to even think of excluding President al Sisi from these others with questionable human rights records'.

On the last line of the page, change al Sisi to Al Sisi and after 'human rights records'. at end of line continue with new sentence below:

One lord referred to Lord Singh as 'Lord Irony'. Another declared that he had neither the wit nor courage to make such a telling intervention.

NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS PRESS RELEASE

Signs of success in NSO anti-Sikh hate crime monitoring campaign

London, 9 Dec 2015: The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) is pleased to acknowledge positive steps taken by the government, following its recent campaigning on the issue of separate monitoring of anti-Sikh hate crime.

A Home office spokesperson said, "In October, we announced a new cross-Government hate crime plan. We also announced that we will work with the police to provide a breakdown of religious based hate crime as part of the data recorded by the police – this will ensure that in future there is accurate data on crimes committed against people because of their faith and race – including crimes committed against Sikhs."

Lord Singh who has raised the issue on a number of occasion in the last year said: ' NSO persistence in constantly raising this issue with ministers in the Lords and in discussion with the DCLG finally appears to be paying off. The government now seem to realize the seriousness of mistaken identity hate crimes against members of the Sikh community.

NEWS 1.

Sikhs visit the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque Dubai

A delegation of 150 Sikh including children and families from the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara Dubai visited the Sheikh Zayed Grand Mosque.

The delegation toured the mosque and admired the Islamic calligraphy on the walls of the mosque, which is a landmark in Abu Dhabi and the UAE, and represents the outstanding Islamic architecture. The delegation was also briefed on the role played by the Mosque in highlighting Islamic culture.

Mr. Surender Singh Kandhari, Chairman of the Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara organized this trip in coordination with SZGM as part of the Interfaith Harmony and Peace programme. Speaking on behalf of the Gurdwara, Mr Khandhari commented:

"We all admired the 1000 Pillars, seven crystal chandeliers and the world's largest carpet. The experience was invaluable and we all appreciated it greatly. The entire team looking after us was very professional and caring and we would sincerely like to thank each one of them'.

NEWS 2.

Arbitrary arrest of Paramjeet Singh

Paramjeet Singh fled from arbitrary arrest and torture in India in 1999, and in the following year was granted indefinite leave to remain in the UK after a finding of a justifiable fear of persecution if he was made to return to India.

Paramjeet is married and is the father of 4 children age 7 to 11. In December 2015 the family went on a short holiday Christmas holiday to Portugal where he was arrest by Interpol at the request of the Indian government and is now facing extradition proceedings for his forced return to India. It seems that the Indian government had taken exception to his speaking out on human rights abuse in India. Lord Singh, for the NSO, has raised his concerns with the Minister for the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and other Sikh groups have also raised concerns with both British and Portuguese governments.

In an interview on 3rd January 2015 with Portuguese TV outside the House of Lords, Lord Singh was asked why had Paramjeet Singh after being granted asylum, continued to attack India's attitude to human rights instead of simply getting on with his own life.

Lord Singh responded that we all have a responsibility to condemn the ill-treatment of others, and for Sikhs this responsibility is embedded in religious teachings and is obligatory. He appealed to the authorities in Portugal not to be used like pawns in a backdoor attempt by Indian authorities to silence criticism of their human rights record, and return Paramjeet to British jurisdiction.

THOUGHT FOR THE DAY

Talks on the BBC Radio 4 prime time Today Programme

25-11-15 Anniversary of Guru Nanak's Birthday

When invited to a radio programme on the theme 'what does God think of us, my jaundiced contribution was: 'If God had human emotions they would be of utter bewilderment and despair at the antics of the human race, coupled with a determination to keep us well away from any truly intelligent life in the vastness of Creation.' Today, in the aftermath of the religion-linked massacres in Paris and Mali, this seems to be a bit of an understatement.

Such killings are nothing new. At the time of Guru Nanak, whose birth anniversary falls today, Catholics and Protestants were at each other's throats in Europe and, in India, there was religious conflict between Muslims and Hindus. Why do our different religions with much to offer, ignore important commonalities and focus negatively on supposed difference and notions of exclusive access to God's truth?

It was a concern close to Guru Nanak's heart. In his very first sermon, he courageously suggested that the one God of us all was not impressed by our different religious labels, but by what we did for our fellow beings. The Guru devoted his life to stressing commonalities and questioning the validity of some supposed differences.

Today in our demographically changed world, while recognising and respecting genuine difference, there is an urgent need to counter the use of difference to justify hatred and violence towards others. The concern over the capacity of those working with ISIS to persuade young Muslims to leave the UK, to join fighters in Syria highlights the need to reach hearts and minds. I can fully understand the revulsion felt by those who say we should bomb ISIS of the face of this earth, but such statements, can be cynically used by extremist as 'an attack on our religion'.

A letter in yesterday's Times by nearly 200 Muslim scholars deploring terrorism in the name of Islam gives hope. They point out that there is nothing Islamic about the so-called

“Islamic State” and no acts of terrorism, hate and violence can be justified. Distortion and misinterpretation can happen with many historic religious texts and is why, particularly in the context of today’s times, it’s necessary to stress the important commonalities with other faiths. In this, all who speak out in such a way deserve our full support.

2-12-15

Today’s debate about the rights or wrongs of air strikes against ISIS, will be focussed on what constitutes a just and proportionate response to ISIS atrocities in Paris and elsewhere. While much has been said and written about criteria that need to be met for a just war, less has been said about imperatives for just and lasting peace.

Syria, like much of the Middle East, is a cauldron of competing rivalries, not only those of Sunni and Shia Muslims but also smaller groups: Alawites, Kurds, Christians and others. While we would all like to see functioning democracies in the region, this is easier said than done. The history of the Middle East, and many other parts of the world shows that majority rule does not always equate to just rule. Majorities insensitive to the rights of minorities can all too easily morph into tyrannies. What is important is, not so much the process of acquiring power, as the way power is exercised.

I was reminded about this at an event celebrating the birth anniversary of the Maharaja Ranjit Singh, who lived in the 19th century. He ruled over a vast area of northern India, including present day Pakistan. Although the Maharaja gained power through military might, he reached out to all communities winning both love and loyalty.

Totally illiterate, he spent hours as a child in the gurdwara, listening to Sikh teachings on respect for all communities. He was deeply influenced by the Sikh belief that token respect for other ways of life is not enough, and that for true respect, we should be prepared to put our own rights and freedom on the line, in support of those of others.

The Maharaja kept this teaching close to his heart. There were more Hindu and Muslim Ministers in his government than Sikhs. He also gave generously for the upkeep and development of places of worship of all communities, bringing peace, stability and prosperity into a region that had been subject to factional rivalry, not unlike that seen in the Middle East today.

Yes, this is history from the 19th century, but it contains fundamental truths that we would be wise to learn from. Reaching out to others in this way is not easy, but is possible, and to my mind, essential for true and lasting peace. We should give our full support to any group working in this direction.

BOOK REVIEW

SIKHS: History, Heritage, Principles, Practices by:

Gurinder Singh Sacha -- Gurmukh Singh, Sikh Missionary Society

There is always need for introductory Sikh literature which meets the needs of different age groups in the West; literature written in Western idiomatic English and suitable for religious education in schools. So, when one comes across a book about the Sikhs which should be on the coffee table in every Sikh home, it deserves mention in “News & Views”. Scholars usually write “book reviews” to impress other fellow scholars. I am simply writing to say that here is a hard-cover, glossy and attractively designed book, which anyone with even a passing interest

in Sikh tradition, will be tempted to pick up, flick through, look at some images with captions and read to gain information about aspects of the rich Sikh heritage. Serious scholars, students and ordinary readers would read this bird's-eye view of the Sikh landscape with interest. Even younger children would gain much by just looking at the pictures and captions.

The author S Gurinder Singh Sacha is a reputable writer and educationist, and Honorary Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Linguists. Some years ago, I recall commenting on his draft of "The Sikhs & Their Way of Life". However, regarding quality and content, this updated publication is truly an invaluable gift for every Sikh household.

The Foreword by University of London senior lecturer, Tuku Mukherjee, sums up the essence of Sikhism, a religion of divinity which stands for human brotherhood, service and protest against injustice. "Implicit within its precept is a conscious and continuous process of struggle against oppression.....Sikhism was not only a revolt against the Brahminical caste structure, but also the beginning of political uprising against Islamic domination and persecution... founded on"the doctrine that the lowest is equal to the highest, in race as in creed, in political rights, as in religious hopes"....It was a Grand Design..."

And so, the Grand Design unfolds as Sacha ji writes fluently about the Sikh way of life, and "Sikh attitudes and Social Behaviour" under topics such as caste, sects, marriage, women, other faiths and world peace. Then follows a systematic summary of the lives of the Gurus – the period of Sikhi tuition by example (1569 – 1708) - and important episodes during that period followed by a vivid account of the trials and tribulations of the Khalsa in the 18th century and later; the reformation movement and on to contemporary issues, achievements and challenges. Description of Sikh institutions and identity, ceremonies, festivals, ethics and concepts is an authentic source of reference for Sikhs, non-Sikhs, gurdwaras (e.g. for information leaflets) and briefings for talks and presentations.

In short, from scholars to students and ordinary readers, the book is a source of ready reference for all. Contrary to the common complaint about shortage of Sikh literature, my impression is that the problem is not so much with quantity but quality literature produced to western standards. S. Gurinder Singh Sacha has given us such a compact and readable treatise.

"The Sikhs" by Gurinder Singh Sacha is available from the Sikh Missionary Society UK

NISHAAN

ILLUSTRATED JOURNAL OF THE SIKHS

**A highly readable and beautifully illustrated magazine of
SIKH HISTORY AND CULTURE**

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THOUGHTS FROM GURBANI

Jab Eh Man Mai Kari Gumana

*When a man's mind is obsessed with vanity
His self-conceit distorts his reasoning. He wanders in error.
When he thinks himself as dust at the feet of others,
Then he beholds the Lord in every one.
The fruit of humility is unforced joy;
This is the gift the Guru bestowed on me.*

*When a man judges his neighbour to be evil,
He is himself the victim of evil thoughts.
When he discards the distinction of 'mine' and 'thine'
No man is then his enemy.*

*When a man clamours: 'It is mine, it is mine.'
Then his is in the midst of many troubles
When he recognizes the Supreme Giver and Doer.
Then he is free from pain and free from sorrow.*

*When a man binds himself to worldly attachments,
He is caught up in the endless cycle of deaths and rebirths;
When all his worldly delusions are dissipated,
He attains to oneness with God.*

*When a man considers his selfhood as separate from God's.
He suffers agony and grief. Should he recognize the One Spirit
Then he has grasped the ground of all manifestation*

*The hunger for worldly wealth is never satisfied
The world's thirst is not quenched
But let a man detach himself from worldly attachments,
And after his trial he shall prosper. **GGs Page 235***

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NETWORK OF SIKH ORGANISATIONS UK

The Network of Sikh Organisations (NSO) is a registered charity no.1064544 that links more than 130 UK gurdwaras and other UK Sikh organisations in active cooperation to enhance the image and understanding of Sikhism in the UK

Some of the things we do:

- Promote unity and cooperation between all Sikh organisations in the UK, whether or not affiliated to the NSO
- Enhance the image and understanding of Sikhism throughout the UK through broadcasts on radio and television and articles in UK dailies and the social media
- Promote and participate in inter-faith dialogue and the active promotion of tolerance and respect between faiths.
- Through the Sikh Chaplaincy Service (SCS) provide spiritual and pastoral care to all Sikhs in prison establishments in the UK
- NSO is the Endorsing authority for Mandeep Kaur, Sikh Chaplain to the Armed Services
- Support Sikh chaplains in hospitals,
- NSO is the recognised authority for the inspection of Sikh faith schools and is represented on the Religious Education Council and the All-party Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Religious Education. Deputy Director NSO Education Dr Kanwaljit Singh OBE. provides training and guidance to Sikh schools.
- NSO is actively engaged in the protection of human rights and religious freedom with NSO Director serving a Vice Chair of the APPG for international religious freedom.
- Work with government and other statutory and non-statutory bodies to ensure that the views and concerns of UK Sikhs are fully represented.
- Counter the numerous sants, babas and politically motivated individuals who seek to distort the Gurus' teachings and establish their own 'maryada'

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