

**MASTER TARA SINGH'S CONTRIBUTION
TO PANJABI LITERATURE**

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ਕਾਠਾ ਚੋਟੀ ਸਾਖ ਪ ਸਤਿਕੁਓ ਸਭੁ ਜਾਖੀਓ
(ਵਾਰ ਸਿਰੀ ਰੇਖ)

F O R

U S H A R A B J A N A

P R E F A C E

Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi literature is noteworthy. So far, except one dissertation dealing with his novel (by this researcher), no critical or analytical work regarding his contribution to Punjabi literature is available.

Master Tara Singh was perhaps the first autobiography-writer (in prose) of the Punjabi language. His 'Meri Yaad' was published in 1945 whereas 'Aarzi' by Teja Singh, which is generally referred to as the first autobiography, was published in 1952. His autobiography is also an authentic history of Punjab from 1885 to 1945.

He is one of the few travelogue-writers of Punjabi language. His 'Mera Safarnama' was written in 1935, when only a small number of travelogues had been published in Punjabi language. This travelogue presents a study of religious and cultural conflict of various communities as well as a true picture of the state of affairs of the Gurdwaras of the areas visited by Master Tara Singh during the period of his travel.

Master Tara Singh is among of the pioneer fiction-writers of Punjabi language whose novels present a realistic picture of Sikh ethnic group in the contemporary Punjabi society. He is best at presenting locale in his novels. His novel 'Baba Teja Singh' is first successful historical novel of Punjabi language.

Besides this, he is among the first writers of periodical essays in Punjabi language on the lines of Steele and Addison. He wrote a plethora of editorials, essays, articles and tracts, which cover almost every contemporary political, religious and social questions relating to the Punjab and the Sikh panth. In the sphere of mystic and moral essays, his place is no less remarkable.

Master Tara Singh has earned a distinct reputation as a politician by dint of his long association with Punjab politics. He is also well-known as a journalist as he has been associated with a number of newspapers and journals like Sacha Bhandora, Akali Te Pardesi, Akali, Parbhat, Jathedar, Sant Sipahi etc.

The present research work concentrates mainly upon his literary achievements which are a significant aspect of his multi-dimensional contribution to Punjabi society.

I have divided this thesis into six chapters. The first chapter deals with the Time of Master Tara Singh. In this chapter I have discussed the political, religious and social scene, particularly that part of the age which made some impact on the writings of Master Tara Singh.

The second chapter introduces writings of Master Tara Singh. I have discussed his writings under the headings - novels, essays, tracts, editorials, autobiography

and travelogue. The discussion in this chapter is concentrated on the contents, background and motif of the works of Master Tara Singh.

The third chapter is an analysis of the ideological concepts as revealed in his writing. The source of Master Tara Singh's writings was mainly Sikh philosophy and Sikh history, so my discussion moves on this pattern. I have covered political, religious, sociological and ethical concepts of Master Tara Singh under this heading. The fourth chapter deals with Master Tara Singh's concept of an integrated personality, his depiction of contemporary society and his views about the people of the religions other than Sikhism.

The fifth chapter deals with artistic aspect of Master Tara Singh's writings. I have divided this chapter into two sections. The first section deals with his novels from plot-construction, characterisation and language point of view. The second section deals with Master Tara Singh as an essayist, as an editorial writer and as an autobiography writer. In the conclusion I have summed up his contribution as a whole.

This thesis aims at evaluation of Master Tara Singh as a Punjabi writer. I don't claim that I have said the final words about his writings. It is, in fact, a novel effort towards evaluation of the literary work of a writer whose contribution to Punjabi society is immense.

(iv)

Before stopping the movement of my pen I must acknowledge the facilitation and guidance from (Prof.) Dr. V.N. Tewari, (Prof.) Dr. Attar Singh, Dr. Darshan Singh, Dr. Raghbir Singh, Dr. Hardev Singh Sachar, Prof. Harjit Singh Sandhu, who were always ready to help me.

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Harjinder Singh Dilbeer

(HARJINDER SINGH DILBEER)

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CHAPTER-1

THE OF MASTER TARA SINGH

1. Political scene
2. Religious scene
3. social scene

...

POLITICAL SCENE

At the time of the birth of Master Tara Singh (1885), the Punjab was politically in ferment. Since its annexation by the British in 1849, the province had seen the first war of independence by the Sikhs, in the form of efforts of Bhai Mahraj Singh, to recover the lost Sikh Raj¹ and the mutiny of 1857 in which a very large number of Punjabis did not participate because they knew that then they were going to facilitate or fight for the cause of those rebels, who had fought against the Sikhs as junior partners of the British. Since then the province was in a continuous state of agitations, sometimes for reform in the Sikh shrines, at others for independence of the country and finally for preservation of political rights, such as right to freedom of speech, religion, culture etc. after the partition of the Indian sub-continent into two (later in three countries in 1971 when Bangla Desh was created) politically sovereign countries. This period of commotion in the state passed through the following phases :

First Attempts for Freedom (1870-1907)

The first attempts towards freedom were the results of the enthusiasm of some sentimental and religiously zealous leaders. The major political movement was the emergence of the Namdhari

1. Bhagwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol. II), pp.64, 65, 73.

Movement. This movement was not an attempt exclusively for the freedom of the country. Baba Ram Singh's programme was mainly religious. His main grudge was that the Britishers were interfering in the religious affairs of the Punjabis. His declarations as to cow protection, opposition of the English schools preaching Christianity, were mainly religious. Later, the political programme was also added in the framework of the Namdhari Movement. (It must be noted that after suppression of the movement by the British, the Namdharis again turned to their old religious activities).

According to Dr. Rajendra Prasad the Namdharis were predecessors of the National Movement of the country. "Ram Singh considered political freedom as a part of religion... The principle of boycott and non-cooperation, which Gandhi introduced so vigorously in our freedom movement were expounded by Ram Singh for Namdharis."² When political programme was added to the field of activities of the Namdharis the following principles were adopted: (1) Boycott of government services; (2) boycott of educational institutions run by British Government; (3) boycott of law established by them; (4) boycott of foreign clothing; (5) disobedience of government orders, which one's conscience abhorred.

The Namdharis had their own postal system in operation in all the parts of Punjab, which worked efficiently under time

2. Bhushant Singh, op. cit., p.135.

schedule. With this seems to have grown the tendency to get the Sikh rule re-established. This optimism must have been encouraged by their growing membership. Thus, this religious movement gradually turned into a political movement in a very short period.

The Namdhari Movement, which could have changed the political set up of the province and the country, died a premature death due to the actions of some over-ambitious persons and hooliganism of some foolish followers of Ram Singh. Cautious approach of the British Government brought a premature epilogue to the movement. The suppression of the Namdhari Movement, however, put the British Government on a strong footing and the government functioned comfortably for a pretty long period.

The year of Ram Singh's death coincides the birth of Indian National Congress with A.O. Hume as its president. This movement could not make an impact on the people of the Punjab state because the province was passing through an era of socio-religious reform movements. The Singh Sabha, the Arya Samaj, the Anjuman-i-Islamiya etc. were active organisations and the major section of elite and affluent people were associated with these organisations. These movements, though primarily socio-religious movements, were gradually influencing political field also. These movements produced the nursery for political platform of the country. Still, their major role was social reform, religious awakening and spread of education.³

3. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, p. 140.

The New Awakening (1907-1920)

The period from 1907 onwards was a period of the new phase of political awakening. The first major political movement launched in the province in 1907 was against curbs on peasantry. The reasons for the beginning of the movement were as follows :

- (1) The Land Alienation Act (1901) saved the agricultural land from passing to the money-lenders but did not solve the problem of rural indebtedness;
- (2) The Punjab was visited by a series of calamities. Famine and epidemic of bubonic plague took a toll of about forty lac lives. The administration remained insensitive to these disasters; instead of remitting land revenue, it continued to increase it with each new settlement and inflicted heavy punishment on defaulters;
- (3) The major immediate cause was the introduction of a bill which restricted the rights of the colonisers to make wills and denied them the right to cut trees on their land. The bill required colonisers to plant a minimum of 55 trees per square acre but denied them the right to cut trees without permission;
- (4) A new settlement of Rawalpindi district was made at a higher rate of assessment and the rates of water were also increased.⁴

A distressed peasantry made the province fertile soil for the seeds of revolution. The agitation was not confined to statements and protests. Urban politicians took the lead in organising protest meetings. The nationalist press supported

4. Bhughwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol. II), p.157.

the cause. By March 1907, the atmosphere in the cities and the affected colonies had become tense. A new song was on the lips of the people "Peasant guard thine turban". Students of the Khalsa College, Amritsar staged a hostile demonstration at the farewell visit of the outgoing Lieutenant Governor, Sir Charles River. Among the organisers of the students demonstrations was young Tara Singh, who was destined to become the dominant figure in Sikh politics.⁵ Protest meetings in bigger cities were organised by lawyers and public leaders.⁶ Fiftieth anniversary of the Sepoy Mutiny (1857) was chosen as the occasion for a province-wide protest. In some places, particularly Lyalpur, the demonstrators had to be dispersed by force by the police. Ajit Singh and Lajpat Rai and some lawyers were arrested. The first two were deported to Burma.

This agitation produced the following results : (1) The controversial bill was vetoed by the Governor General Lord Minto; (2) The king emperor's birthday was made the excuse to proclaim an amnesty and the Punjab leaders returned home after six months. It inspired the people of the provinces; (3) It helped as a booster for the morale of the people and they began to realise that that was not difficult to succeed in the struggle for their rights.

5. Ibid., pp. 157-58.

6. Ajit Singh; Pindi Das; Lajpat Rai; Sufi Amba Parshad and various others.

with this movement a change in political trends had begun. Whereas the previous movements had their origin in religion or personalities, this movement was economic-based, thus, widening the sphere of political activities.

Between 1907 and 1914, the Punjab was a ground for activities of the revolutionaries. Lala Hardayal, Chatterjee, Dina Nath, Rash Bihari etc. were actively engaged in the Punjab for a very long period.⁷ The major happenings were : the murderous attack on the Viceroy (December, 1912) and the Lahore Bomb case (1913) in which a messenger was killed. The brain behind this case was Rash Bihari and Amir Chand. In the second case Amir Chand with three others was hanged. Rash Bihari somehow escaped.

To counteract the activities of the extremists, the British Government adopted the tactics of compromise with the leaders of non-violent agitations. In this process the people of India gained a few rights. These steps of the government conceding some rights to the Indians were called the first achievements towards self-rule.

The Seeds of Another Agitation

The first world war broke out in 1914. Punjabi soldiers, out of which Sikhs constituted a major part, fought on all the fronts of war in Europe, Turkey and Africa. Because of the

7. Khushwant Singh, op. cit., pp. 158-59.

Punjabi and particularly Sikh contribution to the war, both in man and material, it was not altogether surprising that they expected to be specially rewarded for their services. They were, consequently, pained to find that local officials and the police continued to treat them as common rustics instead of heroes. They heard for the first time the full story of the maltreatment of the Sikh emigrants by Canadian and American 'Whites' and of the Ghadr rising, of the infamous conspiracy trials -- the hangings, deportations, and the internment in their villages of nearly five thousand of their Ghadrite co-religionists. Their fellow villagers also told them of the persecutions by the authorities.⁸

Other factor added fuel to the smouldering fire :

(1) The summer monsoon failed; (2) The rabi harvest was extremely meagre; (3) The cost of living rose higher than ever before (Wheat was 47%, cloth 100%, sugar 68% and foreign cloth 175% above the prices of 1914); (4) Urban population was further hit by the imposition of a special income-tax; (5) An epidemic of influenza raged across the entire country taking a heavy toll of life. By the end of the year 1918, over 1,00,000 Punjabis had succumbed to 'flu.'⁹

An atmosphere of disillusionment and depression came to prevail in the province. To prevent any protest, Sir Michael

8. Bhagwant Singh, op. cit., p. 161.

9. Ibid., pp. 161-62.

O'Dwyer, Lt. Governor of Punjab, prohibited nationalist leaders from entering the province and took stern measures to repress agitation against the Rowlett bill intended to combat revolutionary crime. The drastic changes proposed in the bill were summed up in the slogan — 'na calli, na vakli, na appeal' (no argument, no lawyer, no appeal). Nevertheless, the bill became law in March, 1919.¹⁰

Protest rallies against this law were held in various cities of the Punjab. Dr. Saifuddin Kitchlew and Dr. Satya Paul were the main leaders of the movement in Amritsar. They were arrested and deported. On hearing the news of their deportation, a large crowd gathered and proceeded to the bungalow of the Deputy Commissioner to protest against the government's action. The police stopped the mob and trying to disperse them killed a half dozen people and wounded over thirty. This incident was followed by retaliation from the public.

At this General R.E.H. Dyer was sent to Amritsar. He proclaimed a state of emergency and declared all the meetings illegal. Meanwhile a meeting had already been announced at Jallianwala Bagh on Baisakhi day. On the day a large crowd gathered in the garden and the meeting began. General Dyer, on hearing the news of the meeting, marched towards the garden with a platoon of infantry. He occupied the only gate and

10. Ibid., p. 162.

without giving a warning to the people to disperse, opened fire. He killed hundreds of people and wounded thousands. He imposed a curfew on the city. When the news was conveyed to Sir Michael O'Dwyer, he fully approved of the action. Martial law was proclaimed in Amritsar and then extended to Lahore, Gujranwala, Lyallpur and Gujarat.¹¹

Martials, black-flag demonstrations took place at various places. Bridges, Churches, Post Offices etc. were burnt; telegraph and telephone lines were cut; railway line torn up; white-men assaulted. Army took over the administration. Under the military rule atrocities were committed on the people. Besides flogging, fines and imprisonment, nearly twelve hundred persons were killed during the martial law.¹²

Apart from creating hatred for the British among the masses, this situation along with some other reasons (indifference of the government to the soldiers who had won the British the world war, the Rowlatt Act and the Jallianwala Bagh tragedy), created almost final breaches between the British and the side. The normalcy, which was in fact an interval, was due to terror among the people in general and due to reconsideration of strategy by the leaders.

Religio-Political Movement

The uneasy calm prevailing after Jallianwala Bagh tragedy

11. Ibid., p. 163

12. Ibid., pp. 163-64.

They are meeting places, schools and rest-houses for travellers.¹³ Most of the historical gurdwaras¹⁴ were well endowed and not only had the revenues of large tracts of land attached to them but made enormous income from offerings. The gurdwaras were managed by the gahants, who were using the gurdwaras as their personal properties and were, moreover, performing anti-sikh traditions in the gurdwaras. Some of these gahants were men of loose character and carried on their debauchery within the temple precincts. Since the gahants were in possession and possession was nine points of law, cases lodged in courts dragged on for as many as twenty years without any results. The sikhs had to resort to direct action by ousting gahants and occupying gurdwaras in the name of a Committee.

For some fool's advice, the government decided to extend repression of political activity to this purely religious agitation. The government began to back the gahants against the sikh congregations. The years 1921-22 saw a series of tragedies. There was an attack on the sikhs at Tarn Taran resulting into two

13. Ibid., p. 194.

14. such as Nankana sahib, Panja sahib, Paonta sahib, Anandpur sahib, Nagur sahib, Hari Mandir, Randana sahib etc.

deaths. A month later, the gahart of Nankana sahib, the birth-place of Guru Nanak Dev, had more than one hundred and thirty sikh worshippers, who had gone there to take possession of the shrine, butchered by his hirelings. This led to a forceful movement. The government provided incentive by making a series of false moves and withdrawing under pressure of the agitation. Taking and then returning of the keys of the treasury of the Hari Mandir, Amritsar; banning and then allowing of the wearing of kirpan; Guru Ka Bagh agitation for rights; repression and surrender by the government were some such situations. The climax was the dethroning of Maharaja Ripudaman Singh of Nabha¹⁵, who had made no secret of his sympathies with the Akali movement for reform in sikh shrines. A batch of passive resisters who marched into the state to offer prayers for the deposed Maharaja were fired on by the police and forty sikhs were killed. The crowning piece of folly had yet to come. The SGPC and Shiromani Akali Dal were declared unlawful organisations. A very large number of Akalis were gaoled and put to trial.

The movement ended with the passing of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act (1925) and the release of the leaders. In the five years of agitation over 30,000 persons had gone to jails, nearly 400 had been killed and over 2,000 wounded, 700 village officials were dismissed and over rupees fifteen lakhs realised in fines and forfeitures. The political results were even more far-

15. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, p.162.

reaching. The British lost for ever the support and loyalty of the Sikh community.¹⁶ Had the government acted differently, the politics of the Punjab would have been less hostile to the British as in Punjab no movement can be a success unless the Akalis (or the Sikhs) participate in such a movement. Thus, this action on the part of the government prepared ground for a series of agitations.

The Final Phase (1927-47)

The period from 1927 to 1947 is important on two accounts on one hand it was a period of communal disunity in the country; on the other hand the British Government began surrendering some rights to the Indians with the finale in the form of independence. Before the finale, the province passed through various remarkable phenomena.

In the autumn of 1927, the British Government announced that a Commission under the chairmanship of Sir John Simon would be sent to India to review the working of the Government of India Act of 1919.¹⁷ Since no Indian was associated with the

16. Khushwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol. II), p. 61.

17. Under this Act the Sikhs were given 15 out of 93 seats of Punjab Legislative Council and 3 out of 145 of the Central Assembly and one out of 60 of Council of State. The Muslims were conceded a larger share in those states where they were in minority. All this could, however, not be of any use to the people of India as these bodies had no substantial force. Even the separate representation on the basis of nationhood could not bring national integration. The Government of India Act, 1919 was in fact a "beautiful big box with a small toy in it".

Commission, all the three political forces in the province, the Congress, the Muslim League and the Akali Dal, resolved to boycott its deliberations. Consequently, the Commission arrived and it was greeted with black flags and mobs shouting "Simon, go back" at various places including Lahore. Some of the Punjab leaders²⁰, however, did cooperate with the Commission but owing to general opposition from the masses, the Simon Commission had to return empty-handed.

While the Commission was at work, the Congress tried to present the British Government with a draft constitution agreeable to Indians. In February 1928, it called a conference of the members of all important Indian political parties "to consider and determine the principles of the constitution for India". Moti Lal Nehru became the Chairman with his son, Jawahar Lal, as secretary. The Sikhs were represented by Mangal Singh Gill. The Nehru Report recommended the abolition of separate electorate but agreed to reservation of seats for Muslims at the centre and in the provinces in which they were in a minority; the only other section for whom this concession was recommended were non-Muslims of N.W.F.P. Mangal Singh did not press for special rights for his community in his home state or at the centre.

The Nehru Report was impressive exercise in political

20. such as Gihandar Mayat Khan, Ujjal Singh and some others belonging to the Unionist Party and the Chief Khalsa Diwan cooperated the Simon Commission.

bargaining. But the Muslims took scant notice of it, and the Sikhs rejected it. As a result, the Nehru Report found honourable burial in the archives of the Congress.¹⁹

In May 1930, the Simon Commission made its report proposing a federal constitution with two houses of legislature at the centre and autonomy for the constituent provinces and the princely states. The recommendations were a step forward in regard to the provinces, where dyarchy was abolished and they became masters of their own homes. But the report did not recommend wider powers for central government.²⁰

In September 1930, the Viceroy invited sixty-six Indians at London to deliberate its recommendations in the Round Table Conference. In the conference the British Prime Minister outlined the Simon Commission Scheme for a federal India; the princes (except Maharaja Bhupinder Singh of Patiala) expressed their willingness to join federation. Biggest hurdle was again the communal representation. The Muslims were unwilling to accept joint electorate on any terms. Separate electorate won the day — not only for Muslims but also for Sikhs, Indian Christians, Anglo-Indians, and untouchables. The First Round Table Conference achieved more than either the British Government or the participants had anticipated.²¹

19. Khushwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs, p. 228.

20. Ibid., p. 228.

21. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, pp. 172-73.

The Second Round Table Conference met under adverse circumstances in politics of Britain. The coalition government with a majority of the Conservatives did not have a sympathetic attitude towards Indians. Moreover, the question of communal representation could not be solved by the delegates. In the absence of agreement among the Indian delegates, Ramsay MacDonald assumed the right to adjudicate of communal representation. Thus, the second Round Table Conference was a dismal failure.

On April 16, 1932, Ramsay MacDonald made his award on communal representation. Separate electorates were given to all the minorities. Muslims were given $33\frac{1}{2}$ per cent seats in the centre and 86 out of 175 in the Punjab. The Sikhs were given 33 out of 175 seats in the Punjab Assembly and 6 out of 250 in the centre.²²

According to the terms of this award Jinnah's 'Fourteen Points' were fully conceded. The proposed autonomy for the provinces envisaged a weak control set up which was precisely what the Muslims wanted. But the position of the Sikhs in the Punjab remained insecure. They opposed the communal award at a convention held at Lahore on July 24, 1932 and pledged themselves to resist its enforcement at all costs. But the Sikhs were numerically too few to have their protest fully heeded.²³

22. Ibid., p. 173.

23. Ibid., pp. 173-74.

The British parliament set its seal to the Communal Award by the passing the Government of India Act of 1935.

In the elections of 1936-37, the results were amazing. The Congress secured majority in seven of the eleven provinces. The Muslim League fared badly. In Punjab the Akali Dal and the Khalsa Nationalist Party shared the Sikh seats. The Sikhs rejected both, the Congress and the Unionists. Coalition of the Unionists and the Khalsa Nationalist Party formed government in Punjab. In United Province the Congress formed the government. The Hindu leaders refused to accept Muslim nominees of the League as ministers. This became the base for final breach between the Hindus and the Muslims.

The autonomy which the provinces enjoyed under the 1935 Act, with the Federal part of the constitution shelved, was an encouragement to Muslim chauvinism. In the provinces where they had a majority, the Muslims established their communal way gradually disengaging themselves from the concept of a United India. This rising tide of Muslim political fanaticism on the one hand and the Hindu indifference on the other hand was a matter of grave concern for the Sikhs.²⁶ The Sikhs' small efforts were, however, not of much avail to them and that could not help them to get out of their comm- like political situation.

In 1939, the second world war broke out. The Congress decided not to cooperate the British. On the other hand the

26. Ibid., p. 176.

Muslims extended full facilitations to the government. The Sikhs were indifferent to its fortunes because they believed like the rest of India that they had been dragged into the conflict without being consulted. Despite the exhortations of leaders like Master Tara Singh, who wanted to maintain the Sikh strength in the armed services, new recruits were hard to find.

The Muslims started to manoeuvre for political advantage. In 1940, at the annual conference of the Muslim League at Lahore, they declared themselves to be a separate nation²⁵ and demanded portions of India, where they were numerically in a majority, to be sliced off and constituted into a sovereign Muslim state. Jinnah said,

"Let the British, before they quit, make an award giving the Muslims their bit of the country, however small it might be, and they would live there, if necessary, on one meal a day".

The resolution of separate nationhood was a violent shock for the Sikhs. But the vehemence with which it was propagated by the League and the visible willingness of the British to yield ground to it made the Sikhs increasingly apprehensive of their own future.

The possibility of a Muslim state coming into being was more specifically recognized in the British war cabinet's formula presented to India by Sir Stafford Cripps in 1942. The

25. Ibid., p. 177.

Cripps proposal offered to give Indian provinces the right to choose whether they would join any union that might be formed at the end of the war or would stay out and form their own state, separately or in collaboration with other provinces similarly willing to stay out. Pakistan was, thus, clearly promised.²⁶

To avoid the state of Pakistan or at least to subtract major non-Muslim areas from the orbit of the proposed Muslim state, a scheme named 'Azad Punjab' was advocated with some earnestness. It aimed at consolidating the territories of the Punjab where Hindus and Sikhs predominated into a unit separate from Muslim Punjab. But all such proposals which were conceived as antidotes to Pakistan failed to halt the inexorable course of affairs leading to the division of the country.²⁷

At the end of the second world war, the Governor-General, Lord Wavell convened a conference of the representatives of various communities at Simla. The Simla conference discussed the British Government proposal for the establishment of an interim government representing Indian political parties. Though Muslims were 25 per cent of the Indian population, they were offered an equal proportion of seats with Hindus. The Governor-General invited the leaders to make nominations on behalf of

26. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, p. 179.

27. Ibid., p. 180.

their parties for the new government which was to replace his Executive Council. The Congress and the Akalis complied but Jinnah refused. He insisted on all Muslim members of the government being the nominees of the League and objected to any Muslim name coming from Congress. The conference was deadlocked on this point and, on July 14, 1945, Lord Wavell reluctantly announced the failure of his efforts. Master Tara Singh commenting on the results of the Conference said that it was "a failure of big men over a small thing".²⁸

In 1945, the Labour Government, which took office in Britain, in consequence of a national election, displacing the Conservative leader Winston Churchill, promised an "early realisation of self-government in India". It sent out a special mission of three cabinet ministers, Lord Pethick-Lawrence, Sir Stafford Cripps and A.V. Alexander, to negotiate with Indian leaders and settle the basis of an interim government and a constitution-making body for the country. Talks with various Indian parties dragged on for three months, but no arrangement acceptable to all of them could be evolved, owing, primarily, to the attitude of the Muslim League as well as the obstinacy of the Congress leaders. The Cabinet Mission thereupon worked out a plan of its own which was announced on May 16, 1946. Retaining the semblance of a central structure, the substance of the Muslim claim for autonomy was conceded. Three

28. Daily Akali Patrika, July 16, 1945.

separate zones were proposed, two of which were to consist of Muslim majority provinces. Each provincial group was to have its own constituent Assembly to draw up its constitution. A transition government wholly Indian in composition, except for the Governor-General, was to be set up immediately at Delhi.

The Cabinet Mission proposals contained hardly anything for the Sikhs beyond a rather solicitous reference to them. They were recognized as an important community like the Muslims and one of the three main Indian parties, yet they were not accorded the communal veto such as Muslims have been granted in determining their future constitution, nor were they guaranteed any protection against the Muslim majority rule. In the Constituent Assembly of Section B to which Punjab had been assigned, they were to have four seats, the Hindus 9 and Muslims 27. The Muslims outnumbering Sikhs and Hindus together, could have established in the region unfettered communal authority.²⁹ The scheme was subjected to bitter censure at a widely representative Sikh Assembly at Amritsar on June 9 and 10. Over a thousand Sikhs drawn from various organisations attended the meeting. Among them were Akalis, Congress Sikhs, Nirmalas, Namcharis, Nihangs etc. Strange it was that neither the Hindus of the Punjab nor the Centre showed any concern.

The proposals were cautiously received by the Congress as well as the Muslim League. Jinnah accepted it in hope that

29. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, p.162.

It would ultimately result in the establishment of an independent Muslim state. The Congress Party's willingness to work out the Cabinet Mission's proposals was more apparent than real. Despite ratification by its Working Committee, Jawaharlal, who had become its president, admitted that, although the Congress had agreed to the scheme of May 16, it was not likely to accept the grouping of the provinces. He was more anxious to get on with the drafting of a new constitution but was not prepared to join the interim government on the basis suggested. Jinnah offered to form an interim government and, on the Viceroy's unwillingness to invite him to do so, had the Muslim League rejected the May 16 plan in toto. The Muslim League called upon its members to express their resentment against the British Government by renouncing their titles and draw up a plan for 'direct action'. Direct action resulted in the outbreak of violence in different parts of the country.³⁰

This was the final declaration that the Muslims won't accept anything less than Pakistan and it was crystal clear that none would be able to prevent its creation. Now the Sikhs had only one way to choose; either to join Muslim zone or to accept partition. To accept partition meant to abandon their homes, lands, temples, in fact every material possession and flee to India. This proved true on August 14 and 15, 1947, when the Pakistan was created and India was freed by the British.

30. Khushwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol.II), p.26

After Partition

Aftermath of partition, the cross-migration of the population created a number of problems for the newly born states particularly in East Punjab and West Punjab. The refugees were concentrated in a very large number on both sides of the border. The sikhs and the Hindus had left, in West Punjab, extensive areas of agricultural land which they had owned.³¹ It was a big problem to settle the affairs of landed property alongwith the political administration of the country. The worst sufferers were the Punjabis and mostly the sikh population.

The partition and the freedom of the country brought a large number of problems. The communal harmony among the Hindus and the sikhs, infact, was not anywhere but in the words of the leaders only.

The province became ground for a forceful agitation which was in fact result of communal basis. The Congress manifesto for reorganisation of states on linguistic basis was done away in the case of a Punjabi speaking state on the pretext that was not acceptable to a large section of the Hindus. To fight this discriminatory act, the Akalis launched a forceful agitation in May 1955. About 12,000 Akalis courted arrest. The government found a via media to solve the situation. A 'Regional Formula' was announced. Under the Formula

31. Harbans Singh - The Heritage of the Sikhs, p.210.

the state was divided into two zones : Punjabi region and Hindi region. Both the regions were to have separate committees for development, language, cultural affairs etc. Further, every measure affecting a particular region would first be considered by members of that region before coming up for plenary consideration. The Sachar Formula (of language) was to continue, and in addition it was agreed that the official language of each region at the district level or below would be the language of the region.

In 1957, the Akalis and the Congress fought general elections as partners. Akalis captured all the predominantly Sikh constituencies.³² But this could not solve the problems. Regional Formula remained on papers only. It was never sincerely acted upon. The resentment among the Akalis went on increasing.

In 1960 the elections of the S.G.P.C. were held. The Akalis captured 136 out of 140 seats. The opposing groups i.e. the Congress and the Communists were badly routed out. The Akalis had fought the elections on the issue of formation of a Punjabi speaking state. From May 1960 to January 1961, the province was the centre for a forceful agitation. The arrests totalling more than 57,000 followed by two fasts by Sant Fateh Singh and Master Tara Singh.³³ Though the movement was not a success yet it was now clear that this demand won't be prolonged for a very long period.

32. Khushwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol.II), p.298.

33. Harjinder Singh Nilgcer - Shiromani Akali Dal, pp.258-59.

In 1965, the war between India and Pakistan broke out. The Punjabi, particularly Sikh soldiers fought with bravery and won the battle for the Indian Government. Owing to all this as well as expected future agitation on the issue of Punjabi suba, the government decided to carve out a state of Punjab on the basis of language.

The new state came into being on November 1, 1966. The elections to the first assembly of the new province gave a new turn to the politics of Punjab. The Akalis were able to capture power in the state. Gurnam Singh headed the first Akali Ministry which was succeeded by Lachman Singh Gill Ministry in November 1967. The day Gurnam Singh resigned from Chief Ministership was also the day of the death of Master Tara Singh. With Master Tara Singh's death, a lengthy chapter of Punjab's politics came to an end.

Thus, in the previous century, the political situation of the province underwent major changes. The freedom of the country from the British, the partition of the country on religious-national basis, concentration of Sikh population in a zone, an autonomous unit to control the historical shrines of the Sikhs, states on linguistic basis were the major changes from administrative and political point of view. Further, people became rights-conscious. More stress on political rights as well as democratic set-up in the country brought a change in the outlook of the people of the province.

A sense of being the rulers or at least a part of government (in the form of right to franchise) added to the confidence of the people. All this helped in ushering freedom on the one hand but degradation of level of political ethics on the other hand in the country.

RELIGIOUS SCENE

After the British annexation and the new settlement of the land of five rivers, Sikhism and the Sikh community came to face new problems and new challenges. Slowly but surely western system of education and administration, western ideas and patterns of behaviour, western thought and a new religion, Christianity, all borne on wings of the British, started bringing about new situations and new responses, not always uniform and unilinear in character. These responses, to begin with, took the shape and form of movements seeking new adjustments of the old traditional order with contemporary ideas, thoughts and patterns of behaviour. At times they were reformist in attitude and approach, at others revivalist in the main, and still at others reformist and revivalist at the same time.¹

Control of the Sikh shrines

secondly, after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh, the pajaris of the Gurdwaras had become negligent in their duties due to indifference of the later rulers and finally when the British annexed the Punjab, the defeated Khalsa lost its total vigilance for their sacred shrines. The Mahants and sachis, in charge of the various Gurdwaras, gave up all fear of the Sikh sangat and inheritary masters of the sacred shrines.

1. Niharranjan Ray - The Sikh Gurus and the Sikh society, p.115.

Gradually most of them gave up all symptom (inwardly as well as outwardly) of Sikhism excepting beard and the turban. They adopted all sorts of corruptions and vices that are liable to come in with unearned wealth. Idols were placed in various Gurdwaras and their worship was becoming common, contrary to the principles advocated by Sikh religion.²

Challenge of the Arya Samaj

The third challenge to the Sikh religion was that of the Arya Samajists.³ Dayanand and the other Arya Samaj leaders' utterance about Guru Nanak and the Sikh religion were an eye-opener for the Sikhs. The Sikh leaders had to be more vigilant about the activities of the Arya Samaj because some Sikh leaders had been associated with the founding and strengthening of the Arya Samaj movement in the Punjab.

2. Ruchi Ram Sahni - Struggle for Reform in the Sikh Shrines, p.6.

3. Arya Samaj was founded by Mul Shankar, better known as (Swami) Dayanand (d. 1883) in Bombay in 1875, but the headquarters of the Samaj shifted to Lahore in 1877. The Arya Samaj was meant to be essentially a Hindu organisation. Yet it was open to everyone, regardless of caste, colour or nationality. The Arya Samaj, to begin with, however, stood in favourable position with the Sikhs. Some of the Sikhs, on the suggestion of Sardar Bhagat Singh, Sub-Engineer of Kanpur, had actually welcomed Swami Dayanand to the Punjab for his campaign against idol worship and had joined the Arya Samaj. Dr. Ganda Singh (Bhai Vir Singh and His Times, p.23) mentions the names of some leading Sikhs in this connection e.g. Bikrama Singh and Suchet Singh of Jullundur, Sardar Atter Singh and Kirpal Singh of Rawalpindi, Sardar Sant Singh, Ishar Singh, Haseore Singh, Lehna Singh and Mohan Singh of Gujarkhan, Sardar Bhagwan Singh of Multan, Sardar Ranjit Singh of Kohat etc. The part played by Sikhs for the success of the Mission of Swami Dayanand has been acknowledged by Lala Lajpat Rai (a prominent Arya Samajist) in his 'Dayananda Charitra', Ch. XI, p.305.

Bhai Jawahar Singh⁴, an enthusiastic sikh, was for several years the secretary of the Arya samaj, Lahore. On November 25, 1888, however, the indiscreet and rash speeches of some of the Arya leaders like Pandit Gurudutt, Lakh Ram Arya Musafir, Murlidar and others with insulting references to the sikh Gurus, the sikh scriptures and the sikhs in general made the sikh associates to reconsider their relationship with the movement.

The sikhs had not, evidently, so far taken a serious note of Dayananda's book 'satyarth prakash'. This book made criticism not only of sikhism⁵ but also of sanatan Hinduism, vaishnavism, Kabir-panth, Raoulism, Buddhism, Jainism, Christianity and Islam.

Thus publicly insulted and ridiculed, the sikh leaders were left with only alternative of finally breaking with the Arya samaj. Even some Hindu leaders who felt hurt by these unwarranted attacks of the Arya samajist leaders, left the organization for good. Before the final break an attempt was made for modifying the behaviour of the fanatic Arya samajists.

4. Bhai Jawahar Singh, later, spearheaded the Singh Sabha movement.
5. Swami Dayananda has in many places used unnecessarily harsh language against other religions and their founders and followers. This naturally created a sort of bitterness against the Arya samaj and led to tension not only between the Muslims and the Arya samajists, resulting later on in the murders of Pandit Lakh Ram Arya Musafir (March 6, 1887) and Swami Shirdhanand (last week of December 1926), but also between the Sanatanist Hindus and some genuine Arya samajists.

In this connection a joint protest meeting of Hindus, Sikhs and a number of genuine Arya samajists was held on December 2, 1896, in the Baoli Sahib, Lahore, under the presidency of Lala Nand Gopal. This, however, could not change the attitude of the Arya samajists. As a result a very large number of Sikh leaders left the samaj.

A yet more unfortunate thing was the shaving of the beards and heads of about thirty rahtia Sikhs in public on Sunday, the 3rd of June 1900, in the Vachnowali Arya samaj at Lahore, in the presence of hundreds of people who had assembled there to see the performance. The Sikhs of Lahore were all fire with rage at the insult done to their feelings in such a public fashion. The great mass of the Hindu community was rudely shocked and we heard scores of Hindus, young and old, violently cursing the men who had dared insult the race who had protected their mothers and daughters from the nameless atrocities at the cost of their own lives and those of their nearest and dearest in this world.⁶

This exasperated the Sikh workers in the samaj who had been lulled into the belief that the mission of Nayanand was identically the same as that of the Sikh Gurus.⁷

Challenge of Christianity

Next to the Arya samaj's attacks on the Sikh Gurus and

6. Bhagat Lakshman Singh - Autobiography, pp. 161-66, quotes 'The Khalsa', June 6, 1900.

7. W. Owen Cole - The Sikhs, p. 155.

Sikhism, was the challenge of Christianity. The germs of this challenge can be traced in 1834, when the Christian Mission was established at Ludhiana. With the abrogation of the Sikh rule in 1849, the mission extended its work to Lahore, Amritsar, the headquarters of the Sikh religion, became another important seat of church enterprise. In the wake of the mission, came a vernacular school, a high school, a school for girls and a midwifery hospital. The evangelizing work was rewarded with the conversion of men like Kesar Singh (a Sikh Granthi), Inam-ud-Din (a Muslim Maulvi) and Rullia Ram (of a Hindu Khatri family) in Amritsar, who had attended the Mission school and passed the Calcutta entrance examination.⁸

In 1853, Maharaja Duleep Singh, the last Sikh ruler of the Punjab, who had come under the British tutelage at the tender age of eight accepted the Christian faith — a conversion hailed as "the first instance of accession of an Indian prince to the commission of the church".⁹ Duleep Singh made liberal donations out of his allowance for Christian charity and the maintenance of mission school. The Sikh Raja of Kapurthala invited the Ludhiana mission to set up a station in his capital and provided funds for its maintenance. A few years later Gospel was being preached in a Bunge in the neighbourhood of

8. Harbans Singh - Origin of the Singh Sabha (Punjab, Past and Present, Vol.II-1, April, 1973), pp.26-27.

9. Johnston Waigh - A Memorial to the Patetgarh Mission, p.113, Quoted by Prof. Harbans Singh 'Origin of the Singh Sabha', p.28.

the Golden Temple.¹⁰

In the beginning of 1873, four Sikh pupils of the Amritsar Mission school proclaimed their intention of renouncing their faith in favour of Christianity. This shocked Sikh feeling. Added to this was a series of carping lectures in Amritsar on the Sikh faith of the narration of Guru Nanak Dev's life in deliberately garbled detail by Sharda Ram Phillauri who had been engaged by the British to write a history of their faith :

The Christian faith was new to the land, alien in its origin and belonged to the Foreigners who had robbed them of their freedom and reduced them to political serfs. Moreover the Christian scriptures were written in a language not known to the people and their too literal translation in unfamiliar diction and idiom could not appeal to their mind fed on simple and homely Punjabi. The rate of conversion to Christianity was never alarming but it was a pointer to the weakening loyalty of the Sikhs to the tradition of their faith.¹¹ Some incidents were a warning to the Sikh leadership to think in serious tones the future implications of the slow and indirectly affecting activities of the Christian missionaries under the patronage of British Government.

The United Presbyterian Mission's work at Gialkot became the mass movement. By 1900 more than half of the low-caste

10. Harbans Singh - Origin of the Singh Sabha, p.28.

11. Harbans Singh - The Age of Bhai Vir Singh, p.48.

people of the sialkot district had been converted, and by 1915 all but a few hundred low-castes professed the Christian faith.¹²

The sikh religion was under the planned attack of not only the Christians and the Arya samaj but also the Ahmadiyas, under the leadership of Mirza Ghulam Ahmad, otherwise known as Qadianis. This section was also vocal against the sikh Gurus and sikh tenets. The Ahmadiyas of Qadian, however, could practically make no success in attracting the sikhs to their faith owing to the old deep-rooted prejudices against the Muslims, who in in the seventeenth and the eighteenth centuries had tried to suppress the sikh movement, executed its leaders and massacred the sikhs indiscriminately in their thousands during the days of Abdus-samad Khan, Zakariya Khan, Yahya Khan and Mir Mannu.¹³

The Birth of the Singh Sabha

All these causes together provoked the sikh leadership to consider the consequences of the regularly worsening situation of the sikh religion. To consider these matters some prominent sikhs, including Thekur Singh Sandhawalia, Baba Khem Singh Bedi (a descendant of Guru Nanak Dev) and Kanwar Bikram Singh of Kapurthala, convened a meeting in Amritsar in 1873.¹⁴ The meeting decided to form an association called "Singh Sabha".

12. J. Warkam Pickett - The Mass Movement, p.45.

13. Dr. Ganda Singh - Bhai Vir Singh, p.23.

14. Jagjit Singh - Singh Sabha Lehar, pp.11-13.

The aims and objectives passed by the first meeting 34
were : (i) to restore sikhism to its pristine purity; (ii) to edit and publish historical and religious books; (iii) to propagate current knowledge, using punjabi as the medium and to start magazines and newspapers in punjabi; (iv) to reform and bring back into the sikh fold the apostates; and (v) to interest the highly placed Englishmen, in and ensure their association, with, the educational programme of sikhs.

The singh sabha gained quick support of the literate sections of the community and many sikh scholars and leaders volunteered to join its ranks. A vigorous campaign was set afoot. Two of its major thrusts were the depreciation of un-sikh customs and social evils and the encouragement of Western education. Progressive concern was as pronounced as the revivalist impulse. As a result the singh sabha initially met with strong opposition in some of the villages. But this opposition could hold no longer and after a short period this movement became a mass movement. One could see a regiment of retired soldiers in the form of a choir of reciters, going round the villages and singing the sacred hymns at singh sabha congregations.

Now the movement picked up momentum and rocked the punjab from one end to the other. By the end of 1890, two major singh sabhas (Amritsar and Lahore) were working enthusiastically. The singh sabha movement played an important

role in stopping conversions to other religions and ushered an era of religious and social reforms in the history of the sikh nation. Prominent sikh writers, like Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha, Giani Ditt Singh, Mohan Singh Vaid, Master Tara Singh, Nanak Singh, Teja Singh, Ganda Singh etc. are mainly the product of the Singh Sabha movement.

With the strength of the organization, arose the greed for offices of the sabhas, jealousy, groupism leading to un-sikh and anti-sikh activities by the members of the rival-turned two Singh Sabhas i.e. Amritsar and Lahore, along with other units of the Singh Sabhas.

Chief Khalsa Diwan

Some Sikh leaders tried to unify the various units in order to concentrate their energies and to guide and control their activities. A Diwan was held on October 30, 1920 at Amritsar which was attended by a large number of Singh Sabhas. It decided to form a central organization of all the Singh Sabhas under the name of 'Chief Khalsa Diwan'. The aims and the objectives of the Diwan were decided as follows:

- (a) The uplift of the Sikhs in all spheres, spiritual, social, moral and economic.
- (b) The propagation of the Guru's divine word and carrying on of His teachings to the farthest hamlet and spread of the fragrance of 'Nam' all around.
- (c) The removal of illiteracy and spread of education amongst all irrespective of caste and creed.

- (d) The protection of the political rights of the sikhs and redress of their grievances through constitutional means.

The Chief Khalsa Diwan did commendable work in the field of religion. The spread of education through the agencies of Chief Khalsa Diwan furthered the cause of Sikh religion.

The Diwan had several departments of which the major departments were - The Khalsa Tract Society, The Department for the encouragement of the Punjabi language as the language of the province, and the Sikh Educational Conference. These departments achieved a wonderful measure of success during the comparatively short period of about fifteen years when the organization remained in full swing of its vigorous life and work. The Khalsa Tract Society published a large number of books and tracts. These were written in simple and elegant Punjabi. The Diwan accomplished another uphill task of getting approval for the appointment of Punjabi-knowing people in the Postal and Railway Departments. The Railway authorities agreed to print the names of railway stations on the tickets and on the sign boards in the Punjabi language, while the Post Offices appointed Punjabi knowing clerks on their staff who could read the names and addresses on the envelopes written in the Punjabi language.

Sikh Educational Conference

Further in 1908, the Diwan started the educational movement among the Sikhs. Following the example set sometimes

earlier by the Aligarh school of Muslim reformers, the Diwan began to hold an educational conference which met annually at one of the bigger towns for the discussion of educational topics with special reference to the needs and requirements of their own community.

The Diwan remained active as well as the only representative organisation of the Sikhs upto 1920, when the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (formed on November 15, 1920) and Shiromani Akali Dal (formed on December 14, 1920) came into being. In fact the decline of Chief Khalsa Diwan had begun in 1914, when the Diwan failed to satisfy the Sikhs on the issue of the demolition of a portion of the walls of the Gurdwara Rakab Ganj. Another factor of the Diwan's downfall was its passive and compromise-making policy. The Diwan was, then, satirically called "The resolution - passing organisation", but the contribution of Chief Khalsa Diwan in re-generating the religious fervour among the Sikhs is still remarkable.

State of the Gurdwaras

Having united the Sikh masses on a platform, now it was the right time to begin the task of Gurdwara reform. The state of the affairs of the Sikh Gurdwaras was miserable. Anti-Sikh and un-Sikh traditions which were in practice in the Gurdwaras caused much concern. The gobindis (managers) of the

Gurdwaras were using these institutions as if these were simply their personal properties. The shrines had become dens of criminal activities. The character of a large number of the priests was no different from that of the Abbots and monks whom Henry VIII had to turn out from medieval monasteries.¹⁵ The life in Sikh temples was often of as scandalous a type as that of the English monasteries before the Reformation. The priests drank and gambled like publicans; they robbed and bullied the pilgrims like highwaymen and dishonoured women and children like rogues of the worst type.

These priests were under the protection of the government. When people agitated against such persons, the government would not listen; it would not remove these 'monsters of evil' from their immoral occupation. The Sikhs claimed that the Gurdwaras were public property. On the other hand the government regarded the mahants as legal owners of Gurdwaras and was not prepared to remove them.¹⁶

Added to this situation was the act of priests of the Gurdwaras to honour General Dyer who had perpetrated at Amritsar one of the greatest atrocities. The Sikhs were already agitated over the criminal life of the priests. The episode added fuel to fire. The result was the Akali movement for the reform in

15. Sardul Singh Khosla - The Akali Movement (Punjab, Past and Present, April, 1973), p.121.

16. Ibid., p.122.

sikh shrines.

Birth of the Akali Dal

In the summer of 1920, Akalis carrying large kirpans and wearing dark-blue or black turbans first made their appearance in public. Subsequently their number increased. The Gurdwara reform movement took shape in summer and autumn of 1920, the first disputed shrines being the Chonala sahib (Lahore) and Baba Ki Ber (Sialkot). It was followed by the appeal to enrol members for the shahidi-jatha (the martyrs' band) which would construct the wall of Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Delhi (which the British Government had demolished in order to construct a road).¹⁷ A large number of Sikhs volunteered their names. This issue was, however, solved through the good offices of Maharaja Ripduman Singh (of Nabha).

In October 1920, the Sikhs occupied Gurdwara Ber sahib (Sialkot), Harimandir and the Akal Takht (Amritsar). On November 15, 1920 a committee called Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (S.G.P.C.) was formed to manage the affairs of the Sikh shrines. The charge of the Harimandir and the Akal Takht along with some other Gurdwaras was given to the S.G.P.C.

17. V.W. Smith - The Akali Dal and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee 1921-22 - A Confidential Memorandum (Punjab, Past and Present), Vol.I, Pt.II, October 1967, pp.279-80.

The sikhs did not stop with their initial victories. They were not cowed down by the harmless demonstrations which the government made to inspire fear in their hearts. Gurdwara after Gurdwara was occupied by moral pressure, and Mahants had to bow before the huge volume of public opinion. Government could not tolerate this for long. It had no mind to allow the nationalist sikhs to occupy the Gurdwaras which were in the hands of loyal and unscrupulous mahants.

Under official inspiration the priests were organised and pitted against the reformers. The feelings of the Hindus and the Muslims were also exploited against the sikhs. But the Government could not get success in wooing the Hindus and the Muslims as they cared not to act against the sikhs in public fashion. Only the mahants gave open battle to the sikhs, that even for their strictly personal reasons. The priests of Tarn Taran and Nanana sahib openly used violence against the unarmed, non-violent, peacefully demonstrating Akalis and more than one hundred sikhs were brutally murdered by the mahants of Nanana sahib in open day light within an hour's run from Lahore, the seat of the Punjab Government.

This, however, could not teach the government a lesson and the sikhs had to make sacrifices at Guru Ka Bagh, Jaito, Panja sahib etc. During the whole struggle of the Gurdwara reform as many as thirty thousand men had to go to jail; about five hundred of them died or were otherwise killed or murdered;

finer and penalties to the extent of fifteen lacs were also imposed on the sikhs during those days. But these figures do not tell the full story of the sikh sufferings. For this, one has to study the condition of the sikh prisoners in jails, or one has to see how the unprotected sikh children and women had to suffer when protectors of the family were removed from them.

During the Gurdwara reform movement, the sikhs had to fight another battle for the right of carrying Kirpan (sword) with them, which is a must for a Amritdhari (baptized) sikh. The whole phase of the sikh struggle ended with the permission to carry Kirpan and with the passing of "the Gurdwara Act - 1925", under which the sikh demand of the control of the historical gurdwaras was conceded.

This agitation produced two major results. The first was the Gurdwara reform and the second was boosting the morale of the followers of Sikhism. The right to free worship and to manage one's own shrines according to the discipline of the religion was conceded first of all to the sikhs by the British Government. This institution brought the sikhs on one platform as a united force, it created a 'state within a state', a semi-sovereignty, but it also brought groupism, greed for power, corruption etc. which, instead of improving the lot of the Gurdwaras in particular and the sikh religion in general, gave a great set back to the various institutions of the sikh religion.

The sikhs and the Army

The triumph of the sikhs in their agitation resulted into strained relations between the sikhs and the Government and the British confidence in the devotion and loyalty was apparently shaken. It will be noted that while formerly in the British Indian Army, out of 47 per cent of the Punjab, N.W.F.P., and Kashmir quota, the sikhs represented 19.2 per cent in 1930 their strength was reduced to 13.58 per cent. Government's confidence then shifted on the Mussalmans who had lost it in consequences of the Mutiny. The result had been that whereas the Mussalmans in 1914 were only 11.1 per cent, in 1930 they rose to 22.2 per cent.¹⁸

On the declaration of the second world war this position, however, changed. The sikh leaders as well as sikh Rajas established a Khalsa Defence League and started a vigorous propaganda for sikh recruitment to the Army. The Government welcomed this move and encouraged the sikhs by nominating a sikh on the bench of Lahore High Court and one in the Executive Council of the Viceroy.¹⁹

Pakistan and Khalistan

The second world war came to an end in 1945. During

18. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar - Thoughts on Pakistan, p.75, Cited by G.C. Narang - Transformation of Sikhism, p.197.

19. G.C. Narang - Transformation of Sikhism, p.197.

this period the Muslims had raised the demand for a separate Muslim state called 'Pakistan'. The reasons of this demand were not only political but also communal. The attacks on Islam by the Arya samaj, their campaigns for shuddhi (re-conversion of the Muslims), the Hindu clamour for ban on cow-slaughter, Gandhi's resolve to fast unto death to save the "erring daughter of Moti Lal Nehru" from marrying a Muslim, Tilak making ganapati puja etc. as part of the nationalist ritual, hearkening back to Hindu Raj, particularly anti-Muslim past, as under shivaji, hurt and alienated the Muslim sentiments from the Hindus. Lala Lajpat Rai in his last days talked of separating Hindu areas from the Muslim ones, thus preceding Mr. Jinnah by many years. Gandhi himself identified swarajya with Ram Rajya. Though some of the Muslims joined the Congress party²⁰ but the general Muslim sentiment stood apart and away from the nationalist cause. By the end of the Second World War, the creation of Pakistan had become a certainty.

During this period, the Sikhs also demanded a separate state on communal basis. This demand was backed by a large number of Sikhs, but it was ridiculous to say that they were serious for the creation of a sovereign Sikh state on the basis of religion. The Sikh leaders were neither certain

20. Such Muslims were looked at with disrespect by most of the Muslim leaders. Jinnah used to call a Muslim Congressman, Maulana Asad, as 'showboy of Congress'.

about their demand nor were united. Moreover, they demanded the creation of the Sikh state only in the case of the creation of a Muslim state on the basis of religion. Thus, it was not a demand but a threat to counter the demand for Pakistan. Owing to all these reasons the Sikhs could not get a separate state but the creation of Pakistan and transfer of population on the basis of religion gave the Sikhs an area where they could claim majority on the basis of population. After partition of India on August 15, 1947, the Sikhs were in a comfortable majority in most of the Punjabi speaking region of Punjab. This situation, though a result of non-seriousness of the Sikh leaders for the demand of a Sikh state, gave the Sikhs the benefit of becoming a united force.

Partition of India and its impact on the Sikhs

The partition had left lots of the Sikhs homeless, emotionally broken, economically ruined and virtually in a state of utter defeat. With this the Sikhs, who had immigrated from the areas of the new state i.e. Pakistan, got a strange gift from the Governor of Indian Punjab. It was an ordinance which shocked the already anguished Sikh nation. The ordinance declared :

"The Sikhs as a community are a lawless people and are a menace to the law abiding Hindus of the province...".

The reaction of the Sikhs to this circular was both vocal and

calm. The sikhs, in their hearts, began doubting the intentions of the majority community. Some ironical comments regarding the need of preserving sikh religion by the Hindu leaders were seriously pondered over the religious leaders of the sikhs. This was the beginning of a new chapter in the history of relations between the Hindus and the sikhs on the one hand and politics of the sikhs on the other hand.

The decision of the Indian Government that the privileges allowed to the Hindu schedule castes shall not be available to the sikh scheduled castes was another jolt to the sikhs. A timely agitation by Master Tara Singh stopped the expected conversion of lakhs of scheduled caste sikhs to the fold of Hinduism.

The linking of the Punjabi language and the Gurmukhi script with the sikh religion, leading to discrimination against them was another serious situation for the sikhs. Agitation for the formation of a Punjab state on linguistic basis continued with intervals till 1966.

Discrimination against the sikhs in military services, in civilian jobs, on religious bias, in cultural affairs, regarding sikh traditions, heroes and history etc, affected the sikhs' mind to a large extent. This, the sikhs presented as evidence of discrimination with them as well as a threat to their separate identity and entity. It was corroborated by rewards given to apostate sikhs. This added to the already fast-deteriorating state of the sikh religion.

In this calamitous situation, some Sikh leaders, under the stewardship of Master Tara Singh, fought for the revival of the lost glory of the Sikhs as well as for preservation and defence of the religious and political rights of the Sikhs. The first part of this struggle lasted for nineteen years. During this struggle a large number of Sikhs laid down their lives, thousands courted arrests and properties worth many lakhs were confiscated by the government.

This long struggle and suffering bore fruit in the form of Punjab state. The formation of state on linguistic basis was a partial success. With this partial success some Sikh leaders felt that the major danger to the identity of the Sikhs was once over. Soon these misconceptions proved untrue. Another struggle seemed ahead.

Within one year of the formation of the Punjab speaking state, Master Tara Singh died on November 22, 1967. With this the religious scene of the Punjab underwent a major change.

SOCIAL SCENE

At the time of Master Tara Singh's birth (1885), the Punjab was in the process of fermentation of new ideas. The social and cultural milieu was fast changing. Only thirtyfive years had gone by since the fall of the Sikh Empire. The Punjab was the last major territory in India to become part of the British dominions. With the advent of the British the barriers broke down and the Punjab came within the orbit of the new consciousness arising in the country as a result of introduction of Western education. One of the important consequences of the interaction of Western and Punjabi cultures was the development of indigenous language and literature. The stimulus for this, no doubt, came from the work of Christian missionaries, English schools and colleges and Orientalists who studied and discovered the beauty and richness of Indian thought and learning.

Educational conditions

Before the annexation of the Punjab to the British India in 1849, the education imparted in the schools was more religious than secular in character, and there was not a single institution for higher learning.¹ The first government school was opened at Amritsar in 1849 and the Department of Public Instruction was established in 1856 as a result of the recommenda-

1. Selections from Educational Records (1840-1859) Part II (1922), pp. 278-79.

tions of the Wood's Educational despatch-1854.² Consequently, both elementary and higher education began to make rapid progress in the Punjab. By 1901, there were 2383 primary schools, 351 secondary schools and 15 colleges in the province besides a University at Lahore. There were also 3950 private schools of the old type imparting religious instruction and literacy mainly. In 1906, the government started the scheme of free education. In 1919, the Punjab Primary Education Act, embodied the principle of compulsory education for boys. Education became accessible to the common people and moreover the medium of instruction was the mother tongue upto primary level.

In the Punjab, private enterprise played a very significant role in the spread of education among women. The various socio-religious organisations like the Chief Khalsa Diwan, the Arya Samaj, the Muslim League, the Rev Samaj and even the S.G.P.C., made strenuous efforts in this direction. Even the Christian missionary ladies and their schools rendered yeoman's service by conducting classes at suitable centres for the benefit of the Muslim ladies who observed purdah.³

The spread of education in Punjab ushered an atmosphere of the meeting of East and West. To quote Darling, "with the

2. R.R. Sethi and J.L. Mehta - A History of Punjab University, Chandigarh (1947-57), pp. 1-2.

3. Report on the Progress of Education in the Punjab (1918-19), p.2.

spread of education and under the influence of Western culture and civilization, the old superstition and prejudices were losing their force as well as appeal. The change was most pronounced in the central Punjab and the canal colonies where economic progress was considerable⁴. It gave birth to new artistic, literary and social ideas. The study of Western literature, history and social sciences made the Indian intellectuals and leaders think of political freedom. The study of struggle of various nations for independence led Indians to think of the methods of bringing an end to their slavery. The Britishers had never thought that the education and its spread would in any way lead to awakening of the Indians regarding their political rights and the freedom of their country.

The printing press at Ludhiana and later on in various other parts of the Punjab gave birth to Punjabi journalism as well as to the publication of the Punjabi literature in bulk. Now books and newspapers became accessible to common man. With the opening of public libraries and reading rooms the number of the readers rapidly increased. The problem of communication was no more. The net result was an easy access of the masses with each other, an immediate knowledge of the current affairs of the province, the country and the world, an up-to-date information of the movements in various fields particularly

4. Darling - Rusticus (1929), p.371.

social, religious, political and economical. It ushered an era of general awakening in the country.

Economic conditions

Economically, the Punjab saw great changes during this period. Previously also, it had great assets in its climate, its soil and its people; but these alone failed to bring either wealth or welfare until on the initiative of the British communication and irrigation which stimulated production, increased trade and brought into being a wealthy and influential, commercial and professional class which previously had no existence. By the end of the nineteenth century, the Punjab had made considerable progress in agriculture and trade and commerce and had developed means of communication and constructed great works of irrigation.

The Punjab Government took some important measures under the land reform in the province. Big canal irrigation works were constructed which converted the once treeless, waterless wasteland into remodelled and extended; new canals were excavated and several, which had been dug by private agencies, were taken over by the government at their owner's request.⁵ Some leases of government waste land were also encouraged to dig private

5. Report of Indian Irrigation Commission, Part II, p.28.

canals to irrigate their grants and a great deal was done to extend cultivation in this manner.

The problem of irrigation was solved to some extent but there were a much more number of problems which needed reform. Proper manurial treatment of the soil and careful conservation of manure was much neglected. Farmyard manure of the principal manure used in the Province and village refuse was also applied, if and when available.⁶ The agricultural implements were cheap, light and portable, easy to make and repair. Department of Agriculture had, however, introduced furrow-turning ploughs, sugar cane crushers, fodder cutters, harrows, hoes, small pumping machinery and water-lifts.⁷

Another major problem was the sub-division and fragmentation of land. To solve it the scheme of consolidation of holdings was preached by way of formation of cooperative societies and after independence of the country by way of law.

The financial conditions of the peasants were never certain. They had to depend upon various natural consequences. This usually compelled them to borrow loans from the money-lenders, who, on non-payment of the loans, used to get the land of the peasants attached. These money-lenders did not cultivate

6. Indian sugar Committee, 1920, p.66.

7. Recommendations of Royal Commission on Agriculture I, pp. 26-27.

land themselves, but let it out on rent to their former debtors. This problem was partly solved by the Punjab Land Alienation Act, 1901, which opened a new era in the economic history of the province. Under this Act, non-agriculturist classes were not allowed to buy land from a member of an agricultural tribe, nor to take it in mortgage for more than twenty years. The Act solved problems of one section of farmers but it gave birth to racial separation. To quote Khushwant Singh⁸, "The Act sowed the seeds of racial separation. The question as to who was or was not an agriculturist was not decided by actual occupation but by caste. Thus all Jats, Rajputs and members of scheduled castes were declared agriculturists; while all Aroras, Khatri and Banias were classed as non-agriculturists. The Act did not provide for an exception in the case of Jat money-lender or Arora agriculturist. In certain districts Brahmins were declared agriculturists, in others, non-agriculturists. Cases of individual hardships were not so serious as the breaking up of population on a new racial basis. The community mostly affected were the Sikhs. The act served the rift between Jat Sikh farmer and non-Jat Sikh farmer and put them on opposing camps. As a result, while a Jat Sikh was drawn closer to the Jat Muslim, and the Jat Hindu, the Khatri and the Arora Sikhs drew closer to the Khatri and Arora Hindus.

Economic and political differences ultimately affected social life as well. Sikh Jats preferred to marry into Hindu

8. Khushwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol. II), pp. 153-56.

Jat families rather than into non-Jat Sikh families. And Sikh Aroras and Khatrias preferred to inter-marry with corresponding Hindu castes rather than with Jat Sikhs. Finally, there was the third racial group among the Sikhs - the untouchables. Sikh untouchables found that they had more in common with Hindu untouchables than with the high caste Sikhs. They sought statutory privileges according to scheduled castes. In short, with the Lan Alienation Act, race came to matter more than religion. The Sikh community was split into three racial divisions - the Jats, the non-Jats and the untouchables.⁹

The Punjab of this period could hardly be said to have reached manufacturing stage but it had always possessed cottage industries. The chief handicrafts of the province were those of the weaver, the shoemaker, the carpenter and the potter. From 1923 onwards, a new era of industrial development began in the province as a result of Reform Act of 1919 and specially after the abandonment of the policy of *laissez-faire*.⁹

At first the condition of the workers in the industries was miserable. They had to work for long hours, at unattractive wages, with insecure position and with dangerous machinery. slowly many problems of the workers were solved but still their standard of living could not get improved.¹⁰

9. Chitra, V.R. - Cottage Industries of India, 1948, pp.35-36.

10. Report of Royal Commission on Labour, 1931, pp.59-60.

The state of transport in Punjab was better than various provinces of India. Tonga (two wheeler pulled by horse) was the chief means of transport. Motor vehicles and train had also been introduced. After partition of India, the train and the bus service had improved very much. The addition of cars and scooters in cities was a common phenomenon after 1960.¹¹

A large number of roads was that of metalled roads, the major being G.T.Road. Major roads linking almost all the districts and some Tehsil level towns were also metalled roads. The number of unmetalled roads was very high and such roads served links between the interiors of the rural tracts and the metalled roads.¹² The problems of metalled road was, however, solved after the Akalis came into power after 1967.

The population of the province was mainly rural. There were more than fifty thousand villages in 1941 and the number of the towns was 283 and of which 7 towns had a population over one lakh each.¹³ By 1967 the number of big towns had increased to ten (besides partition of India, which transferred four such towns to Pakistan). The rural population has varied from 89% (in 1901) to 79% (in 1971). The main profession of the people is agriculture, other professions being money-lending, hotels and restaurants.

11. Blunt - Some Social and Economic Problems, p.28.

12. Punjab Government - Land of the Five Rivers, p.157.

13. Census 1941, VI, pp.2-3.

in textile, wood, furniture, building material, pottery etc.; industry, transport, army and other government services, domestic service etc. A large number of male population has gone abroad to earn livelihood for their families, mainly as labourers. Most of the migrants belonged to Rooba tract.

The profession adopted by the women are mainly teaching, cooking, cleaning and scavenging, agriculture labour, spinning, sewing and mending of cloths. Women outnumber males in grain parching, midwifery, scavenging etc. Prostitution among women was also prevalent, though their number was very small and that even done secretly since the ban on prostitution.

Cultural Conditions

Village as a Community

The first important feature of the old economic order was the self-sufficient village as unit. But with the increase in the means of transportation, trade and industry, the self-sufficient character of the village was destroyed and it also broke up the village community.¹⁴

Joint - Family System

The next step was the disintegration of joint-family system. The growth of individualism under the impact of western

14. Morrison, Thomas - Economic Transition of India, p.34.

culture brought a set back to joint-family system in the province.

Caste System

Although the educational atmosphere brought some welcome changes in the outlook of the people, yet it could not bring an end to the caste system which was prevalent in every nook and corner of the province. Though moribund, it still held sway in practically unabated strength. It was still the corner-stone of the social super-structure and the hold of caste prejudice on the minds of the people was so strong that it even affected religions like the Muslims, the Sikhs and the Indian Christians, whose religions in their doctrinal basis, emphasized the principle of complete equality among their followers. Among the Muslims, the tribes of foreign descent claimed higher social status than those of the converts from the Hindus. There were Muslim Rajputs, Muslim Jats and Muslim Ahirs, all converts from Hinduism, who retained their identity and were strictly endogenous. The Muslims, the Muslim counterpart of the Hindu chuhra were held in disdain. Similarly, the Masbi Sikhs from the lowest classes were not regarded as equal to rank by Jat-Sikhs and Arora-Sikhs.¹⁵

Customs

Marriages

Marriage constituted the most engrossing event of family

15. Clarke, John - The Sikhs (1946), pp. 237-38, also speech of Chaudhry Zafarullah Khan in Punjab Legislative Assembly debates, on October 19, 1929 (see proceedings).

life and it formed a subject of prolonged preparation. The sum of money spent on a marriage was usually extravagant and often involved the bride's father into debt. The expenses incurred by bridegroom's family were also heavy enough. Wine, dances and fire-works constituted the important items of entertainment. The members of the marriage party had to be treated in a right royal manner.¹⁶

In choice of husbands the girls had no say. Even the boys were, sometimes, ignorant about their - future-brides. Child marriages were common. It was only after 1925 that the age of consent was fixed but it was not observed in most of the cases.

Enforced widowhood was a prominent social evil of the society. It was considered to be "the punishment for some unknown sin committed possibly in an earlier incarnation". Many of them were not more than twenty years old, while a good many had not reached even the age of puberty. Widow marriage was, however, prevalent among the Jats and other agriculturist castes. It is a paradox that even the educated class was not in its favour. Among the Muslims there was no customary prohibition or taboo regarding widow-marriage but due to long association of these communities with the Hindus they considered it derogatory for their widows to seek remarriage.¹⁷

16. Reed, Sir Stanley - India, The New Phase (1925), pp. 97-98.

17. Wilkins, W.J. - Daily Life and Work in India, p.265.

Divorce was not popular among the Hindus and the Sikhs. These religions considered marriage 'a sacrament', an unbreakable tie. Till 1947 the number of divorced among Hindus and Sikh was a very microscopic one.

Female children were not much desired. The birth of a boy was an occasion for rejoicing. To a Hindu, the birth of a son was a religious necessity, because son's presence was necessary for the performance of certain ceremonies whereby his parent's salvation was to be secured according to religion.

The customs of death were different with the Muslims and the Hindus and the Sikhs. The Muslims buried their dead, while the Hindus and Sikhs burnt them. There were still different styles of burning the bodies among the Hindus and the Sikhs.

Village Structure

The typical Punjabi village was an aggregate of cultivated holdings and a central site, where the dwelling houses were congregated together. Whole atmosphere in the village was very simple. The village was economically self-supporting.

The daily life of ordinary men and women was decidedly monotonous, a wedding or a fair only providing an occasional diversion. The social life mainly centred round the gurdwara or the mosque, the public well and the chaupal. Towns and

country planning was woefully neglected in the province.¹⁸

The average village was a mere congeries of flat-roofed mud hovels separated by narrow alleys, while only here and there stood the spacious brick-houses of wealthy landlords, army pensioners and money-lenders. The houses of the poorer classes had a small courtyard and one or two rooms. The rich had a big courtyard, a deorhi and a large number of rooms.

In contrast to the village, where the houses were generally made of mud, in the cities and the towns the houses were made of baked bricks and built close together in order to make maximum use of the available space, only a few houses had courtyard on one side. There was negligible arrangement of natural light and air. The roofs were used for the purpose of sleeping in summer.¹⁹

Diet

There was a marked sameness about the diet of the people and bulk was stressed more than variety and balance. In the plains bread was generally of wheat but in the hills maize and rice were the staple articles of food, fruit did not form an

18. Crooke - *Natives of Northern India*, p. 155.

19. Parling - *Wisdom and Waste* (1934), p. 144.

integral part of the diet even in the towns. The Muslims and the Sikhs took meat. Milk and milk-products were consumed in large quantities and staple drink of all, in the rural areas, was invariably butter-milk. The village folk was very fond of wine and spirits. Drunkenness constituted one of the major evils of village life, one of the chief causes of crime and the ruin of the families. Among the townsmen, especially the upper and the working class, a taste for alcohol was growing. In the hills this vice was widespread even among women and children.²⁰

Smoking was very common among Hindus and Muslims. The Sikhs were forbidden by their religion to indulge in it. gutha was most common mode of smoking especially in the villages. The use of opium, cocaine and kharr was confined to a very limited section of the population.²¹ Sikh militant group Bhainis were very fond of gutha (a variable preparation from kharr).

Wardrobe

The wardrobe of men in the rural areas comprised the pyjama or chhota as the lower garment and the shirt as the upper. In some areas men used to wear gajra also, mainly in Rewalsindi zone. The head dress of men was usually a turban.

20. District Gazetteer Amritsar (1947), p.66.

21. Punjab Legislative Assembly Debates, March 4, 1938.

A small section under the influence of national movement was gradually adopting Gandhi caps as its head-gear.²²

The woman attire comprised a chogara or lahnga of cotton and a kurti or shirt. The famous apparel of the Muslim ladies was salwar and a loose shirt. This dress was also common among Hindu and Sikh women.²³

The English dress, pantaloons and shirt, was becoming popular with the educated and elite section, particularly in the cities and towns, after second world war.

Women were very fond of ornaments. The annual expenses of the province on jewellery were rupees three crores in 1929.²⁴ It went on increasing day-by-day except that of the couple of years after the partition of the province in 1947. There were ornaments for the arms, wrists, fingers, feet, ankles, nose, ears, neck, forehead etc. Baden-Powell counts 99 names of ornaments and the list is by no means exhaustive.²⁵ Men did not show any liking for jewellery and were contented with a ring or a gold bracelet and that even only a small number of men. It increased, however, after green revolution.

22. G. S. Churey - Indian Costumes (1951), p. 244.

23. District Gazetteer Gujranwala, 1935, p. 102; District Gazetteer Gujrat 1921, p. 59; District Gazetteer Shahpur 1917, p. 136; District Gazetteer, Ambala, 1923-24, p. 39.

24. Report of the Punjab Provincial Bank Enquiry Committee, 1929-30, p. 28.

25. Punjab Government - Monograph on Gold and Silver (1890), pp. 30-31.

The shoes were always made of leather. The shoes were of different shape. The commonest shape was the pothohari, which had a sharp pointed toe. The shoes worn by the richer classes had some kind of embroidery work done on them. In towns the educated classes had a liking for English shoes and boots. It increased after nineteen fifties and became very popular in village also.

Position of Women

Women in India have not usually been treated as equals in medieval and modern times. They are expected to be subject to men all their lives, first to their fathers and brothers, then to their husbands and lastly to their sons.²⁶ As the parents of a girl had to give a rich dowry to the bridegroom's family, girl babies were not so welcome as boys and were not so well looked after. Etiquette demanded of women that she should first serve meals to her husband and other elderly members of the household and then eat herself. Thus ideologically women were considered to be a completely inferior species, inferior to male, having no personality. socially she was kept in a state of subjection, denied her rights and suppressed and oppressed.²⁷

The purdah system, which was unknown in ancient India,

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26. Kulakhat - Manu samriti (1913), p.346.

27. Karharia - India, Forty Years of Progress and Reform, p.118.

was adopted subsequent to the advent of Muslim rule in India. The Hindus adopted it as a protective measure in order to save the honour of their womenfolk. It was not the hurea of the Muslims but it was the dupatta which was used to cover much of their faces along with their heads. Purdah was not common among lower classes. After partition, however, purdah disappeared in the cities and towns though it prevailed partially in the rural areas.²⁸

Prostitution

Prostitution in various forms dates back to the dawn of human history. The Indian term randee as applied to all classes of women of ill-fame is a term of contempt. The term is popularly used both for a widow as well as for a prostitute. This vice was not common among women of high classes. Only the lowest classes and those forced to adopt this profession as a last recourse are now to be found among these unfortunates.²⁹ Prostitutes were generally found in big cities like Delhi, Lahore, Amritsar etc. and they were always segregated in separate localities. The number of prostitutes, however, was on decline, the credit goes to social reform and to legislation. Though banned, it is still going-on on a secret level.

28. Ibid., p.119.

29. Somerville, August, 1955. - Crime and Religious Belief in India, p.5.

Entertainments.

The social life of the people was very dull, a wedding in the family or faire only provided occasional entertainment. There were a host of very interesting indigenous games played by children and adults, but hockey, foot-ball and volley-ball were becoming popular in the schools and the colleges. Women found very little time to assemble for some recreation except in trinhang (spinning groups in the villages) or in the gurdwaras etc.

Besides the religious festivals, there were some common seasonal festivals celebrated in the country. The major among them being Lohri, Magant, Holi, Baisakhi, Dussehra, Diwali etc. The religious celebrations included Guru Nanak Dev's birthday, Guru Arjan Dev's martyrdom day, martyrdom day of the sons of Guru Gobind Singh and the birthday of Guru Gobind Singh (Sikhs), Ram Navmi, Shivratri, Janam Ashtami (Hindus), Id-ul-Zuha, Id-ul-Bakr, Moharram and Urs (Muslims).

Mushairas or poetic symposia in Urdu and Punjabi were frequently arranged by public as well as by schools and colleges. Poets of renown from far and wide were invited to participate in them. There was not a single professional theatre in the Punjab. The theatrical activity was confined to the annual show of a college dramatic society. Occasionally, a touring dramatic company would pay a visit to a big town to stage a religious

or historic drama. No woman actresses were employed and their roles were played by well-trained boys. The dancing girls and the singing girls also formed the part of entertainment.³⁰

The cinema had become the chief source of entertainment by the end of the fourth decade of the twentieth century. Though there were no good cinema halls but touring talkies were very popular in larger villages and towns.³¹ The cinema hall, however, were constructed in large numbers in fifties and sixties. Another popular entertainment was circus but it was common everywhere and it could not be available for a large number of days.

The songs of the spinning wheel were very popular among the women folks.³² These songs depict a sister's love for her brother, love stories of Heer Ranjha, Sohni Mahival, Mirza Sahiban, Gassi Punna etc., the wedding rituals, bravery and chivalry of brave Punjabis, patriotism etc. The Punjab had a rich variety of folk-dances as well. It included bhangra, giddha, phunna, gharrai etc. These dances are not only the source of entertainment but also speak of the vital life of the Punjabis.³³

30. Anand, Mulish Raj - The Indian Theatre (1950), p.24.

31. Report of the Indian cinematograph Committee (1927-28), p.21.

32. Rochan Lal - Folk-lore of the spinning wheel, in article published in The Advance (Vol.VI of 1959).

33. Kartar Singh - The Punjabi Folk-lore, an article published in the Tribune, on November 10, 1957.

Thus, during the previous century, the province saw some major changes on socio-economic-cultural front. The spread of education, the breaking of joint-family system, lessening of the fear of various types of taboos, trend towards materialistic approach, change in attitude towards religion, upward trends towards fashions, change in eating habits, particularly taste for wine and mutton, love for hypocrisy, aping of West in almost every sphere, diminishing ethical values and end of humanistic values are some of the net results of the previous century.

CHAPTER - II**WRITINGS OF MASTER TARA SINGH**

1. Novels
2. Essays
3. Editorials
4. Tracts
5. Autobiography
6. Travelogue

NOVELS

Among the writings of Master Tara Singh, his novels have a prerogative place. In many histories of Punjabi literature, Master Tara Singh has been referred to only as a novelist, various critics have discussed the writer Master Tara Singh primarily as a novelist. Dr. Attar Singh is all appreciation for his novel 'Prem Lagan'. He considers this novel as the first successful Punjabi novel depicting the local culture.¹ Gurdial Singh Phul praises this novel for realistic presentation of rural environment². Dr. S.S. Dogra praises the novelist Master Tara Singh for being impartial in presenting the contemporary Sikh society³. Dr. Joginder Singh Rahi gives the credit of realistic approach to Master Tara Singh for his depiction of the Sikh society in its glory alongwith its weakness⁴. According to Dr. Ajit Singh "Master Tara Singh has a pioneer's place among realistic historical novelists"⁵. The references in the histories of Punjabi literature, (published by the Language department, Punjab)⁶, the Punjab University and K.S. Basal acknowledge the contribution of Master Tara Singh to Punjab Novel.

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1. Dr. Attar Singh's article "Punjabi Novel (1918-38) It sarvekhan, published in sahit samachar (Upniskar Ank) p.186.
 2. G.S. Phul Punjabi sahit De sath saal, pp.188-89.
 3. S.S. Dogra-Punjabi Ithasak Novel, p.104.
 4. J.S. Rahi's article in 'Punjabi Novel-sarvekhan To Mulankan (Ed. K.S. Thind) p.30.
 5. Dr. Ajit Singh-Punjabi Gulp Vich Yatharthvad, p.65.
 6. Language department, Punjab, Patiala, - Punjabi sahit De Ithas (vol. II) p.91.

Master Tara Singh has given two novels to Punjabi Literature. Both these novels were written by him in 1934-35 when he was spending his days out of Punjab during his self-imposed exile. This 'exile' he had imposed on himself, in response to an appeal from intellectuals, asking Giani Ghar Singh and Master Tara Singh to retire from active politics⁷, so that an end may be brought to factionalism in the rank and file of Sikh leadership which had brought with it deterioration of the Sikh situation during that period. The references to factionalism and division on the one hand and the desire to bring back the lost Sikh glory on the other hand are that of the environment.

Prem Lagan

Prem Lagan is a novel presenting rural Sikh culture of the Punjab from 1906 to 1926. The writer portrays the story of Sikh chivalry and the saga of the national qualities of Sikhs. A Sikh is essentially a brave, agile, physically strong, dutiful, alert and conscious of his surroundings⁸. To make his point more elaborate and clear, Master Tara Singh has presented the other side of the picture as well. Gurdit Singh, the hero for the first part of the novel is a brave Sikh but on the other hand his brother and nephews are bohemians. They have already squandered away their share of inherited property due to their habits of drinking and gambling⁹. Gurdit Singh takes pity on them and gifts a part of his land to his younger brother and nephews¹⁰.

7. Master Tara Singh - Meri Yaad, pp. 110-111.

8. Prem Lagan, p.38.

9. Prem Lagan, pp.43-44.

10. Ibid., p.56.

But this does not solve any purpose except that of adding to their jealousy with the Bhai. In order to grab the land of the Bhai, they chalk-out a plan to murder the Bhai. This plan, after a couple of unsuccessful ventures, matures after all. Bhai Gurdit Singh is murdered.¹¹ It is followed by the death of the only daughter (who is married to Mohan Singh, the hero for the second part of the novel) of the Bhai. This death is partly due to the psychological effect of the post-Gurdit Singh's death condition of her mother and brother. Before her death she gets promises from her husband, Mohan Singh, that he should guard her brother and her mother from the enemies of the family. Like an adventurous Robinson Crusoe, he keeps his word.¹² But as the chance would have it, the child Balbir Singh, the hero for the third part of the novel, is abducted by the family enemies with the intention of murdering him. The child is saved by a timely rescue effort by Mohan Singh. But the frightened child in order to escape from the abductors, finds another resort in the house of a sahidhari Sikh Loringa Mall.¹³ This childless family brings up the child with full respect to the religious feeling of the child. Grown up child is a brilliant student, a devoted religious person and a politically conscious man. He makes his contribution in struggle for the reform of Sikh shrines.¹⁴ During one such agitation Mohan Singh discovers him. Under the provocations and misunderstandings created by the family enemies, Balbir Singh has a combat with Mohan Singh.

11. Prem Lagan, p.103.

12. Ibid., p.152.

13. Ibid., p.190.

14. Ibid., p.256.

Mohan Singh is seriously wounded. He, later on, succumbs to injuries. In the end, the declaration of reality brings an end to the adventurous history of the family.¹⁵

The main concern of the novel is the depiction of the Sikh culture of the contemporary Punjab. It is a portrayal of moral degradation, increasing drinking habits, jealousy, abductions, disputes over lands, murders and in brief the evils which are obstacle in the free and unchecked development of human life in the wider meaning and the ideal Sikh society in the restricted sense.

By presenting both the sides of the portrait (one of good and the other of evil), Master Tara Singh craves for a sane-evil, ideal Sikh society. He longs for Sikh fundamentals.

The novel is the saga of Sikh chivalry and this chivalrous tradition is imparted from generation to generation in the whole of the story. The hero for the first part of the novel, Bhai Gurdit Singh is the saint-soldier of the Sikh concept. This Sikh tradition is transmitted into Mohan Singh, the hero for the second part of the novel and then into Balbir Singh, the hero for the third part of the novel.

Master Tara Singh is conscious of, is concerned with and is pained at the growing religious, moral and ethical degradation among the Sikhs. He feels that all the situation is a by-product of irreligious and profane atmosphere. Evil characters of the novel, Dalip Kaur, Kirhan Singh, Sharn Singh

etc. have no faith in attending the congregations at Gurdwaras. They don't believe in recitation of the sacred hymns or in attaining spiritual qualities. Kishan Singh, when once listens to the singing of hymns by a trained choir, is impressed by it and that brings a change in his criminal attitude. As a result, he gives up the idea of murdering the Bhai. But this does not continue long. His crooked mother brings him back to the criminal atmosphere. Thus, almost all the evil characters of this novel live like bohemians. Master Tara Singh has not only painted a pale picture of all these ills of the Sikh society of his age but has also suggested a panacea. He is confident that Gurbani can prove the basis for a better life.

While discussing the evils of contemporary society Master Tara Singh has made many references to the growing increase in the use of intoxicants. The use of all intoxicants and specially tobacco and wine has been forbidden under the Sikh code. Master Tara Singh shows his concerns about it and frequently condemns intoxicants. In the novel Prem Lagan, however, he does not condemn wine to that extent to which he censures other evils. His character Gohna Singh remains a lovable character throughout the story but even till the end he does not even think of giving up his drinking habit. For Master Tara Singh even an addict to drinking can be a morally high person.

The novel ends with justifying the noble characters and punishing the evil fiends. Although all the noble

characters spend major part of their lives in struggle and suffering but they achieve their goal and get recognition in the ending of the story. In the ending a serene calm prevails all-around.

The novel covers another point also. This is the story of struggle for reform in Sikh shrines.¹⁶ The mahants (Managers) of the Gurdwaras used to treat the shrines as their personal properties. A very meagre share of the income of the Gurdwaras was spent for their maintenance. The excess of wealth under the management and the possession of these managers turned them corrupt. As a result of such type of activities, the atmosphere of the Sikh shrines which is essentially a spiritual atmosphere became unhealthy. The enlightened Sikhs were pained at the fast deteriorating state of the Sikh shrines and the Sikh institutions. They raised their voice for amelioration of the situation. The period from 1919 to 1926 was the era of struggle for reform in Sikh shrines. Agitations had to be launched for the release of various Gurdwaras from the hands of the mahants, the major among them being Nankana Sahib, Guru Ka Bagh, Jaito, Rakab Ganj, Bhai Phera etc. Hundreds of Sikhs sacrificed their lives and thousands of Sikhs courted arrest. The finale of the agitation was in the form of the success of the Sikhs in getting the Sikh Gurdwaras Act passed. Under this Act the Sikhs were granted the right to choose their representatives to the managing body for the Gurdwaras.

16. Prem Lagan, p.211.

The novel portrays a part of this struggle also. The characters of the Akali leaders, their habits, their reaction to certain situations¹⁷, sociological depiction of agitations, mob behaviour¹⁸, psyche of the Akali leaders¹⁹, life in prisons during 1920-25 period²⁰, etc. have been minutely presented in the novel.

Although this sub-plot depicting the Akali Movement can be easily separated from the novel but a general atmosphere under the effect of long ago popular Singh Sabha Movement and the other revivalist movements can be found right from the very beginning of the novel. This socio-religious movement ushered religious atmosphere throughout the Sikh cultural belt.

The novel is a product of this atmosphere. The writer by depicting this atmosphere wishes to bring a Sikh cultural revolution. This culture is essentially free from vices, such as drinking, gambling, greed, fashions, hypocrisy and crime. The society must respect women folk and women should be treated at par with men far as social status is concerned. The officers should be benevolent and loyal to their duties etc. The whole atmosphere should be that of Satyuga. The novel revolves around this central point. This novel is the first and perhaps the only successful novel depicting local culture. Master Tara Singh for the first time gave the idea of Sikh

17. Prem Lagan, pp.286-292. 18. Ibid., pp.243-244.

19. Ibid., pp.261-265.

20. Ibid., pp.279-92.

culture in particular and Punjabi culture in general.

DADA TEGA SINGH

Baba Tega Singh is a historical novel. It is the fictional autobiography of an adventurous soldier of Maharaja Ranjit Singh's army. In the beginning of the novel we see Baba Tega Singh as a young man full of youthful show of physical strength. To well utilize his physical powers he joins the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh in the platoon of his General Sham Singh Attariwala.²¹ During the period of his service, he proves himself as a duty-bound, justice-loving soldier and a good administrator working under the command of General Attariwala.

When the war between the Sikhs and the Britishers erupts, he along with General Attariwala fights very bravely till General Attariwala dies in the battlefield. After the defeat of Sikh army at the hands of the British, he can not compromise with the situation, so he does not surrender his arms before the victorious British.²² The "Sikh-English Wars" is a story of the bravery of the Sikh soldiers and it is a story of the betrayal by the leaders of the Sikh army. The Sikh soldiers fought bravely and a large number of them embraced death. But on the other hand some opportunists, unpatriotic, selfish, traitors, underwent a secret deal with the British and harmed their own army. In spite of this Sikh soldiers did not

21. Baba Tega Singh, p.11.

22. Ibid., pp.92-94.

loose courage. Some freedom loving soldiers, like the hero of the novel, Baba Teja Singh, refused to accept the slavery of the British.²³ They made individual efforts and isolated attempts at recovering the lost Khalsa raj but such efforts could not prove successful. Even such persons, later on, out of helplessness made a compromise with the situation, still throughout their lives they believed that the lost glory of the sikhs is sure to return. This belief they imparted to the next generation.

The novel is a detailed description of the Anglo-sikh wars fought between 1845 and 1849. After the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh the British espionages secretly planned to create envy and enmity for ministerial posts among the courtiers of Ranjit Singh. This policy of division among the whole rank and file of the personnel of the court of Ranjit Singh prompted some selfish persons for treason. The same led to provocation to the sikh army for a war with the already war-prepared army of the British. The bravery of the enthusiastic sikh Generals could not avert the defeat and the whole of the Punjab was annexed by the British within a short period of four years. The defeat of the sikhs was not due to the war strategy, strength or better equipped British forces but it was due to treason of the traitor Generals of the sikh army²⁴ and the political administrators of the sikh raj, like Teja Singh, Lal Singh, Bahara Singh, Gulab Singh etc., who were working

23. Baba Teja Singh, p.92.

24. Ibid., pp.46-47.

secretly for the British, merely to get minor material benefits from the British or were jealous of one or another prince or minister or courtier. To prove his points, Master Tara Singh has frequently quoted from J.D. Cunningham's "History of the Sikhs". J.D. Cunningham was the captain of that British army which fought the Anglo-Sikh wars. J.D. Cunningham has unhesitatingly praised the prowess and the bravery of the Sikh army.²⁵ He concedes that the Sikh army was far superior than the British army and gave better performance. He accepts that the "credit" of the defeat of the Sikh army goes to the traitor Generals of the army of the Sikhs.

Master Tara Singh has not only described the chivalry of the Sikhs but also the other side of the picture. He has given details of the rivalry among the rank and file of the Sikh leadership of post-Ranjit Singh period, treason of some of the leaders, personal vendetta, hooliganism of the armymen²⁶ as well as leaders and the want of a central leader like Ranjit Singh or Akali Phula Singh etc. With the corroboration of Shah Mohammad, the poet, he believes that an acceptable central leader of calibre could have averted the catastrophic situation.²⁷

Master Tara Singh has referred also to the political and judicial administration during the Sikh Raj. The Sikh rule secured full justice to every one without the distinction of caste or creed or religion. The most modern theories of

25. Baba Tega Singh, p.66.

26. Ibid., pp.32-34.

27. Ibid., p.56.

punishment which have been accepted and applied by some developed nations, were long long ago popular during the rule of the sikh nation. Fine and probation of the offenders²⁸, which is being widely propagated as an advanced and progressive theory of reform through mild punishment and reform was widely accepted and adopted custom in the sikh rule.

The recruitment to the military and other jobs was impartial and justice-based.²⁹ Only deserving persons with good physique, and even that after a show of bravery and ethical qualities by such recruits, were admitted into the sikh army. When the author writes about such persons it seems as if his words are throbbing with life. The author points out specifically that there was no question of favouritism and the only criteria was the worth of the person. Sometimes a number of tests had to be passed before becoming a confirmed member of the 'Khalsa Army'.

When Master Tara Singh wrote 'Baba Tegh Singh', there was available a little material about the history of the sikhs. Whatever was available had been produced mostly by the non-sikh authors. The works of these writers were based on their personal prejudices. They depicted the sikh history from their point of view. Thus it was very difficult to find an accurate account of the sikh history.³⁰

28. Ibid., p.22.

29. Baba Tegh Singh, p.11.

30. Ibid., Preface.

Baba Tega Singh was written with the purpose of presenting the true history of the sikhs. This, he declares in the preface of the novel : "The purpose of writing of this book is to present the details of Anglo-sikh wars. I have not found these details in any book written in any vernacular language or by any Indian writer. I have read it from the English books or have learnt it as related by Baba Tega Singh. Our writers have given details only of the sounds of cannons, glitter of the swords and beauty of the arms, but none has described the causes of war, the events, the progress of the wars and the results of the wars."³¹

Master Tara Singh has not only narrated the historical events of Anglo-sikh war but has also portrayed the character of the sikhs of the period, their bravery, their way of life as well as the politico-socio-economic condition of the people of the area of the sikh empire.

Master Tara Singh wants to present the sikh history in its exactness. For this purpose he frequently quotes from historical books. The references have been taken not only from 'Panth Parkash (Giani Gian Singh)³² and 'Jang-Nama Singhon Te Frangian (Shah Mohammad)³³ the histories in poetry, but also from the writings of J.D. Cunningham³⁴, William Edward³⁵, B.D. Bagu³⁶, and Thackwell.³⁷ In the ending part of the novel,

31. Baba Tega Singh, Preface.

32. Ibid., pp.48-50.

33. Ibid., pp.38, 39, 56.

34. Ibid., p.66.

35. Ibid., pp.152-155.

36. Ibid., pp.145-150.

37. Ibid., pp.74,75,78-80, 88-89.

an additional chapter under the heading "vaachu kaand"³⁸, 80
the writer has presented fifteen pages of material from the
writings of B.D. Dasg, William Edwards and Sir Charles Napier.
The purpose of this chapter and other footnotes in the main
body of the novel is to add authenticity of the historical
aspect of the novel.

Besides the accurate presentation of the glorious
history of the sikhs, another purpose of the writer is to
prove the superiority of the administration during the sikh
rule, love of the sikh rulers for justice, self-imposed
religious discipline of the sikh army and the public and above
all the superiority of the sikh way of life.³⁹

As discussed in the beginning of this sub-chapter,
these novels were the product of those days when the sikh
leadership was divided in different factions due to personality
cults or sectarianism or parochialism. This factionalism gave
birth to degeneration and degradation of the sikh society.
Master Tara Singh with this situation as the back-ground of the
birth of these novels wished to teach his religion-fellows that
they should shun factionalism, should venture for return of
lost glory and should work for a better future of community.
Frequent reference to division among the rank and file of sikh
leadership on the one hand (Baba Toga Singh, p.144, Prem
Lagan, p.311 etc.) and physical strength, prowess, chivalry,

38. Ibid., pp.145-159.

39. Ibid., Preface.

human qualities, religious qualities etc. attained by ideal characters on the other hand show the contention of Master Tara Singh. He wants ^{to} reconstruct the ideal sikh society as conceived by the sikh gurus.

various critics have reckoned these novels among the realistic presentation of their contemporary society. Rural punjabi culture was for the first time presented in these two novels. Prior to Master Tara Singh, the punjabi novel was partisan in colour. Bhai Vir Singh's view of supremacy of sikh society in comparison to the Hindu and Muslim societies was corrected by Master Tara Singh who presented a compact view of sikh society and presented it in both its forms. Good and bad both aspects have been equally treated with.

History, culture, sociology, Religion, Politics etc. contemporary world, and not the artistic aspects of a novel, is the main problem of Master Tara Singh the novelist. (The artistic aspects have been discussed in Chapter V of this thesis). In contrast to the popular expectation of prejudiced view of a society by a religious leader like Master Tara Singh, he has presented an impartial view of his age. These novels, apart from being first successful realistic and historical novels, are also the true picture of the contemporary society of the period. The credit is given to Professor Purn Singh, the punjabi poet writing about sikh culture and sikh history, that he is secular poet of the Punjab. Master Tara Singh, while writing about sikh culture and sikh history, remains the

first secular novelist of the Punjabi language. These novels are among the most accurate secondary sources of the socio-religious-cum-political history of the contemporary period.

ESSAYS

Essay is a short literary composition in prose, in which a writer discusses a topic, usually restricted in scope, or tries to persuade the reader to accept a certain point of view.¹ In essay distinction is made between formal and informal essay. The former is impersonal. Examples will be found among the serious articles on current topics and issues in any of the magazines addressed to a thoughtful audience. In the latter, which is called personal (or familiar essay also), the author assumes a tone of intimacy with the audience, tends to be concerned with every day things rather than with public affairs of specialised topics and writes in a relaxed, self-revelatory, and often whimsical fashion.²

Essay in Punjabi is a result of the impact of English literature on Punjabi literature. Its birth, in Punjabi, can be traced in the ending part of the third decade of twentieth century.³ Principal Teja Singh, Lal Singh Kamla Akali, Suran Singh, Master Tara Singh, Sahib Singh and Gurbax Singh have contributed a plethora of essays on motley topics. Among them, Sahib Singh and Master Tara Singh have contributed a large number of essays on moral and religious topics.

Master Tara Singh was more of a religious leader than that of an essayist. He wrote essays not because he was a

1. The Encyclopaedia Columbia, p.892.
2. M.H. Abrams - A Glossary of Literary Terms, pp.54-55.
3. Dr. Diwan Singh - Principal Teja Singh To Punjabi Leikh, p.254.

literary man but in order to talk to his religion fellows and his followers. Before considering Master Tara Singh's essays, one thing must be kept in mind that he was not bothered about the form of essay as a genre but was more concerned with the contents contained therein.

He, infact, wanted to impart his personal but community-oriented comments on certain points and for him the artistic aspect was secondary aspect.

Master Tara Singh wrote three books of essays namely, "Pirm Piala", "Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana" and "Grehst Dham sikhia". Most of the Essays of these books were written by him during his imprisonment (1949-50). Some of these essays had appeared in Journals during 1935-36. The essays in "Grehst Dham sikhia" appeared in book form in 1932. Most of the essays of period of 1935-36 were written by him during his self-imposed exile. These essays cover a variety of subjects i.e. metaphysics, religion, social questions, ethics etc.

PIRM PIALA

'Pirm Piala' is the first of the books of essays by Master Tara Singh. This book consists of seventeen essays and a collection of one hundred and twenty three quotations. In the beginning of the book Master Tara Singh accepts his shortcomings and says that he was still a learner and not a scholar with encyclopaedic knowledge. If one does not have much knowledge, he says, one should not stop efforts to attain

Tara Singh, while rejecting such a person, advises that one should first, become noble in one's own eyes.¹⁰ He observes that the major drawback in the personality of a social worker is the desire to get honour by show of hypocrisy. This desire is like a big hole which gives way to all the qualities.¹¹ Instead of trying to show oneself as a noble person, one should try to become noble.¹²

Distinguishing between good intention and principles, Master Tara Singh asserts that principles have foremost place in ethics.¹³ To forsake principles, even though done with good intention, is against the fundamentals.¹⁴ We must stick to fundamentals. Citing the example of Baba Ram Rai, son of the seventh Sikh Guru Har Rai, the author tells that Baba Ram Rai's intention in misquoting from Sikh scriptures had been done with good intention but it was against Sikh fundamentals.¹⁵ Sikhism stands for principles of truth and righteousness. Master Tara Singh believes that in case of a choice between two principles we have to choose to support the right one.¹⁶ If, while doing so, one commits a mistake then one must be ready to rectify it and should not contumaciously stick to one's point. To accept one's mistake is good than that of trying to justify one's wrong stand which is worse than committing of such a mistake.¹⁷

Regarding equality between rights of men and women,

10. Ibid., p.20.

11. Ibid., p.21.

12. Ibid., p.23.

13. Ibid., p.60.

14. Ibid., p.62.

15. Ibid., p.62.

16. Ibid., pp.60-61.

17. Ibid., p.62-63.

Master Tara Singh observes that men and women cannot have the same rights. Nature has made both of them different in physical and mental set-up. Here, Master Tara Singh excludes those exceptional cases in which women have shown the same physical quality that men generally possess.¹⁸ Master Tara Singh believes that the function and duties of men and women are different. One cannot perform the function of the other.¹⁹ We cannot take exceptions as a general rule. The only thing that can be accepted in the first instance is that women should not be a target of insults, excesses, atrocities etc.²⁰ She should be treated in the same manner in which male wish to be treated.²¹ Women should get rights like men. It should be alike rights and not the same rights.²² Asserting his point Master Tara Singh comments that stress on rights is a result of impact of Western Culture and pale imitation of West has added to our sorrows.²³

In his essays Master Tara Singh has dealt with some metaphysical points also. Like sufi saint Rabia and various other saints, Master Tara Singh believes that meditation should not be done with any purpose other than being one with God.²⁴ The person who meditates in order to achieve psychic power is likely to be frustrated. Such a person is like that woman who does not seek her husband's love but wishes to have grip on

18. Ibid., p.89.

19. Ibid., p.89.

20. Ibid., p.87.

21. Ibid., p.89.

22. Ibid., p.89.

23. Ibid., pp.86-87.

24. Ibid., p.38.

him, comparing among a firm believer in God, an illusioned person and a hypocrite he says that the first drinks nectar, the second drinks sweet water and the third one gets poison.

Next he tries to prove the existence of psychic power. Commenting upon non-believers in psychic power, he says that such persons believe that there is nothing beyond material world. Such persons assert that there is nothing beyond laws of nature and nothing such exists which cannot be known through five sense sources, i.e., seeing, hearing, tasting, touching and smelling.²⁵ Such person, while not believing in happening of some events due to psychic power, do believe in co-incidence and while doing so they partly believe in psychic power.²⁶ To further prove his point Master Tara Singh quotes the experiences of Theosophy society's men²⁷ and those of Saint Joan²⁸ (Joan of Arc, who had achieved psychic power for some period and after such power had been lost, she was charged of hallucination and witchery). Master Tara Singh warns that if we outrightly reject a point we cannot know its reality. It is only by starting pursuit for such knowledge with full faith that we can get nearer the reality.²⁹

Master Tara Singh believes that everyone can achieve psychic power through meditation. In the beginning meditation is not done with the purpose of achieving of psychic power but

25. Ibid., p.43.

27. Ibid., p.45.

29. Ibid., p.49.

26. Ibid., p.44.

28. Ibid., pp.48-49.

gradually when such power is granted to such a soul then either such power is not used by the possessor and if it is used then the user adapts to satanic activities. Thus psychic power in itself contains the germs of satanic tendencies.³⁰ so, psychic power is an obstacle in the way of Bhakti.

sainthood, for Master Tara Singh, is detachment from worldly desires. To achieve this stage one has to begin with Bhakti. Bhakti is not recitation of the name of Nanaguru rather it is surrender of self unto God.³¹

Master Tara Singh censures hypocritic show of Bhakti. some people reject Bhakti in reference to hypocrites Bhaktas. This attitude, Master Tara Singh says, is wrong, as Bhakti as a concept is not bad and thus it is only the hypocrites who deserve to be rejected.³² sometimes hypocritic show may attract some sincere persons who faithfully adopt Bhakti as means.³³

Commenting upon idol-worshipping, Master Tara Singh observes that almost every person on this earth is an idol-worshipper.³⁴ refining idol-worshipper he says that the person who worship body instead of soul is idol-worshipper.³⁵ Master Tara Singh says that the atheists are simply idol-worshippers because they do not accept anything beyond this material world.

30. Ibid., p.57.

31. Ibid., pp.69-70.

32. Ibid., p.75.

33. Ibid., p.76.

34. Ibid., pp.82-83.

35. Ibid., p.83.

For them body is everything. On the other hand the pantheists believe that this world is illusion (like smoke which appears to be a mountain). Thus, pantheists are idol-worshippers till they remain illusioned.

In 'Pirm Piala', the last chapter is a collection of more than a hundred quotations. These quotations are the epitome of a successful man's life. It is the quintessence of the experiences of a religious man. Some of these quotations are, however, already established universal truths and some others are logical and erudite observations. Some of the quotations run as follows :

The greatest flaw in a man is ignorance of one's flaws. He who has nothing with him is not poor rather that man is poor who has fears of having nothing.³⁶ The wounds of sword are less painful than billingsation.³⁷ One who is proud of his victory is sure to fall.³⁸ Love begets love and hatred begets hatred.³⁹ Enjoin friends in joys, it doubles your joys; and sharing of your sorrows with your friends lessens the effects of sorrows.⁴⁰ It is easy to acquire one hundred good qualities than to give up one bad habit.⁴¹ Every dark night is followed by a bright day.⁴²

All these quotations are not innovations of Master Tara Singh himself. Some of these quotations have been taken from prudence of elders and some others from history and some of the

36. Ibid., p.99.

37. Ibid., p.100.

38. Ibid., p.100.

39. Ibid., p.102.

40. Ibid., p.106.

41. Ibid., p.109.

42. Ibid., p.103.

quotations are the result of Master Tara Singh's experiences. In these quotations we find a combination of Sikh ethics, Indian socio-political ethics and modern diplomacy. Master Tara Singh had to function on all these planes. His reactions in the different roles produced these formulations of Master Tara Singh.

"Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana" is another book of essays. It consists of sixteen essays dealing with various metaphysical topics: existence of God, atheism, Karma, Time, purpose of human existence, pre-destination of fate, Shanti, ethics etc. Like 'Pirm Pials' this book also, is a record of Master Tara Singh's comments on various points, not on philosophical level. These are the observations of a religious leader whose main purpose was not to formulate some philosophical system but to educate his religion fellows about their religious ideology.

Master Tara Singh starts with the existence of God. As he was addressing Sikhs in particular, he begins with the formulation that God's existence has been established already. To confirm it further, he quotes from metaphysics. The first proof presented by Master Tara Singh is argument from design.⁴³ This organised universe is working in some order and there is some force behind it. The trees, plants, birds, animals, human beings, water, air, rivers, sun, moon, stars etc. are wonderful creations. All these are a part of the whole order of natural law. Only God is the organiser of this order. The symmetry, the balance and the harmony in the world is due to God's will.

43. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.9-11.

Further, Master Tara Singh gives cosmological⁴⁴ argument to prove the existence of God. He says that he has the knowledge of his power of hearing and seeing but he does not have the knowledge of the creator of this power. Moreover, he himself is not the creator of this power. There must be some Creator and the Creator is God.⁴⁵ Next, Master Tara Singh gives ontological argument also. According to this argument the universe is made up of parts, and thus has analogy to artifacts; artifacts arise from intelligent agency; therefore universe arises from intelligent agency.⁴⁶ This intelligent agency is God and none else. This argument has been favourite of many of the famous philosophers such as St. Anselm, Descartes and Spinoza and also Nyaya-Vaisesika school.⁴⁷ Replying to the criticism of proof of God's existence, Master Tara Singh says that it is foolish to expect God in the form of a human figure or like. There is fallacy in the query doubting the existence of God. God, he asserts, cannot be seen but it can only be felt. The proofs presented by Master Tara Singh to prove the existence of God are not his innovations but have been borrowed from Western philosophic system. These proofs have come under heavy attack of the

44. Dictionary of Comparative Religions, p.305.

45. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.30-31.

46. S.C.F. Brandon (Ed.). A Dictionary of Comparative Religions, p.305.

47. Kugumanjali quoted by Brandon in Dictionary of Comparative Religions, p.305.

philosophers. Master Tara Singh is perhaps not in knowledge of such criticism or like a missionary he has chosen only favourite points.

Replying to the atheists, who say that only that knowledge is true which we can know through the five sense organs, Master Tara Singh asserts that there is knowledge beyond the five sense organs of human body but those who do not want to get knowledge not attainable by these five sense organs, cannot know about God. We cannot see anything after having closed our doors. To strengthen his point he quotes some examples of the psychic power and the power of mantras. The author knows that this has been labelled as hypnotism and clairvoyance. Master Tara Singh says that the acceptance of hypnotism and clairvoyance implies indirect approval of some super-power and thus, psychic power and God are the next stages.⁴⁸

Talking of Bhakti, Master Tara Singh says that mere recitation of scriptures or name of God is of no use. It is like the man who takes wine in his mouth and vomits it out without having any drop inside his throat.⁴⁹ To achieve one's purpose one should not only recite hymns but also should act upon the teaching of these hymns. As preached by Sikhism that "people may repeat the name of the Lord through their tongues, but that will never bring the peace of mind. If the Name resides in the heart through the grace of the Gurus, the

48. Kiu varni Kiv Jhana, p.34. 49. Ibid., pp.39-40.

devotee will get the desired result.⁵⁰ The final emancipation can only be obtained when the Name resides in the heart. The resemblance of the Name can bring no fruit, if the life of a person is corrupt⁵¹. Master Tara Singh is not altogether opposed to recitation⁵². He believes that those who recite the Name without knowing its meaning, but are men of noble living, may achieve salvation meaning thereby that Master Tara Singh believes that the sacred hymns teach noble life and thus living of noble life alongwith recitation can prove fruitful.

Master Tara Singh believes in pre-destination. He believes that God the Almighty is the organizer of the universe. He has already determined the activities of every atom of the universe. Like a fatalist, he surrenders everything to God. Sikhism stresses God's Command as final. In Sikhism all are engaged in doing what God ordains⁵³. Telling, seeing, speaking, moving, living and dying all are transitory. The true Lord, having established the Divine order, has himself placed them all under it⁵⁴. That alone happens which pleases God, nothing is in the hands of man who is completely helpless⁵⁵.

Master Tara Singh believes that though every thing is pre-destined yet it can be known in advance⁵⁶. Those who forecast weather do so by knowing full details of the movement of the

48. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana - p.34
 49. Ibid, pp. 39-40
 50. Rag Gajri, N.3.
 51. Sri Rag, N.3.
 52. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.45.

53. The Adi Granth, p.8
 54. The Adi Granth, p.145
 55. The Adi Granth, p.417
 56. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.59

monsoon, their speed, the range of the mountains on the way, the climate of the areas on the way of the monsoon etc.⁵⁷ Thus, by obtaining exact and complete details we can get the accurate information. Our analysis and judgement shall be true if our information is complete. One can know about the future events and happenings of one's life and even of the whole of the universe, subject to the condition of getting total and accurate information.⁵⁸ There are certain persons who have made predictions and such predictions have proved true.

To the question, "if every thing is pre-determined then why should we make efforts?" Master Tara Singh says that our style of thinking, process of thought, our efforts and even our prayer etc. have also been pre-determined.⁵⁹ Some persons say that if every thing is pre-determined, then why one should pray before God. There are others who say that if our deeds are to be evaluated then what would be use of praying. To the second question he replies that prayer has its impact and alongwith one's deed the prayer has also to be evaluated.⁶⁰ Further, Master Tara Singh says that even our prayer is pre-determined. Prayer, he believes, purifies one of one's sins.⁶¹ "whether our Karma determine our life?" or "does our life move according to the hukam of God?" Master Tara Singh says that there are stanzas in Gurbani to prove both the contentions. Our birth is a result of our past Karma.⁶² On the other hand, a number of stanzas from

57. Ibid., pp.61-62.

59. Ibid., pp.69-70, 76.

61. Ibid., p.79.

58. Ibid., p.65.

60. Ibid., pp.77,80.

62. The Adi Granth, pp.730,662, 433.

Gurbani prove that everything moves under God's command⁶³.
 on the face of them both the points seem to be contradicting
 each other. But it is not so. The result of our past KARMA
 is also determined by God. Thus even the KARMA and their
 effect is God's Will.

Discussing the Russellian logic⁶⁴ that if our actions are
 determined by the Almighty then why should one be punished for his
 evil deeds because such deeds are also the result of God's Will,
 he says that this is the fallacy of observation. The fallacy arises
 because all of us observe from a particular situation. Secondly,
 there is nothing evil or good. Evil or good is simply an illusion.
 One must come out of this illusion. Prayer can be instrumental in
 coming out of this illusion. To the question "if every atom is
 moving under the HUKM of God, then what is the need for prayers?"
 Master Tara Singh says that even one making prayer is under his

Master Tara Singh observes that our division of Time and
 Space is not justified. Illustrating his point, he says that there
 is nothing called length, breadth or height. We cannot see abstract
 length, breadth or height.⁶⁵ It is only in relation to some solid
 substance that we can know them. Likewise Time is also a relative
 term. We cannot measure Time. Past has no existence because it is
 dead. Future is not yet born, thus non-existent⁶⁶. Present is
 also non-existent because we cannot ascertain as to what do we
 mean by present. It is today? Even today can be divided into past
 hours and future hours. Then is it the hour or minute or second

63. The Adi Granth, pp. 937, 418

64. A.J. Ayer-Russell, pp. 128-129

65. Kib varni Kiv Jaana, p. 98

66. Ibid, p. 99.

which can be called present time? Even the second can be further split into fractions⁶⁷. Further, what is present now shall be past after a moment. It is like St. Augustine, who said, "Time seemed not to be real or measurable because most, if not all of it, so far as it consists of period rather than moments seems not to exist at any given moment, and what fails to exist now has seemed less real than what merely fails to exist here"⁶⁸. Master Tara Singh believes that we should not be bothered by Time or Space.

Commenting on human existence, Master Tara Singh observes that there is a lot of contradiction in our theory and practice⁶⁹. We all believe that "Death is a certainty. In spite of this everyone is planning one's life as if one is to live for an unlimited number of years"⁷⁰. Majority of the people seem to be ignorant of the word "Death". It seems that our belief regarding the certainty of death is for others, but in our heart of hearts we consider "Death" as untrue. There is a race for material wealth among the people. Every one wishes to leave the other behind in this race. They are simply running like mad men or are running in circles⁷¹.

Discussing the purpose of human existence, he says that he does not know why does man exist? If one does not or cannot know the purpose one's existence then what is the need of continuing living? Master Tara Singh believes that 'death' shall not solve these riddles. Neither death nor continuance of living is going

67. Ibid, p.100

68. St. Augustine as quoted by A.R. Racey in 'A Dictionary

69. Kin Varni Kiv Jaana, p.101

70. Ibid, p.101.

71. Ibid, p.101.

to solve the problems. But, there is some ray of hope in living, which can lead us to find answer to this query i.e. purpose of human existence⁷².

Towards the ending of the book Master Tara Singh says that one should know one's limitations of knowledge, experience and intellect and should pray to God for His Grace. Only His Naam can enlighten us which shall lead to salvation⁷³.

GREHST DHARM SIKHIA

"Grehst dharm sikhia is a book dealing with married life. This lengthy essay, in parts, is a detailed commentary on sexual relationships, marriage intoxicants, literature, procreation, love duties of husband and wife, marriage system, religion and marriage etc.

Master Tara Singh is opposed to love at first sight as it is not love but it is infatuation⁷⁴. Referring to the romances of land, Master Tara Singh says that these romances were either infatuations or were sex-oriented⁷⁵. Love marriages are generally unsuccessful because the base of such marriages is not likeness of habits or nature of each other, but is infatuation. Criticising the romances, he says that had the poet depicted the post-marriage life of such lovers, the approach of the reader

72. Ibid, pp. 106-107

74. Grehst dharm sikhia, p.96

73. Ibid, p.112

75. Ibid, p.97.

to love marriages would have been different⁷⁶.

True love, for Master Tara Singh, is understanding the nature of the other partner. It is a union of the tastes, habits and nature of each other. It is surrendering of one's rights for the other. It is a spiritual union⁷⁷.

Master Tara Singh is against extra marital, pre-marriage sex relationship. To escape from sexual indulgence before marriage (and even after) one must avoid going to cinema, reading of romantic literature, listening to vulgar and cheap jokes etc. One should shun that company which discusses such things⁷⁸. Before marriage, Master Tara Singh seems to be favouring brahmacharya.

Smoking, drinking and other intoxicants stimulate sexual urge. Intoxicants lead one to inhuman stage, the finale of which is madness. Under the effect of intoxicants one loses the sense of evil or good, right or wrong. Most of the sex crimes have their birth in intoxicants. One should overcome them⁷⁹.

Husband and wife are two essential parts of the family. There should be complete harmony in each other. Husband and wife should love each other. Both should be so attached to each other that one should be prepared to sacrifice one's interest and rights for the other. Husband and wife are two indispensable parts of the family and the loss of either of them shall render the other as useless. They are like two bodies with the same one soul in them. Their

76. Ibid, pp. 98-99

77. Ibid, p.46

78. Ibid, p.7

79. Ibid, p.9

relationship is not physical but it is spiritual⁸⁰.

Master Tara Singh rejects celibacy as it is not in consonance with Sikh tenets. A Sikh must join family life. Family life is no obstacle in the way to salvation rather it is an important step, which has to be covered very carefully⁸¹.

All these essays by Master Tara Singh are, as discussed earlier, the reactions of a religious leader to certain points related with metaphysics, sociology, ethics etc.

Master Tara Singh was not a philosopher. He did not present any personal system of philosophy, sociology, politics, religion or ethics. In these essays Master Tara Singh has not presented any organised system of any of the above branches. Master Tara Singh being a leader of the Sikhs, had to talk to his religion-followers and followers, so he chose the medium of literature as it was easy to communicate his views to public through this medium.

Master Tara Singh is a Sikh speaking to Sikhs. He is not preaching anything but Sikh ideology, and though sometimes not fully compatible with Sikh fundamentals, he sincerely believed that he is doing so. It is evident from a reading of his essays that whatever Master Tara Singh cannot convince his readers, he stops by saying that Gurbani's teaching is final and it should be accepted without questioning it. His frequent references from Gurbani prove that he wanted to present the Sikh views in a simplified version. As it is a general trend with most of the Indian religious leaders that they knowing that they are writing for illiterate masses, talk in simple idiom as to be understandable by the man ploughing in the field.

80. Ibid, pp. 47, 48.

81. Ibid, p.60.

These essays in very simple Punjabi idiom are simple in diction but at many places Master Tara Singh quotes from western philosophy and history. He has not adopted this style to exhibit his erudition but he wanted to give understandable examples. Moreover, he invariably uses comparative method to prove his conviction.

These three books of essays though not serious works on metaphysics, sociology and ethics yet they present the views of the leader of a religious community. The historical value of these essays, thus is of much importance.

EDITORIALS

Journalism is "an enterprise, not an empiric. It records facts, and on the basis of such facts utters the opinion on partisan consensus, of editorial policy, or at its point of nearest approach to literature, of individual intelligence¹.

Journalism is concerned with immediate phenomena. Talent for its empirical method of dealing with the data offered by such phenomena, finds a safeguard in the impersonal or partisan attitude, it is enabled at least, to generalise by code to a practical end².

The real business of journalism is to record or to comment, not to create or interpret³. Editorial is expected to make special appeal.

The editorial may deal with any theme. As a rule, however, these themes can come under six heads: religion, criticism, biography, history, science, philosophy, such subjects are of permanent interest and give permanence to literature. "Editorial work in newspaper cannot compare with literary work. The reason is, mainly, this is ephemeral, too hastily written for permanence⁴.

Master Tara Singh was associated with journalism since his youth. In 1909, he started a weekly paper 'Sacha Khanda'. After two years of its publication it had to be discontinued. Then, in 1920, he started 'Pardesi Khalsa', which was a weekly publication. Later on, in 1922, it was merged with another paper daily 'Akali' and the new name adopted was 'Akali Te Pardesi'. Its publication

1. H.W. Boynton-Journalism and Literature and other essays, p.6.

2. Ibid, p.11.

3. Ibid, p.4

4. H.H. Masun-A handbook of Literary Criticism, p.176.

continued for many years. In 1950, he re-started the publication of the daily 'Akali' from Jullundur. The publication declaration of the daily 'Akali' was cancelled during the Punjabi suba movement (1960-61). In 1961, he started daily 'Juthadar' from Jullundur.

Master Tara Singh, being the editor of all these papers published from time to time, had to write editorials for these papers on various topics. The range of the topics was very wide. Master Tara Singh continued writing till his death in 1967.

The editorials of Master Tara Singh deal with a vast area of politics and religion along with other fields. Master Tara Singh was a multi-dimensional personality; he was a writer, a leader and a journalist. His editorials show the effect of all these three dimensions.

Editorial is "the editor's comment as distinguished from the news stories written by reporters and the 'letters' contributed by the readers. It speaks of the policy of the paper and/or the editor⁵. Master Tara Singh's editorials are a mixture of, what Hugh calls the editor's comments, and a politician's comments. In his editorials he behaves as a partisan politician more than as a journalist.

Master Tara Singh's editorials cover a wide range of topics, sociological, religious, political, metaphysical, biographical and current affairs. Almost every event attracted Master Tara Singh's notice. He was very prompt to report, comment, analyse, inform and discuss the events and the

5. Chilton R. Bush - Editorial Thinking and Writing, p.2.

situation of his day. His most famous editorials deal with the Gurdeva Reform Movement, Azad Punjab scheme (1944-46), Sikh-Pathan Relations, Partition of India (1947), Political situation of Pakistan (after Jinnah's death), Sikhs and Hindus, Sikh and Muslim relations, Sikh Questions, Sikh Problems, Punjabi Language and the Hindus, Rights of the Sikh Scheduled Castes, Sachar Formula, Regional Formula, Punjabi - suba, Maha Punjab, Religion and politics in Sikh polity, Minorities versus majority, Sikhs and their position in Independent India, the idea of the Sikh state, discrimination against the Sikhs, the Sikhs and the Congress Party, the Sikh Leadership, vatican status for Nankana sahib.

In his editorials he wrote eulogies, biographies, life-sketches and obituaries also. Some of the important among these are about Baba Khark Singh, Giani Gher Singh, Sant Attar Singh, Bhai Randhir Singh, Mohammad Ali Jinnah, Mohan Das Gandhi, Jawahar Lal, Govind Vallabh Pant, Lajpat Rai, Teja Singh Samundri etc.

His editorials also include commentaries on some sects like the Nihangs, the Namdharis, the Udasis etc. Some other editorials deal with ethical code, political ethics, religious instruction, cinema, atheism, modernity, rights and duties etc. Thus, Master Tara Singh's editorials cover a wide range of subjects covering the topics of almost every section's concern.

Master Tara Singh's editorials are full of information. Whatever be his subject he tries to give maximum information

about that. In his editorials written during the Gurdwara Reform Movement (1920-25), he has detailed maximum facts that he could get information of. As he himself was a part and parcel of the movement, his information of the facts regarding this subject is most accurate. His analysis of the whole material is no less valuable. But, the fault in such editorials lies in the findings or the final observations which ^{are} oftenly partisan or prejudiced.

In his editorials written about and during the penultimate situation of Indian sub-continent's partition, he is most logical. In such editorials he begins with his hypothesis and gives the statement. Next, he presents both the sides of the picture. Having presented detailed information about his hypothesis, he draws out the various possible results and leaves it for the reader to choose the one he feels fit. In the daily 'Akali Patrika' and the monthly 'Sant Sapahi', we can find dozens of editorials written about Azad Punjab scheme, the Cripps-Proposals, Sapru Committee, Sikandar-Baldev Singh pact, Simla-Conference's failure, Sikhs' position in proposed Dominion status Scheme, A 'Buffer state' between India and proposed Pakistan, Cabinet Mission's response to Sikh problems, the demand of the Sikh state etc. Except in some of the findings, regarding Sikh questions where he behaves as a Sikh leader, his analysis is invariably logical. In his editorial regarding 'Sikandar-Baldev Singh pact', he seems to be making a defence of the controversial compromise between the Unionist Party and

the Akali Dal.⁶ He, on the one hand, speaks for the stand of the Dal in relation to its oneness with the Congress Party and on the other hand he justifies a compromise with anti-Congress organisation, the Unionist Party.

In his editorials of post-partition period, Master Tara Singh has dealt with every point like an amicus journalist and a conscious leader. His warning regarding the results of the 'shameful circular' of the Central Government calling the Sikh as "lawless people" and "a menace to the law abiding Hindus of the province"⁷, his reaction to the Government's policy of making the Sikh scheduled castes bereft of the privileges granted to the Hindu scheduled castes, his warning as to the results of the ban on the slogan 'punjabi suba zindabad', and the Hindus resisting the Punjabi language, his analysis of the findings of State's Re-organization Commission, his views as to the Regional Formula and Akali-Congress compromise in the general elections of 1957, his thesis of the victory of the Akalis in the elections of the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee in 1960, his revealings regarding Sant Fateh Singh's formation of a new Akali Dal, his protests against deformation of the Punjabi suba under the pretext of re-organization, are full of facts and are well analysed treatises on the subjects. These editorials were popular among his partymen as well as among his opponents. As stated earlier, Master Tara Singh's editorials have

6. Daily Akali, June 14, 1942.

7. Sant Sipahi, April, 1950.

maximum information about the concerned points. Before writing⁷ an editorial on current situation, especially a news item or some event, he would consult all the editorials of the leading papers, particularly those opposing his stand. This is evident from the frequent reference to the editorials and the statement of the contemporary politicians in his editorials. He would not leave any point untouched. Sometimes he would change his stand as to some point, but this he would not do immediately. Firstly, such a change would be a result of some change in the circumstances; secondly, he would defend his previous stand before referring to the circumstances that led him to the new stand regarding the situation. In his unconditional support to the Congress Party in 1957 and later on extreme opposition of the same party, he writes: "Our support to Congress Party was the need of the hour. Gandhi's and Nehru's assurance to the Sikh's should have believed in the first instance as a matter of faith. Their backing out from their promises have given only one way to the Panath i.e., to choose only and only 'Panath first and country second' policy. Congress under Mr. Pant⁸ has chosen to harm the Panath and the Panath has decided to fight till end. It will be either Pant or Panath."⁹

In the editorials dealing with those points which refer to acts of discrimination against the sikhs he uses two tones. While enlisting the acts of discrimination he is logical. He

8. Govind Vallabh Pant was known as Pandit Pant. He was the Home Minister of India at that time.

9. Daily Akali, January 2, 1959.

gives evidence from data and then argues his case on the basis of the evidence. After having done so he requests the senior partners i.e., the Hindus to be more considerate and moderate. He becomes emotional and his style becomes like that of the conversation between two brothers. In a very sentimental tone, he requests the Hindus not to doubt the younger one's integrity as that has already harmed the both.¹⁰ In a passionate tone, he appeals for grant of his due as a brother.

In his editorials during the period of division in the rank and file of Akali Dal, he becomes passionate and even at occasions, he declares his intention to surrender everything before "the Timeless Throne" (the Akali Takht) and get the verdict of the highest judicial seat of the Sikh panth.¹¹ Such passionate appeals in his editorials, many a time, made his opponents return to the fold of Akali Dal. It also strengthened his hold on the organisation.

In his editorials, which are eulogies, biographies, life-sketches, obituaries etc. his stress is more on his relations with the other person. On the death of Giani Sher Singh, Sant Attar Singh, Bahi Ranchir Singh etc. he wrote obituaries in the form of editorials in his journals. In editorial on Giani Sher Singh¹² he talks more of his relation with Giani Sher Singh than that of writing about his p

10. Sant Sipahi, April, 1955.

11. Jathedar (Daily), July 4, 1962.

12. Akali Patrika, Oct. 9, 1944.

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life and work. The editorial about Sant Attar Singh is mostly information regarding the Sant's impact on Master Tara Singh's personality.¹³ The editorial dealing with Bhai Randhir Singh is more devoted to the similarities between the author and Bhai Randhir Singh. Thus, while talking of others, Master Tara Singh is more autobiographical than being biographical. He was basically an emotional personality, so it is possible for such a man either to go astray or become emotional while writing about a person to whom he is emotionally attached or is politically concerned with.

Thus, Master Tara Singh's editorials presenting vast material regarding the persons, politics, history, social life, religion and events of his age are pride of Punjabi journalism and also have value as literature.

13. Akali Patrika, March 25, 1933.

TRACTS

"A tract is a brief treatise, pamphlet or leaflet for general distribution, usually on a religious or political issue."¹

According to William Henry Sheran, the tract is "a brief controversial essay - a treatise in miniature. It deals with problems of current interest, usually with political and religious matters."² A tract is always a special pleader, always partisan in tone. In supporting a creed or party, it may be descriptive, satirical, elastic; but it is always controversial. It is a record of popular feeling and its history represents the changeful currents of public opinion of any particular area.

The history of tracts and pamphlets is the most interesting chapter in the literary history. It had its origin in England. It is the record of the great national debates carried on by the most gifted literary men, with all the bitterness and hostility. The first such debate arose over the subject of religion.³ Wyckliffe and Lollards sharpened the British appetite for pamphlets. In the eighteenth century, the pamphlet's form underwent a wholesome change. While still controversial in character, it was written with more skill and taste. In the hands of Addison,

1. Random House Dictionary, p.1391.

2. William Henry Sheran - A Handbook of Literary Criticism, p.167.

3. Ibid., pp.168-169.

Steele, Burke and Atterbury, this form became as polished and refined as any other class of literature. Even in twentieth century, tracts continue to play an important part in political and religious world. They are circulated publically and privately in the interests of every kind of reform.

In Punjabi language, the tractarian movement began with the advent of Singh Sabha Movement. The Chief Khalsa Dewan's Khalsa Tract Society, under the stewardship of Bhai Vir Singh, played pioneer role in this movement. Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid's role was not less laudible. Both these writers contributed hundreds of tracts.⁴ The tracts of both the writers were concerned with religion or discussed socio-religious reforms. The public demand for information and expert's comments on political events in their relations to Sikhism was fulfilled by Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh contributed the first tract on political questions and particularly politics of the Punjab and the Sikhs. For about four decades, Master Tara Singh contributed a large number of tracts about Sikh situation, Sikh problems, Asad Punjab scheme, Sikh-Communist differences, Pakistan and its future, Factionalism in Akali Dal etc. These tracts were most talked of during the period of the publication of these tracts. Some of the tracts contain plenty of information. The tract on Asad Punjab was a booklet with inexhaustive data about the area, population, language, religions,

4. A comprehensive list of Bhai Vir Singh's tracts can be seen in commemorative volume published in his honour as well as in various other works about Bhai Vir Singh. For Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, see Abinash Kaur's thesis for Ph.D. "Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid's contribution to Punjabi Literature", published by Language Department, Patiala.

castes, geography, resources etc. of the proposed province. Further, some of the tracts were a good analysis of the situation. The tract on Pakistan was perhaps the best analysis of the then contemporary situation of the forthcoming country. The results as prophesied by Master Tara Singh about the future political state of Pakistan proved almost true.

In his tract 'Vartman Sikh Rajniti', Master Tara Singh discusses three points: (i) the plight of the sikhs, (ii) the solution of the problems of the sikhs, (iii) consequences of the proposed solution.

Master Tara Singh feels that the sikhs are being treated as second rate citizens even in the Punjab by the Hindus of the province and the treatment given to them by the Hindu leaders, statesmen and politicians of the country is no different from that of the Hindu folk of the province. The religious questions of the sikhs are being dealt with contempt. The problems of the sikhs do not bother the Hindus. Almost every Hindu treats the sikhs either as an opponent or behaves indifferently to the sikh problems⁵. The sikhs are being discriminated in services. The question of the sikh shrines left in Pakistan is being coldly treated⁶. The sikhs are being denied political rights in provinces other than Punjab also. The Punjabi language and the Gurmukhi script is being rejected by the Hindus because

5. Vartman Sikh Rajniti, p.2.

6. Ibid, p.5.

most of the literature of the sikhs has been written in punjabi language in Gurmukhi script⁷. The majority community cannot tolerate the sikhs calling themselves as a nation and the sikh religion has not been given its due reverence, sikh culture, sikh institutions, sikh heroes, sikh history, sikh religion and their shrines and sikh way of life is being ridiculed by the majority community under a planned programme. In every field the sikh nation is being discriminated. The problems of the sikhs are so serious and tough like the scaling of the mount Everest that only a man like Tensing can solve them⁸.

Having listed the sikh grievances, Master Tara Singh suggests the remedy also. He feels that the solution of all these lies in the formation of such a state within the Indian Union, where the Sikhs could feel secure and free from the Hindu chauvinism. It does not make any difference if such a state is formed on linguistic basis or on any other basis, but one thing should be kept in consideration that the purpose of the formation of such an area should be 'to ensure the rights of the sikhs, to make them feel secure, to assure them the feeling of political and religious freedom'⁹. It may be in the form of a state on Russian pattern, where every state enjoys double nationality; or may be on the analogy of Kashmir, which has been granted an indirect internal autonomy

7. Ibid, p.7

8. Ibid, p.10

9. Ibid, p.11-12.

under article 370 of the Indian Constitution, or it may be in the form of a Sikh Homeland with sovereignty on all subjects, except defence, currency, external affairs, communication etc. This problem should be solved with a view of removing the Sikh fear of a threat to their separate entity. Master Tara Singh wishes that the newly formed zone will be an area in which all the nations have equal rights. The decision concerning a religion shall be exclusively taken by the members of that particular religion represented in the legislature¹⁰.

While discussing the pros. and cons. of such a solution Master Tara Singh avers that after the formation of such a state the problems of the people belonging to different religions shall stand solved and an atmosphere of religious cohesion shall entrust harmony in the zone. No nation shall have supremacy over the other. Referring to the fears of the over-anxious Hindus, such as the expected Sikh majority in the proposed area, Master Tara Singh says that would not affect the rights of the Hindus, as the Hindus enjoy majority in all the other provinces of India. Master Tara Singh believes that this zone would ensure an atmosphere of peace and prosperity¹¹.

10. Ibid, p.14.

11. Ibid, p.16.

In the tract "Sikh To Communism", Master Tara Singh says that there is basic contradiction between Communism and Sikhism. Belief in God, meditation, other-worldliness and religious rituals form the hub of Sikhism whereas Communism, atleast in India, begins with atheism, rejection of totem and taboos and opposition of traditional ethics and religious rituals.

When seen from the other angle, both of them have some similarities also. Both of them teach us to help the poor and the down-trodden, both of them teach that the proletariat should have equal place in socio-economic-cum political set up along with the elite. Guru Gobind Singh was prototype of Marx when the former said, "bestow kingdom on those proletariat Sikhs."¹² Master Tara Singh says that Sikhism was first to teach earned bread, tithe, equal sharing of available resources etc. Marx might not have read or even known Guru Gobind Singh or the Sikh tenets, but it is a fact that the Sikh movement was pioneer in this direction.

As regards to Communism, Master Tara Singh says every Sikh is a communist with additional benefit of spiritual uplift. On the other hand every communist cannot become a Sikh unless he accepts the existence of God, meditation etc. When a communist adopts this path, he shall be no more a communist as the latter rejects this path. So, in Communism one loses something and in Sikhism something gets added.¹³

12. Sikh To Communism, p.3.

13. Ibid., p.7.

In the end, Master Tara Singh warns the sikhs against dangers of Communism. As said above, he cautions against the obvious losses while adopting the Communism. We should not accept the path of losers', warns Master Tara Singh. He believes that like fanaticism of the Hindus and the Muslims the damages of atheism of Communism is not less important and we should be cautious of this slow-poisoning¹⁴.

In the tract 'Panthik Nishana' Master Tara Singh addressing his fellowmen says that the programme before the Sikh Panth is to achieve the past glory¹⁵. The Sikh history is the saga of achievement in social, cultural, religious, economic and political fields. Since the annexation of Punjab by the British, we are gradually losing our glory. The Sikhs have become lethargic selfish, unscrupulous, coward and unenterprising. They have lost passion for their religion and their nation. They are gradually heading towards materialist's way of life leading finally to atheism. The future of Panth is very hazardous. We shall have to be more cautious in dealing with such dangers to our nation.

The relation of this painful solution lies in our determination to improve our political and religious freedom. For the latter, we should launch strong efforts for propagation of religious movement for Amrit Parchar (baptisation), convincing the Sikhs through persuasion for performance of basic Sikh rituals etc.¹⁶ Politically we should remain more alert. We must

15. Panthik Nishana, p.1.

16. Ibid, p.6.

know as to what are the further damages to the panth at the hands of the fanatics among the Hindu leadership of the country, attack of the communist and other atheists, conspiracies of traitors in our own tent, activities of apostates etc., and finally we should struggle for the formation of a sovereign sikh state¹⁷. This sikh state should comprise of the sikh cultural zone. It should be within the Indian Union. The purpose of this state would be to safeguard the interests of the sikh nation, preservation of the sikh entity and revival of the lost glory of the sikhs¹⁸. This, according to Master Tara Singh should be the goal of the panth.

Master Tara Singh, in his tract 'Agad Punjab', supports a free political zone comprising of the cultural Punjab¹⁹. This zone comprises almost equal proportion of Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs, meaning thereby that no group shall be able to exploit the other partners. This tract is one of the best tracts by Master Tara Singh. In this tract Master Tara Singh proves his contention with facts and figures. He analyses how this zone shall be among the richest zones of the world. To prove it, he has given inexhaustive data regarding the area, population, languages, religions, industry, resources etc. of the proposed zone.

Within an year of the formation of Pakistan, Master Tara Singh predicted the future of this Muslim state. He says that lawlessness, a de-facto state of no-government, restlessness

17. Ibid, p.7.

18. Ibid, p.10.

19. Agad Punjab, p.1.

and frustration will go on increasing in Pakistan. The death of the uniting force of Pakistan, Mr. Mohammed Ali Jinnah, Muslims' defeat in Hyderabad and partial defeat in Kashmir has added to already prevailing state of discontentment in Pakistan²⁰. Final defeat on Kashmir front will be damaging for the Pakistanis. Soon the political administration of this state will come to a standstill. The frustration of the masses shall increase the criminal activities in the country²¹. People shall repent on their decision for creation of Pakistan. Much of Master Tara Singh's prediction has been proved by history.

The tract 'Panth Di Kachehri Vich sada paik' (our point of view before the Panth) deals with the situation of division of the Shiromani Akali Dal in July 1962. When Sant Fateh Singh rebelled against Master Tara Singh and announced the formation of another Akali Dal, the Sikh's political situation underwent a major change. It was not only the division based on the follower of the two personalities i.e. Master Tara Singh and Sant Fateh Singh, rather the base was Jat-Sikh versus non-Jat Sikh. It was damaging for the basic tenets of the Panth.

In this tract Master Tara Singh presents arguments in his favour and says that Sant Fateh Singh's allegations against him on the issue of the two fasts by Sant Fateh Singh and himself (Master Tara Singh) are baseless. He, by producing two photographs (in the tract) showing the breaking of the fasts by the above two

20. Pakistan, p.3.

21. Ibid, p.7.

leaders and by giving extracts from newspapers quoting the statements of the leaders and the resolutions of the working committee of the Akali Dal, defends his stand as against the Sant's. The whole tract is a logical defence, an attempt at proving his sincerity. In the end, Master Tara Singh makes a passionate appeal. He says that he is prepared to do anything for the panth but the Sant Group should not hurt the panth in the back by using the same tactics of division among the Sikh ranks, which were being used by anti-Akali parties. He shows his preparedness to accept any punishment for his wrong deeds²². He further claims that he might have committed many wrongs, mistakes and even blunders but had never deceived the interests of the panth. To divide the Dal, he feels, is to join the tent of deceivers of panth²³.

In the tract 'panth Azad - panth zindabad', Master Tara Singh advocates a Sikh state within Indian Union. To strengthen his point he quotes from the history of the sub-continent, India.

Master Tara Singh says that Sikhs cannot remain slaves. Sikh have always remained either rulers or rebels. Having suffered at the hands of the Congress regime for eighteen years (the tract was written in 1965) Master Tara Singh feels that Indo-Pak War (1965) is the high time to declare the Sikh demands in black and white²⁴. He feels that the Sikhs should

22. panth ni kachehri vich sada paidh, p.12.

23. Ibid, p.16

24. Panth Azad, panth zindabad, p.5.

demand self-determination. A nation's right to self-determination has been accepted by the Russian Communists and even the Congress party favours it. The Congress advocates right of self-determination for the Pakhtoons of the North-West Frontier province of Pakistan but strange it is that the same right is being denied for the Muslims in Kashmir and the Sikhs in Punjab²⁵.

Inspiring his fellowmen for struggle for Sikh sovereignty, Master Tara Singh says that Sikhs have fought many battles and have lost a large number of them. The sacrifices of a nation always bear fruit. panth shall win even the battle for sovereignty. Master Tara Singh tells his followers not to be bothered by some minor defeats. Defeat is only in that moment when you loose your hearts. He asks his followers to be ready for the final battle for the achievement of sovereignty for the panth. The success, he believes, is God-granted, man's role is simply that of an instrument²⁶.

These tracts, as stated earlier, are the message of a Sikh leader to his fellowmen. As a part of artistic work these tracts may not be of much consideration but from the point of view of contents they have their value. These tracts are a minute, though partial, picture of the politico-religious

25. Ibid, p.8.

26. Ibid, p.13.

situation of the Punjab in general and the Sikhs in particular, of the Age of Master Tara Singh.

The language of these tract is very simple. These were meant for masses dwelling even in the remotest villages of the province. The author has tried to teach his fellowmen in simple language, familiar local and conversational tone with a logic from ordinary day to day life.

In his tracts there is a lot of repetition of the same point and he does not shift to the next point, nor does he stop, until he feels that he has convinced the reader. On various points, regarding which he is sentimental, he gets emotional and sometimes even stops presenting further evidence or argument and rather he wishes the reader to accept that much of logic as the sufficient. Sometimes he even accepts his limitations as to advancement of new or more evidence and appeals to the reader to respectfully accept his thesis.

The logic and even the evidence, though sometimes not very much convincing for a learned reader, yet these tracts affected a large number of readership and proved a booster to attract a very large number of followers for Master Tara Singh. These tracts brought forth a big number of volunteers to participate in the politico-religious movements launched by the Akali Dal under the leadership of Master Tara Singh.

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

Autobiography is an individual's interpretation of one's own life.¹ The first fully developed autobiography is also one of the greatest; 'Confessions' of St. Augustine, written in the fourth century. This design has been repeated in many later autobiographies, whether these, like St. Augustine's, are religious confessions of crisis and conversion, such as John Bunyan's 'Grace Abounding' to the 'Chief of Sinners' (1666), or secular works in which the crisis is resolved by the author's discovery of his identity and vocation as a poet or artist, such as Wordsworth's great autobiography in verse, 'The Prelude' (1805). Among the notable British and American autobiographies in prose, are those of Benjamin Franklin, J. S. Mill, Anthony Trollope, Henry Adams and Sean O'Casey.² The autobiographies of Rousseau, Gorky, Trotsky (Russia) Hitler (German) count along with the English and American list as far as their importance is concerned.

In Punjabi literature the germs of autobiography can be found as early as in Guru Gobind Singh's 'Bachitar Natak'. Autobiography proper, in Punjabi, was written only in 1945. 'Meri Yaad' by Master Tara Singh is the first ever autobiography written in prose in Punjabi language. It was published in October 1945.

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1. The Encyclopaedia Britanica, p. 298.
 2. M. H. Abrams - A Glossary of Literary Terms, pp. 15-16.

This autobiography covers the events and situations of life of Master Tara Singh. This is not only the life story of Master Tara Singh but also the history of the Sikhs in particular and Punjab in general, from 1885-1945.

Master Tara Singh has divided his autobiography into thirteen chapters. The first two chapters deal with the early life of the author. The remaining portion of the book depicts Master Tara Singh, the political leader. The chapters dealing with Nankana Sahib Massacre (1921), silt cleaning of the Golden Temple (1923), Nabha Agitation (1923-1925), Patiala Agitation (post 1926 period), Civil Disobedience (1930) Baska Agitation (1930), Saheed Ganj Morcha (1935-36) Sikander-Baldev Singh Pact (1942), Congress-Akali Plan (1943-44), Factionalism in Akali Dal (1944) depict the situations of the political history of the Sikhs and Punjab during the period with Master Tara Singh as the central figure.

Master Tara Singh has written his autobiography with the purpose of presenting the true picture of the Sikh history of the concerned period. In the Preface he declares, "except that of the events of my childhood, I have restrained myself from detailing such events (related to me), in which public can have no interest".³

The pages depicting the childhood of Master Tara Singh are the record of the formation of certain habits of the author. It also records the influences of certain persons and events. In

3. Meri Yaad, p.5.

the very first sentence, he unhesitatingly confesses that his dislike for milk was due to an incident of his early life when once his mother chided him for his habit of getting breast-feeding till that age. Although he is conscious of the cause of his dislike for milk yet he cannot mould himself as this phobia-like habit has become a part of his personality.⁴

Master Tara Singh remembers his school teacher with scorn. He has hatred for his hypocrite teacher. This teacher used to withhold the students for the whole of the day, when the actual teaching hours were never more than two hours a day, simply to make a show of his 'hard labour' and deep concern for teaching. The teacher, his method of teaching and his behaviour with the students filled the students with contempt for him.⁵

The author has a soft corner for his widow aunt, who used to relate to him events from the Sikh history and some mythological anecdotes and stories.⁶ The information of Sikh history made a great impact on him and this impact became permanent when regular reading and katha from Sikh history began to be held in the local gurdwara.⁷ This influence lessened when a large number of incidents of appearance of false goddesses occurred in the province. This faith re-emerged with the disillusionment regarding the reality about such fraudulent cheats.⁸ The author who was a Hindu till now embraced Sikhism and became a committed follower of Sikhism.⁹

4. Meri Yaad, p.9.

6. Ibid., pp.10-11.

8. Ibid., pp.20 to 24.

5. Ibid., pp.15-16

7. Ibid., pp.17-18.

9. Ibid., p.28.

The writer expresses his opposition to the new civilization which he names as dandyism under the label of modernity. In those days the style of having a lock of hair hanging on the forehead, had become much popular with the Hindu boys. Such boys would sometimes wander bareheaded in order to get their lock dried and exhibited. The author dislikes not only this fashion but also the habit of moving bareheaded in public.¹⁰ Master Tara Singh is against this style of fashions and so-called modernity.

Master Tara Singh counts some of the influences on his personality. He tells that the first major influence which affected him was listening to the Katha of Sikh history in the Gurdwaras. The second influence was that of the study of the two prize books named "Character" by Dr. Samuel Miles and "The student's Manual" by Dr. Todd.¹¹ Another major influence was that of the teaching by the Pani Piaras (the five beloved ones) at the time of Baptization. The Sikh-teaching that he should not have sexual relationship with any woman other than his wife, was learnt to heart by Master Tara Singh. All these influences were responsible for formation of his character. Throughout his life he acted upon the vow that he had taken before Guru Granth Sahib.¹² To keep up this vow he did not see cinema shows nor read romantic literature as he believed that was likely to arouse sexual urge.¹³

10. Ibid., p.25.

11. Ibid., p.26.

12. Ibid., pp.28-29.

13. Ibid., pp.29-30.

The author has a respectful remembrance for Mr. Brown the then principal of the Medical College at Lahore. Mr. Brown had a soft corner for the sikh nation. He recollects that he could not get admission in Medical College due to his short height. Here, he reviews his academic career. His assessment reveals that he suffered on academic side due to his wide interest in sports and due to and his newly-formed habit of gossiping. His interest in sports, however, made him a good player of hockey and football. His indifference to small wounds, physical pain etc. gave him the non-de-plume 'pathar' (stone)¹⁴.

The year 1906-07 was the turning point in his life. The partition of the Bengal province turned many students as anti-British. Here he analyses the reasons for strain in relations between the sikhs and the British. He lists the following reasons for Anglo-sikh differences: (1) the new enactment for Lyallpur lands, (2) Khalsa College management's take over by the Government, (3) the Komagata Maru ship's episode at Baj Baj Ghat, killing dozens of sikhs and (4) the indifference of the British to the sikh case since the Lucknow Pact (1916) between the Congress (Hindus) and the League (Muslims) regarding the proportion of communal representation in legislative houses at the centre and in the provinces.

Master Tara Singh was a devout sikh since he got Baptisation. But when he was a student of the Khalsa College at Amritsar and was a renowned sportsman, he boldly confesses

14. Ibid., pp.34-35.

that he stopped joining the evening congregations at the College Gurdwara.¹⁵

Master Tara Singh's first profession was teaching. When he was still a student of teachers' training college, he offered his services for the newly opened Khalsa School at Lyallpur on an honorarium of rupees fifteen per month only. He had to suffer a lot for the establishment and the maintenance of the school. He would even go to the extent of doing manual labour when the construction of the building was going on.¹⁶

This was in the year 1908-09. From 1909 up to 1920, Master Tara Singh has not given any details of his own life. Only casual references to the political history and particularly to the Anglo-Sikh relations have been, very briefly, given.

Though Master Tara Singh has not divided his autobiography into parts, yet one feels that from 1920, Master Tara Singh's autobiography becomes a serious study of political history of the province during the twenty five years. Though it becomes more of history, yet the author has tried to preserve its autobiographical form.

The episode at Nankana Sahib Gurdwara in which the gahart and his hired men butchers' more than one hundred and fifty Sikhs was another cause of Sikhs' hatred for the Britishers. The Govt. adopted the tactics of delay in the passing of the Gurdwara Management Act. The author believes that it was foolish on the

15. Ibid., pp.39-41.

16. Ibid., pp.41-42.

part of the government to delay the bill because the Sikhs' silence or inaction was meaningful but the Government underestimated the Sikhs' strength and considered it as disinterestedness of the Sikh nation.¹⁷

As the first step towards plan of action on this issue the Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee organised regular elections to the committee. After the elections were over the committee decided to regulate the affairs of the rich treasury of the Golden Temple. This decision of the Sikh committee was not acceptable to the Government. A large number of Sikh leaders were arrested. This provocation by the Government made Sikhs to volunteer themselves for an agitation. After a forceful agitation the Government had to concede the Sikh demands.¹⁸

Discussing the psychology of the victorious agitators, Master Tara Singh says that the victory of the agitation, turned the aggressive agitators to the acts of hooliganism. Ticketless travelling and misbehaviour with the leaders and management of the Gurdwara over petty issues and non-issues became the common phenomena. Some over-enthusiastic leaders made fiery and irresponsible speeches as well. The Government reacted to the situation and arrested several hundred Sikhs. This helped in ushering some discipline among the Akali workers.¹⁹

Commenting on the above situation, Master Tara Singh has made some valuable observations. He believes that the one who cannot digest a victory will fall later on. One who cannot face

17. Ibid., p.56.

18. Ibid., p.58.

19. Ibid., pp.58-60.

defeat will die. He feels that hooliganism had harmed Sikh polity. All this has roots in degeneration of the religious make up of Sikh society. We have lost the qualities of humbleness, morality, selflessness and unity. He asserts that the politics and particularly Sikh politics should be based on religion and ethics.²⁰

Guru Ka Singh agitation and Non-co-operation movement were run almost simultaneously. The later could not succeed because the Hindustani volunteers failed to brave the police atrocities. The Akalis braved rigours of the movement and made sacrifices for the success of the movement. Secondly, the extremist Akalis, famously known as Babbar Akalis, had begun their operations of avenging the police, the touts of the police and the British officials. The Babbar Akalis killed a large number of persons who belonged to the above stated categories. In order to earn the sympathy of the Akalis as well as to prove that the government had a sympathetic and compromising attitude towards moderate Akalis, the British Govt. released the moderate Akali agitators on the pretext of response to the successful peace-making efforts of the Akalis during the Hindu-Muslim clashes in the city of Amritsar. Master Tara Singh, here recounts that the Sikh efforts for peace during Hindu-Muslim clashes had earned the Sikhs the support and the sympathies of both the communities.²¹

Master Tara Singh praises the spirit of the Sikh masses, who envied each other in sewa (service) during the operations of

20. Ibid., pp.60-61.

21. Ibid., p.65.

the cleaning of silt from the tank of the Golden Temple at Amritsar. Master Tara Singh lauds the role of Teja Singh Samundri whose administrative and organising ability was remarkable.²²

The chapters 'Nabha Morcha' and 'Patiala Morcha', are beautiful specimens of memoirs. In these chapters, Master Tara Singh has analysed the personalities of the rulers of Patiala and Nabha states, Gurmukh Singh Jhabal, Gopal Singh Gauri, Kharak Singh, Nara Singh Thikriwala etc. Assessing the personality of the ruler of Patiala, Master Tara Singh observes that "the ruler of Patiala was a very intelligent man but he had a drawback that he had over-confidence of his intelligence."²³ Gurmukh Singh Jhabal and Gopal Singh Gauri were irresponsible as leaders though the latter had somewhat reformed himself. Master Tara Singh feels that an irresponsible leader is a danger for his own organisation.²⁴ Baba Kharak Singh was a credulous man. He could be easily provoked by any shrewd man.

Master Tara Singh claims to be the first Sikh leader to oppose the Nehru Report (1929) which, he believes, was against the interest of the Sikh nation. He, however, does not claim the whole credit for the opposition and rejection of the Report. Instead, he eulogistically presents Baba Kharak Singh as the greatest protagonist of the Sikh case (the author recollects the visit of Mohan Das Gandhi, Jawahar Lal, Dr. Ansari etc. in the office of the Gurdwara Committee in 1929, when these leaders

22. Ibid., p.69.

23. Ibid., p.72.

24. Ibid., pp.81-82.

had made promises that the Congress party won't sign any communal agreement which could not be acceptable to the Sikhs and the other minorities).²⁵ Further, on the issue of the colours of the proposed flag of free India,²⁶ Kharak Singh was still more vocal in his fight for the Sikh case and in his opposition of the Congress Party.

Master Tara Singh very boldly accepts that he had made a compromise with his enemy, the ruler of Patiala, and as a result of this unprincipled compromise the son and the nephew of Baba Kharak Singh were terminated from their services in Patiala Government.²⁷ The author does not hide his being a party to the dirty group-politics which was on many occasions personal though sometimes personal and political both.

In regard to the Sikhs' share in the constitutional set-up, Master Tara Singh feels that injustice with the Sikhs was due to two reasons: (i) the Sikh opposition of the Government during political turned Gurdwara Reform Movement and (ii) soft corner for the Muslim nation, for it had successfully demonstrated its faithfulness towards the British. Master Tara Singh feels that the change in British attitude towards the Muslims might have been due to international situation.²⁸ The author and some British friends of the Sikhs made efforts for a re-approachment between the Sikhs and the British. The second World War was an appropriate and a golden opportunity for this

25. Ibid., pp.102-103.

27. Ibid., p.104.

26. Ibid., p.103.

28. Ibid., pp.107-109.

purpose. These persons, including Master Tara Singh impressed upon the sikhs to get recruited to the country's army. This policy had two-fold purpose: Firstly, to convince the British of sikh concern for them by helping them at the juncture of international crises²⁹ and secondly, to use this strength of sikhs in army as a threat for getting nation's due in multifarious situations.

The chapter naska morch is the story of final breach in relations between Master Tara Singh and Baba Kharak Singh. Master Tara Singh has a grudge that Baba Kharak Singh launched an agitation without the consent of the executive body of the Akali Dal. Ugly part of this situation was that none courted arrest following Baba Kharak Singh. Baba Kharak Singh's insult was an insult to the whole organisation. As a result Master Tara Singh joined the agitation. In the jail both the leaders met and decided that none should believe the reporting of a third man without verifying from the concerned person. But this agreement could not continue longer. After the failure of the morcha both the leaders blamed each other for its failure.³⁰ Thereafter, they never joined hands in any situation. (Baba Kharak Singh's version is, however, different. He feels that Master Tara Singh did not want launching of this morcha and rather wanted that this morcha should not become successful. The failure would automatically harm the leader Baba Kharak

29. Ibid., p.109.

30. Ibid., pp.119-120.

singh).³¹

In his autobiography Master Tara Singh confesses that he is a short-tempered man.³² His reactions to provocations were immediate. In 1935 he went to Lahore with a view to make a compromise with the Muslims on the alleged mosque within the precincts of the Gurdwara Shaheed Ganj but Muslim provocations prepared him for non-acceptance of even acceptable demand of the Muslims.

Master Tara Singh is sorry for the growing indiscipline among the Sikhs. During Lahore agitation the Sikhs demolished the alleged mosque before the agreed limit of time. This action on the part of the Sikhs lost them the sympathies of the British Lord. The Lord became indirectly favourable to the Muslims and he transferred them the mosque and the adjoining area of the mosque of Shah Chiragh to the Muslims in lieu of the alleged Mosque within the area of the Gurdwara.³³

Master Tara Singh has judiciously depicted the personality of Sir Sunder Singh Majithia. Sir Majithia's role in educational field has got appreciations from all and sundry but his role as a politician has been questioned by a large number of Sikhs. Commenting on Sir Majithia's joining of Unionist Cabinet, Master Tara Singh feels that Sir Majithia should not have accepted the policies and the programmes of Sir Sikandar Hayat Khan as that was against the Sikh fundamentals.³⁴

31. Aali Qaumi Daro, Feb., 11, 1934

32. Meri Yaad, p.122.

33. Ibid., p.123.

34. Ibid., p.126.

In 1939 the elections to Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee were held. In these elections, Master Tara Singh's party was opposed by a 'grand alliance'. This alliance included the groups of Giani Sher Singh, Baba Kharak Singh, Chief Khalsa Diwan, Communist Party of India, terminated employees of the Gurdwaras etc. Master Tara Singh regrets that such unprincipled alliance was simply due to personal opposition and not ideology. (It must be noted that Master Tara Singh himself had unprincipled alliances with the rulers of Patiala (1934)³⁵, with Jan Singh (1962), with communists (1962),³⁶ with Congress (1948, 1957)³⁷ etc.).

Master Tara Singh was opposed to violence. Due to his vocal views, the extremist section never consulted him on such questions. He asserts that this programme did not have the sanction of any political leader either of Punjab or of Hindustan. It was the planning of some disruptive element.

The autobiography includes the details of his self-imposed exile also. In 1934-35 there arose a situation when the groups of Master Tara Singh and Giani Sher Singh made the Sikh situation as a mockery. At this juncture a group of Sikh intellectuals asked both the persons to retire from active politics. Master Tara Singh accepted the advice and left for some unknown place. He spent his period in semi-hill tract of Poonja Sahib, in Western India at Nagur Sahib, in Ganhi Ashram

35. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

36. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer - Shiromani Akali Dal (Jk Itiha), p. 265.

37. Ibid., p. 231.

at Wardha etc. During this period he wandered aimlessly and observed human nature of people of those areas. The autobiography contains a chapter dealing with this travel, in brief.

This autobiography covers the events upto 1944, when he was of 59 years of age. Master Tara Singh lived for another thirty three years. Thus, this autobiography does not cover the whole of the life of Master Tara Singh.

This autobiography is an amalgam of four forms i.e. autobiography, memoirs, history and travelogue. (Formal part of the autobiography has been dealt in the fifth chapter of this thesis).

As it has been said that autobiography is an individual's interpretation of one's own life, 'Meri Yaad' the autobiography of Master Tara Singh, fulfills the conditions of such a work. In his autobiography, Master Tara Singh constructs his life by showing the true picture of his life. He has very faithfully mentioned those influences which effected his personality particularly his character and his religious outlook. He owes all this to Sant Attar Singh, his aunt, his mother and the didactic books read by him during his childhood. This has been verified by various biographers of Master Tara Singh including Durlab Singh (Valiant Fighter), Mohinder Singh (Sardar-i-Azam), Miranjan Singh (Jeevan Yatra-Master Tara Singh), Jaswant Singh (Master Tara Singh-Jeevan Sangharash te Udash) etc. Master Tara Singh's early life also was a period of struggle on economic front. His

elder brother's rigorous life has never failed the qualities of compassion, simplicity and cooperation in Master Tara Singh. The struggle for reform in sikh shrines and for freedom of India (in which Master Tara Singh actively participated and suffered), filled Master Tara Singh with selflessness. His participation in struggle for an honourable place for sikhs, added in him better qualities as a religious man and as a leader. His being committed to his ideology in political and religious field and his sacrifice of his personal interest made him a real leader of the masses. His work in political, religious and social fields made him popular with people from every rank and file. From layman's point of view Master Tara Singh was a non-achiever (to quote Sardar Kapur Singh in his paper - 'sikh situation After the Death of Master Tara Singh'), but for an intellectual Master Tara Singh's contribution is immense though in some fields indirect. All this has established Master Tara Singh, the leader, as a great human personality in his autobiography. This personality, however, is not a result of his own pen and in his autobiography, but history also records it. Thus, the contention that in autobiography the author ^{can} construct his personality stands proved in this autobiography by Master Tara Singh.

Generally speaking, while talking of his own status as well as while discussing his own role, it is difficult for an autobiography writer to remain balanced. An extra grain of

praise for self can turn him a hypocrite and wilful concealing of self importance exhibiting events diminishes the personality of the autobiographer. Master Tara Singh has well maintained the balance by discussing his failures, his weaknesses and by introspection. Almost in every situation he analyses his own role in relation to his principles and in relation to others. He accepts his fault wherever he is wrong. In spite of this, his respect for values, his morality, his struggle and his being committed to an ideology obliterates his demerits and his personality appears as a model worthy of inspiration to future generations.

Master Tara Singh has written about himself, about the influences on his personality, about his relatives, about his political, religious, social and ethical ideas, about his opponents, about mob behaviour, about agitational politics, regarding the leadership patterns, regarding various questions dealing with multifarious fields. Strange it is that he does not talk about his career as a journalist, about his literary works, the reasons for joining active politics, regarding his family life, his wife, his children etc. Nor does he talk of his seniors and their attitudes towards him or about his juniors and their reaction towards him and vice versa. In spite of this a casual reader of his autobiography does not find much missing. It seems that a full personality is being revealed before the reader of the autobiography.

An autobiography must be a true record of facts. 'Meri Yaad' proves true from this point of view also. The proof that this book has been used by a very large number of biographers and historians is sufficient to prove its authenticity, however, Teja Singh's 'Aard', Mohan Singh Vaid's 'Dairy', Niranjan Singh's, Jagwant Singh's, Durlab Singh's, Gurcharan Singh's, Prithpal Singh Kapur's biographies of Master Tara Singh, Hira Singh Dard's 'Merian Kujh Itthak Yaadan', Sohan Singh Josh's, Harjinder Singh Dilgeer's, Mohinder Singh's, Kailash Chander Gulati's histories of the contemporary politics also record most of the facts presented by Master Tara Singh. Wherever there is a minor difference it is mainly due to the angle of observation. Secondly Master Tara Singh still hoped to live a pretty long period more (and he lived for 33 years more) so it was there in his mind that he was to continue to be accepted as an established, honest and genuine leader of the masses. So, partly defensive attitude in the autobiographies of politicians has mostly been observed. But today, in 1981, when fourteen years have passed since the death of Master Tara Singh, the facts and the stand presented by him in his autobiography has not been refuted and rather it stands confirmed. Thus, from the truth of facts point also this autobiography is flawless.

Apart from giving valuable information about the personality of the great son of Punjab, Master Tara Singh, this

this autobiography serves two major purposes. This is a source of inspiration to the future generation to make their lives sublime; secondly this is a ready reference for future historians of Akali party, sikhs, Punjab and India's freedom struggle. Thus, as a piece of literature and as history 'Meri Yaad' the first autobiography in prose in Punjabi literature is also one of the best autobiographies of Punjabi language.

TRAVELOGUE

Travelogue in Punjabi is a very old tradition. 'Janam Sakhi' about the lives of the Sikh Gurus have the germs of the present literary form of travelogue. But, the formal travelogue in the present form as a genre is however, about a half-century old. The first travelogues are perhaps 'Burma Di Sair' (by Suraj Singh-1908) and 'America Di Sair' (by Raghbir Singh-1914), but the first most discussed travelogue is 'Mera Vilaiti Safarnama' (by Lal Singh Kamla Akali-1933). Most of the historiographers of Punjabi literature have discussed it as pioneer among travelogues.¹

Master Tara Singh's 'Mera Safarnama' was written in 1934-35, when only a few travelogues had been published in Punjabi language. Master Tara Singh's travelogue, however, was published posthumously in 1968.²

'Mera Safarnama' is in the form of a diary. Master Tara Singh had written the details of his journey, on some of the days, during the period of eight months of his self-imposed exile. This travelogue is not only in the form of a diary but also partly in epistolary form. At many places the writer is addressing someone. After going through his style of addressing³, we find that the author is writing letters to

1. Gurinder Singh Grewal 'Punjabi Vich Rogi Safarnama' Ik Adhyan', pp.14-15, also Harnjit Singh-Punjabi Vich Safarnama, an article published in 'Punjabi Sahit De Sath Sath' (Ed. Ishwar Singh Atari), p.352.

2. Master Tara Singh died on November 22, 1967.

3. At p.34 of the travelogue the author writes, "Please send gardar Arjan Singh because it will not be wise to remain indifferent to the designs of the ruler of Patiala".

someone and if he did not intend to post these letters to anyone, then he might have thought of writing this travel-diary for himself as well as for his family members.

The travelogue deals with no foreign land but describes the land and the people of India though the scene is that of some different culture.

Finally this travelogue is not about a planned travel for the sake of travel; but travel is simply a result of his self-imposed exile. In the very beginning of his travel we see that he is not happy for having begun this travel because he is much concerned with the environment that he has left behind him and especially the political situation of the sikhs.⁴ Almost during the whole of the period of travel, he thinks, talks and seems to be worried about his nation. For the author, this is a period for meditating over the sikh situation. Master Tara Singh has always in his mind the sikh environment. He is sad at the sorry state of affairs of Akali party⁵. The groupism in the party could have been avoided, but, instead, both the groups (including the group headed by him) engaged themselves in condemning the rival group and in justifying itself. Further, he thinks of the possibilities of the Muslim rule and the tough period for the sikhs under the Muslim rule⁶. Thus his community and his

4. He is so engrossed in his thoughts for the sikh panth that he forgets to carry his umbrella from his seat of the train.

5. Ibid, p.1

6. Ibid, p.2

concern for it is present from the beginning of the book of its end.

During the period of the nine months spent by Master Tara Singh out of his home town, like a traveller, he visited Saharanpur, Tajewala, Roosta Sahib, Harpat Bagar Bihari Garh, Mihalgarh, Bhangan Sahib, Masoor Sahib, Wardha, Agra and Delhi etc. At all these places and during all his activities, Master Tara Singh does not forget that he is a great leader of the Sikhs and observes and comments upon every point with his concerns as a leader of the Sikh nation. While writing about any area, he talks about the Sikhs, their professions, their style and standard of living, their cultural conflict with the local inhabitants, the places of Sikh interest, the persons belonging to other religions and their relations with the Sikhs and the Gurdwaras of the area.

While writing about his stay at Roosta Sahib, he talks of the state of affairs of the Gurdwaras specially at the hands of the ruler and the other administrators of the area. The land owned by Gurdwaras, which was free from revenue, has been taxed⁷. Some of the property attached to various Gurdwaras has been either acquired or confiscated. The ruler of Simour has confiscated much of the land owned by Gurdwara Bhangan Sahib. The land attached to Gurdwara Toka Sahib has been attached by the ruler because of ill reputation

7. Masa Safarnama, p.29.

of the priest of Gurdwara⁸. The Government has constructed some building on the land of the Gurdwara at Nahan without paying any amount of compensation⁹. The Government is disallowing the construction of a second floor of the building of the Gurdwara. The author is much pained at the state of affairs of the Gurdwara at paonta sahib. The Gurdwara had a land of 400 bighas but the state has constructed tahsil office a hospital, a Hindu temple and a market in an area of 150 bighas of land without the permission of the Gurdwara authorities and without paying any remuneration for the land. The former mahant of the Gurdwara had demanded land in lieu of the acquired land but his demand has not been heeded to. Instead, a condition has been imposed on the property of the Gurdwara that the mahant of the Gurdwara should be a man of high ethical standards and he should remain loyal to the government¹⁰. Master Tara Singh wonders how the Gurdwara or its property is to be penalised for the personal faults of the mahant.

Master Tara Singh, analysing the communal conditions of the area says that the Hindus of Nahan are fanatic. The local sikhs, however, have better opinion about the ruler. The local sikhs, attribute the excesses committed on the sikhs to the fanatic Hindu officers of the local administration. The

8. Ibid, p.29

9. Ibid, p.29

10. Ibid, p.30

fanatic Hindus have no respect for the feeling of the sikhs¹¹. This section of the Hindus deliberately smokes on the threshold of the Gurdwara in order to insult the sikhs. This situation has many a time lead to brawls, and one such brawl resulted into the murder of a Hindu by a sikh named sachha singh¹².

Due to his planning of remaining aloof from the public, Master Tara Singh paid a secret visit to Bhaini sahib (Ludhiana District), which is the head office of the Namdhari organization. When Master Tara Singh visited Bhaini sahib, a community congregation was being held to celebrate the annual day of their organisation. During the functions, four separate kitchens for different sects of the sikhs, had been arranged by the organisers. There were separate kitchens each for Kuka Babekis, Nihang Babekis, Bhasori Babekis and the fourth for the remaining ganga which belonged to none of the three sects¹³. This, Master Tara Singh says, has damaged the very base of the sikh concept of langar which is based on the thought that there should be no caste, creed or sect distinction among the sikhs.

During his visit at Masur sahib (Maharashtra State), Master Tara Singh spent most of time in the Gurdwaras. This area is inhabited mainly by those persons who are concerned with the Gurdwaras or by the businessman whose business is dependant on pilgrims of these Gurdwaras. Appreciating the hospitality of the management of the Gurdwara Mata sahib,

11. Ibid., p.30.

12. Ibid., p.30.

13. Ibid., p.64.

he tells that on seeing more than a hundred pilgrims the Nihangs who were managing the Gurdwara were overjoyed. They provided the pilgrims with milk and jalebis (A Typical punjabi sweet¹⁴). The persons who wanted to stay there were provided with best possible facilities by the Nihang-Incharge of the Gurdwara.

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Though Master Tara Singh is happy to notice the hospitality of the punjabi Nihangs managing the Gurdwara but he is pained to find serious differences between the punjabi Nihangs and the southern sikhs. The punjabi Nihangs had complaints against the southern sikhs regarding their corruption and misuse of the Langar funds, as well as regarding misbehaviour by the clerical staff and the priest section of the Gurdwara under the management of the southern sikhs. Another complaint against the southern sikhs was that they used to prepare Karah parshad in lesser quantity of ghse.¹⁶ The author feels that all these allegations were baseless and the point of contention was that the management of the each Khand Gurdwara was in the hands of the southern sikhs. The only point that goes against the southern sikhs is that the ceremonies they conducted while following the sikh tenets were unauthentic.¹⁷

14. Ibid., p.71.

15. Ibid., p.72. Master Tara Singh has mistakenly used the word southern for the sikhs of Maharashtra. It might be popular mode of addressing them but Maharashtra is in the Western zone of India. The appropriate term would have been Western sikhs, but as Master Tara Singh has used the term southern, it has not been corrected by this researcher.

16. Ibid., p.72.

17. Ibid., p.72.

They were much under the influence of Hinduism. This, Master Tara Singh accepts, has affected the income of the Gurdwara under the management of the southern sikhs, as a large number of the pilgrims would not like to donate liberally to the funds of this Gurdwara¹⁸.

Dispute between the managements of both the Gurdwaras is due to southern versus Punjabi differences. This has resulted in influencing their attitude towards the Sikh pilgrims of the Gurdwara of Hasoor sahib. They behave like two shop-keepers of the same street. The business of these managements is not to welcome^{or} to facilitate the pilgrims to the Gurdwaras, but is to attract customers to their shops.¹⁹

Master Tara Singh, though a Punjabi Sikh, does not behave in the manner of partiality. He appreciates the southern sikhs who have maintained the honour and have since long been sacrificing for the maintenance and the honour of such Khand Gurdwara. The southern sikhs bravely faced the hostility of the local Muslims, who are in big majority in that vicinity²⁰. Master Tara Singh analysing the traits of the southern sikhs appreciates their courage. He says that though the southern sikhs are physically not well built up but they are more courageous than the Punjabi sikhs.

18. Ibid, p.74-

19. Ibid., pp.74-75.

20. Ibid., p.75.

It goes to their credit that they protected their institutions from the tyranny of the majority population of the area, specially^{When} there had been age-long hostility between both the religions.²¹ Here, Master Tara Singh behaves like an unprejudiced persons and takes an objective view of the relations between the Punjabi sikhs and the southern sikhs.

Master Tara Singh did not visit sikh centres only (i.e. Beonta sahib, Bhaini sahib, Masoor sahib etc.) but also travelled through Wardha, Agra, Delhi etc. (Mohan Dass Karam Chand Gandhi had been staying at Wardha. Master Tara Singh paid a visit to Wardha on November 16, 1934 and spent a few days there²². Master Tara Singh has given detailed description of the Ashram of Gandhi.

Master Tara Singh tells that only women visitors were allowed to stay at Gandhi's Ashram and male visitors had to go to Seth Janna Lal's residence²³. Appreciating the hospitality of the Seth, Master Tara Singh tells that the Seth's residence looked like a big hotel, where dozens of visitors used to stay everyday. As the visitors belonged to different areas, different cultures and different nations, it was not possible to prepare different dishes for every visitor. So

21. Ibid., p.75.

22. Ibid., p.88.

23. Ibid., p.88.

a very large number of dishes were prepared and one could make his choice.²⁴ Some of the dishes were new for most of the visitors, so everyone would try to imitate the other in eating the unknown dishes. Master Tara Singh very sadly narrates how he had to remain half-fed in the beginning because he did not know as to which dish and of what quantity would be sufficient as his diet. Either he had over-eaten or could not satiate his hunger.²⁵ It was only after four or five meals that he could know as to the quantity and the type of the dish to be taken by him for his meals. While commenting on the cooking of the dishes, Master Tara Singh says that though the number of the dishes was large but only a few were worth-eating for him. Gujrati people add sugar in many vegetables and Master Tara Singh could not relish that. Another dish of pumpkin, cooked without adding salt or turmeric, was tasteless for the author but the author found a man relishing only that one dish. A dal, which had been cooked in Punjabi style which was served towards the ending of the meals, was very tasteful. One day karah was served to the guests and Master Tara Singh got a lion's share because, they said that the Khalsa dish must be served to Khalsaji in abundance.²⁶

Master Tara Singh tells that the main product of that area is barley. The local people's diet is mainly barley and

24. Ibid., p.89.

25. Ibid., p.90.

26. Ibid., p.91.

different dishes are made from barley. The people relish eating popped-barleys as the Punjabis have a taste for popped-corn (of maize). The poor and the rich alike relished popped-barleys.²⁷

Talking of the religious atmosphere of the Gandhi Ashram, Master Tara Singh describes the routine of the Ashram. Gandhi himself lived in girls' Ashram which was at one mile distance from the Ashram for men. The prayers were made at girls' Ashram. The language of the prayers was Sanskrit and to Master Tara Singh's astonishment most of the visitors were deaf to Sanskrit language. Master Tara Singh regrets that Gandhi is not so far free from orthodoxy.²⁸

During the prayers, one could sit anywhere. There was no mattress or cushion spread on the floor to sit on, for the visitors. For Gandhi a special cushion was spread on the floor and a big round pillow had also been placed along the wall. This special privilege for Gandhi is not appreciated by Master Tara Singh.²⁹ He compares this scene of prayers with the atmosphere of the Sikh congregation. He recalls that Guru Gobind Singh always considered his followers as equal to himself and the treatment given to them was the same that was given to the Guru. Master Tara Singh is afraid that this special type of treatment given to Gandhi was likely to affect the others and this may lead to some complex with the visitors.³⁰

27. Ibid., p.92.

29. Ibid., p.93.

28. Ibid., p.93.

30. Ibid., pp.93-94.

Talking of strictness of discipline, Master Tara Singh 150 writes that before the prayers began, the roll call of the girls staying in the Ashram was taken. The writer could not know whether absence of the girls from prayers was liable for punishment or not³¹ but he feels that that was not in tune with the fundamentals of 'satyagraha' because anything specially religious performances, done under force is likely to decrease one's respect for that.³² In his autobiography also, he recollects that the forcible attendance at the college Gurdwara had already affected the religious environment in the college. Persuasion and not force is really effective.

While returning from Wardha, Master Tara Singh broke his journey at Agra. He visited the famous building of the world, 'Taj Mahal'. 'Taj Mahal' does not appeal to the mind of Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh's disliking for 'Taj Mahal', in his own words, is due to his preference for natural scenery.³³ He loves living cascades, fountains, pet animals, birds, flowers and even handsome men and women more than a life-less tomb.³⁴ Master Tara Singh's dislike for 'Taj Mahal' seems to have another background also. 'Taj Mahal' was got constructed by the Mughal emperor Shah Jahan in the loving memory of his wife and Master Tara Singh has a disliking for every thing reminding of romantic love stories. (In his book of essays, 'Grehst Dharm sikhya' he rejects even the love affairs of Heer Ranjha, the famous love legend of the Punjab). While narrating his visit of 'Taj Mahal' he does not conceal

31. Ibid., p.94.

33. Ibid., p.98.

32. Ibid., p.94.

34. Ibid., pp.98-99.

his disliking for museums and exhibitions. It is strange to observe that a man of Master Tara Singh's style has disliking for exhibitions.³⁵ When on the other hand he is much concerned about the history of his nation, which he wanted should be preserved in its authenticity.

The travelogue reveals that Master Tara Singh is a great lover of river-sides, forests and hills. He enjoys sitting by the river-sides continuously for hours. He loves to walk by the river-sides, through the hills and forests. The forests enchant him, rivers inspire him and hills attract him.³⁶ This has resulted from his religious bent of mind which makes him to move far from the madding crowd of the city life. The whole travelogue is replete with the scenes and descriptions of natural scenery which gives him ecstatic pleasure and the style of the writer speaks of the writer's emotions and the expression is full of gusto.

During the period of his self-imposed exile Master Tara Singh enjoyed hunting expeditions in the forests adjoining the area of Poanta Sahib. This is the same area where the tenth Sikh Guru Gobind Singh spent a lot of time in hunting besides other important activities as a politician, as a religious leader and as a writer. The thought of Guru Gobind Singh's love for hunting adds to his joy of hunting expeditions.

One thing that we notice through the book is that Master Tara Singh is always conscious of the fact that he had left

35. Ibid., p.98.

36. Ibid., pp.16, 17, 22, 23, 26, 27, 33, 98-99.

Amritsar for the purpose of spending some period away from active public life, but it is strange that he spends most of his period in the Gurdwaras or most, mostly the Sikh people. He being a very famous leader of the Sikh nation, was well known to the Sikhs from all walks of life. Thus it would not have been possible for him to avoid being recognised by the Sikhs, the active local personalities, officials, etc.

The travelogue is a record of the state of the Sikhs, the Sikh Gurdwaras, and the culture conflict of the Sikhs with the local inhabitants of the areas, wherever he went. It is also an interesting portrait of the hills, the forests, and the river-sides of the areas journeyed by Master Tara Singh. Except on the points of Sikh concern, where he behaves as a Sikh leader, he has presented the land and the people as an objective observer. His observations of the Sikh situation also, is impartial. He, while writing about the condition of the Gurdwaras at Hapur Sahib, does not get prejudiced in favour of the Punjabi Sikhs to the extent of their due.

Thus, Master Tara Singh's travelogue is a Sikh leader's visit to some Sikh Gurdwara zones, with the exception of Wardha and Agra. In this travelogue, Master Tara Singh a lover of nature, a religious leader, behaves like an impartial observer of the land the people, particularly the Sikhs, the Sikh places and the Sikh concerns. Besides being the story

of a journey, the travelogue by Master Tara Singh is a narrative of socio-economic and religious history of the area visited by him during 1934-35.

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CHAPTER - III**IDEOLOGICAL CONCEPTS OF MASTER TARA SINGH**

1. Political
2. Religious
3. Sociological
4. Ethical

...

POLITICAL

Master Tara Singh was the only major political leader of the Sikhs since Jassa Singh Ahluwalia.¹ All the political decisions and activities of his days have either the stamp of Master Tara Singh's approval or were influenced by his opposition. During his political career of long fifty years, Master Tara Singh watched the political situation of political parties, leaders, working of state, administration and justice. Master Tara Singh was a religious man, a political leader, a writer and a journalist. His political ideology which appears from his writings is an amalgam of the reactions of all the above aspects of personality of the same person. The reactions of a religious man, a political leader, a writer and a journalist to a particular context, situation or point are ordinarily different from one another. Master Tara Singh, on different occasions commented in a different tone; sometimes as a writer, on other occasion as a journalist/political leader/religious man. This variety of experiences has resulted into some confusion or incoherence in his political ideology or even it may be said that there are no formulations in the strict sense of the term in Master Tara Singh's political comments. As stated above this flaw can be attributed to Master Tara Singh's multi-dimensional personality.

1. Jassa Singh Ahluwalia (1718-1783) was a leader of the Sikhs during the eighteenth century. He was the founder of the Dal Khalsa. Under its flag the Sikhs fought various battles as a united force. He was the most popular leader of the century.

From point of view of form of state, the governments have been divided into three types — monarchy, aristocracy and democracy. Absolute monarchy has no place in Sikhism. Democracy is the best form of government provided it is free from defects like illiteracy, corruption and nepotism etc. It is very difficult for a common man to be above these things. The government can be efficient if the rulers are without these defects. Such people are generally very few; but if the government is given in their hands, it would be the best form of government. Such a government is called aristocracy or the government by the best; it is different from oligarchy. Plato called such best people as guardians and, to elevate their character, he recommended for them a life of hard and rigid discipline. Similarly Lenin organised a party of the best and the devoted workers whom he named as Communist Party; only those workers could become its members who were willing to make all kinds of sacrifices for the cause of Communism. Manu assigns this job to rajahatya. Meaning thereby, they all believe that the power of governing the common multitude should rest in the hands of the trained few. The fear about aristocracy that it might become fascist, has to be guarded against.

Guru Gobind Singh found a solution of the dilemma. The abolition of caste system was the first step. Now there was provision of opportunity for all and there should be no social hindrance in picking up the efficient people. The principle of selection was 'willingness to sacrifice life for the common good.' Their character was further improved by putting them under a

discipline which was harder than the one proposed by Plato for the Guardians or by Lenin for the members of the Communist party.

Master Tara Singh, whose main source of ideological concepts is the Sikh philosophy and the Sikh history, is in favour of limited monarchy. He favours lesser interference by state to the maximum of possibility. The king should treat his subjects as his sons. His role is that of a guardian of the subjects and custodian of the state. He is not to behave like a superior or arrogant official. The king shall be a man with the qualities of a warrior, administrator, justice etc. Moreover he is to lead the life of a spiritual man. All these qualities that Master Tara Singh assigns to a king are like those that have been attributed for a king by Plato. Such an ideal person, though improbable, is not impossible. If the king of Master Tara Singh's concept, goes astray then who is there to check him? There must be some force to put limits on his functioning and power. When Master Tara Singh grants superior power to the Akal Takht in social and religious affairs, it does not remain absolute monarchy. The power of the spiritual head over the temporal head even though in religious affairs, turns the monarchy into a limited monarchy under the check of religion. Moreover religion and politics are not separable in Sikh polity. Master Tara Singh, however, does not grant any sanctioning force to the spiritual head. In a situation of non-performance of the mandate of the spiritual head, it is only the coercion in the name of religious force which can be used against the monarch.

In Master Tara Singh's frame of form of government, there is a king at the top; he is spiritually enlightened, morally high, physically powerful, skilled in administration, an impartial justice and what not. Next to the king there is a nominated governor in every province. The role of the governor is almost the same as that of the king with the difference that the governor is answerable to the king and has to work in a smaller area. Further, next to the governor there is a panchayat in every village.² There would be no elections to the panchayat. The panbardar, the priest, the nobles of the village and the educated persons of the village should be the ex-officio members of the panchayat. The major decisions, however, should be taken by the whole of the village community. This is like the ancient Greece system of City States.³ The panchayat system of Master Tara Singh's views is in a way self-rule by the villagers. The village panchayat is under the direct command of the governor. The working of the panchayat is to be watched by the governor.

King of Master Tara Singh's ideology is under various checks. He is bound to obey the spiritual throne on religious and social front. His sovereignty, then, remains on political realm only. But there, too, Master Tara Singh says that the king is only a nominal head of the state. The king is like a custodian because he rules for the Khalsa. The final sovereignty lies in the Khalsa.⁴ Here Master Tara Singh has mixed democracy with monarchy. In putting restrictions on the king, Master

2. Prem Lagan, p.20.

3. The New Columbia Encyclopedia, p.565.

4. Baba Tega Singh, pp.8-9.

Tara Singh has virtually reduced the king to a nominal head who cannot function according to his pleasure. Further, while talking of the Khalsa rule, Master Tara Singh says that the sovereignty is that of the proletariat as they have been bestowed sovereignty by Guru Gobind Singh.⁵ All this creates a mess of ideas. A king is answerable to the spiritual Throne in religious and social affairs; he is a nominal ruler and rules in the name of Khalsa; de jure sovereignty lies in the proletariat. On the other hand, as the functioning of the king is under checks, it is unexplained how these checks are to be implemented. The election/nomination/hereditary office of the ruler has not been explained. It seems that Master Tara Singh wishes a king, who is so selfless and spiritually high person; should rule the state and it should be an era of satyug, where there is no physical or spiritual problem. Master Tara Singh makes a picture of such a Utopia where the king, the administering staff and even the subjects are spiritually so high that this worldliness and the problems of the material world have no meaning for them.

In his concept of the form of government, Master Tara Singh has confused various ideologies e.g. limited monarchy, theocracy, aristocracy and democracy etc. Master Tara Singh's support for a monarch, religion in a supreme status in socio-religious affairs, right to rule and administration to dedicated, intelligent and spiritual persons (like in aristocracy) and even favour for a welfare state along with sanctity for the gurmata (like democracy) is an amalgam of various ideologies.

5. Ibid., p.9.

Master Tara Singh's Chief source of thought, as stated above, is the Sikh scriptures and the Sikh history. Along with all this, his study of Western culture, history, literature and philosophy has led him to choose the better aspects from the above sources as well.

Master Tara Singh was a political leader and a journalist. Person belonging to any one of these categories has to make certain contextual comments. Master Tara Singh's incoherent and even paradoxical comments are due to the above reason. Further, he was a writer of fiction and in fiction it is not possible to present a total portrait of a scientific political system. As a Sikh, Master Tara Singh aspired for an ideal state with a spiritual atmosphere. Master Tara Singh had read a lot of English literature as a college student and as such he has added most modern theories of forms and functions of the government. With all this material discussed as a whole one cannot draw out a clear political system out of it.

Next, Master Tara Singh pleads for individual's freedom of speech, worship, profession, property etc. He believes that state should have minimum interference in an individual's life. In trade also Master Tara Singh favours laissez-faire. The interference should be exerted only when it becomes essential to help in defending the genuine rights of the affected persons.⁶

Master Tara Singh wishes that the ruler should see that there is economic stability in his kingdom. He should not resort to heavy taxation for his personal purse but instead he

6. Prem Lagan, p.20.

should charge reasonable revenue which may be sufficient to see that the basic needs of the subjects with regard to food, shelter and clothing may be fulfilled.⁷

Master Tara Singh is a protagonist of the right of equality. The rights of all the subjects are equal. There is no distinction between rich and poor. No caste is high and no caste is low. Rights of every person without consideration of caste, creed, religion or social/political/economic status are equal.⁸ Rights of men and women are also equal; but, here, Master Tara Singh explains that equal does not mean the same. Master Tara Singh favours for alike rights for both the sexes.⁹ Master Tara Singh believes that the state should equally treat all the sections of the society as far as approach is concerned. Consideration, however, may be given to needs of a certain section, but this consideration should be based on principles of justice, equality and good conscience.

Master Tara Singh is against exploitation of every type, especially of the poor labour. Bonded labour or extortion etc. are vehemently opposed by him.¹⁰

Having considered Master Tara Singh's concept of the form of state, it seems that such type of rights, equality and freedom are dependent on ruler's personal will. A monarch,

7. Baba Tega Singh, p.23.

8. Baba Tega Singh, pp.9,22.

9. Pirm Piala, pp.88-90.

10. Prem Lagan, pp.53-54.

allowing all sort of freedom and rights as a rule is likely face a chaotic situation. These rights are, however, possible if the ruler and the ruled, both the sections, have higher moral values, are not self-oriented and have a spiritual outlook. It will then, be an age of super-men. In fact Master Tara Singh had the concept of the 'City of Bliss' in his mind and the sources of such a city lie in sikh polity, sikh history and Master Tara Singh's Utopia. This trend is present in his approach to various other points also.

The recruitment of the employees of the state, specially in military and administration should be on merit only. Specific tests should be given to the incumbents and unless one exhibits his worth, one should not be selected. Exhibition of worth and not any kind of pressure should be the base of selection of employees. This should be carefully observed in army as an army man has to work on three fronts i.e. defence, administration and justice.¹¹

Master Tara Singh believes that justice must be given to all alike, without the distinction of religion, race, creed, caste or sex.¹² Justice must be quick as justice delayed is justice denied. Master Tara Singh is for deterrent punishment, for social crimes. Master Tara Singh believes that a criminal can be reformed. Master Tara Singh favours for most modern

11. Baba Tega Singh, pp.28-30.

12. Ibid., p.22.

theories of punishment. He advocates Fine and Probation,¹³ to be adopted as punishment and he emphatically says that this can help in stopping the criminal activities. He believes that criminals can be reformed but if heavy fines and penalties are not useful, then such a criminal should be given exemplary punishment in order to deter others from committing such crime. Deterrent punishment may include public beating, flogging and even shooting the criminal, according to the intensity of the crime.¹⁴ Among these the theories of fine and probation though being adopted by most developed countries of west and United States are not new. These were prevalent in remote past in Indian history.

Regarding political ethics, Master Tara Singh has made many observations. He says that powerful is one who achieves power and does not depend upon others.¹⁵ A powerful man is proceeding towards weakness if he does not use it.¹⁶ A winner must always be ready to forgive, otherwise he shall be in a pitiful condition in moments of his failure.¹⁷ We must have faith in our friends and should be conscious of our enemies.¹⁸

13. Baba Tega Singh, pp.19-22.

14. Baba Tega Singh, p.31.

15. Pirm Piala, p.99.

16. Pirm Piala, p.100.

17. Pirm Piala, p.100.

18. Pirm Piala, p.105.

A small paper can be blown away even by wind but a hawk flies towards the side that it wishes to fly.¹⁹ A powerful man changes his approach after due consideration but a weak man can be moulded by a powerful situation.²⁰ Mercy is more powerful than taking of revenge.²¹ One must be fearless and candid in expressing one's opinions. We should not be afraid of those enemies who have become so for not submitting to their wishes and we should not have much faith in those friends who have become your friends as a result of your help to them in certain situation.²² An irresponsible leader is more harmful for a movement than those who oppose the movement.²³ Even in political agitation, the path of truth should not be forsaken.²⁴ One who cannot digest victory, is sure to fall (in near future)²⁵. Defeat is never physical, it is always mental.²⁶ A political leader should be humble, of high character and in credulous.²⁷

19. Pirm Piala, p.106.

20. Pirm Piala, p.106.

21. Pirm Piala, p.107.

22. Pirm Piala, p.11.

23. Meri Yaad, p.82.

24. Meri Yaad, p.87.

25. Meri Yaad, p.60.

26. Daily Akali - Oct. 24, 1959.

27. Meri Yaad, p.61.

An organisation cannot be successful unless its members have faith in each other.²⁸ Master Tara Singh wishes that politics should be based on faith and religious ethics should be its guiding force.²⁹ Majority should look upon the minorities as an elder brother behaves a younger one.³⁰ Personal disputes should not be linked with political differences.³¹ Politics should be based on honesty and sincerity.³²

Master Tara Singh's political ideals can be divided into three parts i.e. : (1) his views regarding state, form of government, administration, army (2) his observations regarding rights of equality, freedom of speech and justice (3) political ethics. Master Tara Singh favours a limited monarchy in which military, police, general administration and (partly) justice also are assigned to the same section. Persons with such qualities cannot be expected the modern world. This remains in Master Tara Singh's Utopian world. Further, on the other hand sanction of rights, freedom, equality are most modern democratic terms which if fully granted shall make the monarchy nominal or may give an end to that. Thus both the points together, is not possible. The political ethics revealed in the writings of Master Tara Singh is a conglomeration of religious

28. Meri Yaad, p.61.

29. Meri Yaad, p.61.

30. rally Jathedar, Jan. 4, 1962.

31. Meri Yaad, p.88.

32. sant sipahi, Oct., 1947.

ethics and extreme diplomacy. In certain points he is the highest ethical man and in some others he is a shrewd diplomat talking in the manner of a shrewd and calculative politician.

Master Tara Singh's remarks regarding the above points of politics are his contextual observations and not a part of his organised political ideology. In the dynamic, fast-changing political set up, in those days, Master Tara Singh, as a leader, as a journalist and as a writer, had to make observations which due to the above factors create some inconsistencies in his comments. Moreover, not only Master Tara Singh but almost all the major Indian political leaders and political thinkers who were contemporaries of Master Tara Singh show more or less signs of inconsistencies in their ideology and Master Tara Singh who was not primarily a political philosopher but was a Sikh politician speaking as a Sikh representative, as an anti-British, as a nationalist, as a parochialist, as a communal man, as a writer, as a journalist on different occasions is no exception to this flaw.

RELIGIOUS

It is a well known fact, supported by history, that Master Tara Singh was a prominent political leader of the Sikhs but at the same time he was a prolific writer also, may be because many a time a leader has to talk to masses through some or the other medium and literature can be one of them. So Master Tara Singh also adopted this method and used it effectively according to the demand of the situation.

This is also a well-known fact that Master Tara Singh was a Sikh, not by birth and he did have very strong convictions about Sikh religion; a firm believer in God, submission to His supreme Will and to act according to His will was his conviction. In nutshell, he was a Sikh by religion, having strong faith in its tenets with a sense of pride in being so.

In this way, naturally, he was functioning, as a religious man and as a writer, in the broader framework of Sikhism. The Sikh tenets revealed through literature, history and the events related with the Sikh Gurus and the Sikh personalities were the source of strength for him and in this way all that they had brought forth as religious tenets were accepted by him. Whenever a situation arises to expose himself to a religious situation, he finds his refuge in the above.

According to Sikh religion 'There is but one God, true by name, the Creator, All-pervading, without fear, without

ermy; Timeless Being; Birthless; Self-existent; (to be realised) through the grace of the Guru.¹ Master Tara Singh believes in one God, who is Immanent, Transcendental, Self-expressed, beyond Time, Creator of the universe.² To prove the existence of God, Master Tara Singh gives teleological³ and cosmological arguments and also argument from design. These arguments have been borrowed by Master Tara Singh from Western philosophers. He has, however, not bothered for the criticism of such arguments.

Sikhism believes that God's Hukam⁴ reigns supreme and controls all our actions; the human beings have no power at all; that the Hukam of God has been ordained from the very beginning.⁵ As to the last point the Sikh Gurus lay emphasis on the maxim "As you sow, so shall you reap".⁶ Master Tara Singh also accepts the same. He further says that even our past Karmas are pre-destined. All this is the Hukam of God. It is absolute pre-destination.⁷

1. Mul Mantra, Japuji, The Adi Granth, p.1.

2. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.11,23,31,53; Pirm Piala, p.44.

3. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.11.

4. A.G., p.1.

5. A.G., p.736.

6. A.G., pp.4 and 433.

7. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.80.

According to Sikhism the final goal of man is to achieve the stage of salvation (Mukti). Mukti means to love God with such intensity as to be one with Him. Love of God helps an individual in getting rid of cravings, and be free from them. According to Sikhism, salvation comes through Grace and Benediction of God. This doctrine differs from Hindu and Buddhist thought of Mukti. To quote Kapur Singh, "In Hinduism and Buddhism Mukti is just an other name for the destruction of the personality. In the whole of the Hindu thought and attitude, the individuality and personality has no value intrinsically, it has secondary significance only. The stress in Sikhism is shifted. The individual is not an evil mirage to be destroyed and disregarded which is the very foundation on which the whole of the religious activity is to be built. Mukti is liberation from its limitations and sickness and it is not its dissipation and destruction." Master Tara Singh believes that salvation means being one with God. To achieve this stage Master Tara Singh suggests the path of Nam simran. According to Sikhism Nam simran may include hearing and learning⁸, faith and devotion⁹, singing praise of God¹⁰, service of sangat¹¹, simran¹², and Ardas.¹³

8. A.G., pp.2, 152, 1240.

9. A.G., pp.3, 59, 353, 411, 660 and 1241.

10. A.G., pp.12, 534.

11. A.G., pp.25, 391 and 920.

12. A.G., p.1291.

13. A.G., pp.10, 268; Dasam Granth (chaupai).

While stressing at meditation, Master Tara Singh says that it should be total surrender of self unto God. Meditation done with a purpose is bargaining. Meditation should be done with the purpose of achieving union with God.¹⁴ Meditation which is done with the purpose of achievement of psychic power is no meditation because psychic power is in itself greed for power and honour, which is an obstacle in the path of salvation. This is all satanic.¹⁵ Meditation is surrender of self unto God; it is negation of self. In its early stage meditation is done with two purposes i.e. for the love for God and the desire to achieve psychic power. Gradually one of the above two diminishes. If the love for God increases, it is likely to lead to salvation. Psychic power diminishes salvation-purpose and gives one unto more and more greed for pride and power. It is only total surrender to the Almighty that can lead to salvation. All this is under the Hukam of God.

As stated above singing of praise of God¹⁷ has a unique place in the Sikh way of life. For Master Tara Singh singing of praise of God purifies one's mind and this can set a man for meditation. Master Tara Singh stresses that singing of hymns should include understanding them and also acting upon them. Otherwise it would mean taking the wine inside the mouth and throwing it outside without pouring it down the throat. This

14. Pirm Piala, pp.16, 52-59.

15. Pirm Piala, p.58.

16. Pirm Piala, p.57.

17. A.G., pp.12,534.

process even if repeated for hundreds of times would be of no avail. It won't lead to the stage of Blissfulness.¹⁸

Master Tara Singh says that during meditation one should be lost unto Him. Unless one achieves this, one's meditation is not in its right stage.¹⁹ Even right stage cannot be achieved unless He showers His Bliss upon us. To earn His Grace one must pray before God.

Prayer is an essential part of Sikhism. Our prayers before God never go unheeded to. Ordinarily one has to suffer for his misdeeds; God Himself writes down the reward or punishment to be given and man is born into another life according to that, but the Law is not inexorable. Only God's Grace is instrumental in this regard. The prayer can help us in getting His Grace.²⁰ The Sikh way of life makes it particular for a Sikh to start every work with prayer. Every day's routine business, every new activity or expedition has to be preceded with Ardas. References as to it can be found in the Sikh Rehatnamas and from the Sikh history. Master Tara Singh repeatedly speaks for the value of Ardas.

To the query, "If God is omnipotent and omnipresent then what is the need of prayer? God Himself should know what we wish to pray", he replies that even this prayer is due to His Will.

18. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.39-41.

19. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.41-42.

20. A.G., Sri Rag.

One cannot make prayers unless sanctioned by Him. It is a part of His Nikam.²¹

In Sikh credo joy and sorrow, pain and pleasure exist only for those who treat this world as material world. The wise one is he who abideth in the Will of God and looketh upon pain and pleasure alike.²² Guru Nanak said that he alone is in pain who indulgeth in pleasures, forgetful of God.²³ Master Tara Singh also seconds the same. Master Tara Singh says that happiness and/or suffering is all illusion.²⁴ He further says that everything is moving under the command of God. Our so called joys and so called sorrows are simply His Will. This illusion of joy and sorrow can be removed by God alone. To achieve God's Grace the only path is that of nam simran and Ardas. Guru can lead us to this stage.

Guru occupies special place in the doctrine of various religions.²⁵ Probably, the Christians give the highest place to their Master. For them Christ is the son of God, the saviour. For the Hindus, the Guru is very near to God. Buddhism and Islam give nothing but a human status to the Buddha and the Prophet, respectively.²⁶

21. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.80.

22. Trilochan Singh - Theological concepts of Sikhism, pp. 70-71.

23. Asa Meh. I, var shaloka Meh.I.

24. Malhar, M.I.

25. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.86.

26. schan singh - Sikhism among World Religions, pp.159-
An Article published in "Sikhism" - Edited and published
by Punjabi University, Patiala (1969).

Sikhism attempts to combine the two views. The Guru is both human and God-like. The Guru is born and dies as other men do. "I am the slave of God, come to see this fair of the world", says Guru Gobind Singh. There is no doubt that the Adi Granth contains statements, such as, "Guru Arjan is God Manifest" (Guru Arjan Pratakh Mar-I) but there is no hesitation in saying that they are in tune with the general trend of thought in the Adi Granth. Guru Nanak Dev has again and again described himself as lowly in the eyes of God - his proudest claim was that he was a minister of God. At the same time, the Guru as the word, as one who takes the disciple by the hand to lead him into the Presence of the Lord is so close to God in the sight of the disciple that the distinction between the Guru and God is but a broken epistemological tool.²⁷ Master Tara Singh often confuses Guru and Naheguru. This confusion occurs only when he finds the thin epistemological wall between Guru and God has almost disappeared. The hymns of the Adi Granth and his own direct conversation with God appear to Master Tara Singh as one and the same. For Master Tara Singh, the Sikh Gurus and the Adi Granth, as is the belief of the Sikhs and the bestowment by Guru Gobind Singh (that the Adi Granth is the Guru for the Sikhs and they should seek guidance from the Granth) are synonymous and the Sikh Gurus as they were the messengers of the Naheguru were not unlike God. While talking in such an atmosphere Master Tara Singh forgets the distinction between the Guru and Naheguru. Master Tara Singh does not accept any living person

27. Ibid., pp. 159-60.

as Guru. For him no one can achieve those heights which a Guru should have, as referred above that Master Tara Singh finds Guru almost God-like and except the Sikh Gurus, he does not find any one equal to that status. He does respect, however, saints and men of lore, who, according to him can explain the approach to Guru's sayings which, further, would be helpful towards the path to Maheguru.

Renunciation has no place in Sikhism. Master Tara Singh also rejects the path of renunciation which is adopted by some Hindus seeking union with God. Quoting from Sikh scriptures²⁸ Master Tara Singh says that "one must live in the world as the lotus liveth, detached in water, or as the duck liveth in a stream". While performing our day-to-day activities of a family man still we can achieve salvation.²⁹

Tithe (daswandh) as a part of Sikh religion has been propagated since long.³⁰ Common kitchen started from common fund has been a special feature of Sikh movement since the time of the Sikh Gurus.³¹ Master Tara Singh also believes that every Sikh must donate tithe for religious and social purposes.

As Master Tara Singh was a disciplined Sikh, he was of the belief that baptism was must for every Sikh³², but the

28. Ramkali M.I., Siddha Gosh.

29. Prem Lagan, p.162.

30. Rehatnama Bhai Desa Singh, No.5. Rehatnama Bhai Chaupa Singh, No.8.

31. Var of getta and Balwand.

32. Prem Lagan, p.92.

ceremony of baptismation should be performed by some noble priest and not by cheats and debauch priests.³³ Master Tara Singh believes that the priest has an important role to perform. The priest must be a pious and spiritual man.³⁴ For priest we should have special regards on all occasions and in all situations.³⁵ This practice must be strictly observed by all and sundry.

Besides this Master Tara Singh preached religious ethics for the sikhs. For a sikh the major instructions of the Guru are ; the remembrance of the Name of the Lord, the practice of godly qualities in life, self-surrender etc. The sikh surrenders en toto to the Guru and adopts the injunctions enunciated by him.³⁶ In a nutshell the above injunctions can be put as under :

1. Remain a householder throughout life.
2. Work for the subsistence of the family.
3. Help the needy and serve the society in diverse ways according to aptitude.
4. Imbibe godly qualities and virtues e.g. truth, purity, justice, fearlessness, love, mercifulness, generosity, tolerance, greatness etc.
5. Discard all evil forces and vices.
6. Have faith in one and only one God.
7. Attain spiritual heights with the grace of the Guru and through the remembrance of the Name of the Lord.

33. Prem Lagan, p.92. A large number of sikh priests in those days (1915-25) were debauches. They were neither noble men nor were emotionally attached to sikhism. They were like businessmen who treated priesthood as business activity.

34. Prem Lagan, pp.91-92.

35. Prem Lagan, p.40.

36. A.G., p.91B.

Master Tara Singh's religious views are almost the same that a sikh should have. As said previously, Master Tara Singh was emotionally attached to sikhism and being a religious leader, he wanted to talk to his religion-fellows about his observations and experiences as a sikh. He emphatically declared that whatever was being written by him was but sikhism as understood by him.³⁷ He confessed his limitations as to understanding and expounding the sikh religious ideas.³⁸ But, as a leader of the masses he had to talk to his religion-fellow. He begins with the proposition that he is talking to those who believe in sikh religious thought, and, his function is that of reminding them of their path.

37. *Kis Varni Kis Jans*, p. 8 (Preface).

38. *Ibid.*, p.44.

SOCIOLOGICAL

Master Tara Singh was not a sociologist. Like every conscious writer he made certain indirect but deliberate observations on various sociological points. These comments, however, do not provide us a picture of some system of social thought. Writers invariably influence their contemporary society and even the future world, hence his sociological ideology is being discussed under this heading.

Master Tara Singh believes that ideal society is a federation of more or less self-sufficing and self-governing village communities. Like Gandhi¹, he believes that society consists of groups settled in villages in which voluntary co-operation is the condition of dignified peaceful existence. The people should live as one unit. Their festivals and functions, their joys and sorrows should be joint.² It should be a collective living. Master Tara Singh is opposed to urbanisation. He feels that the cities are centres of criminal activities, tension, greed, treachery, injustice and impious life.³ The ever-increasing irreligious and materialistic attitude of the urban people is perhaps the main source of this type of development of attitude of Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh believes in spiritual and human values. His concept of the members of the village community that such a member is honest, cooperating, generous,

1. Harijan, 13.1.1940, p.411.

2. Prem Lagan, pp.21, 80.

3. Prem Lagan, pp.20, 61, 167 and 168.

sympathetic, helpful, virtuous and full of milk of human kindness makes the village community of his concept as an ideal model of the satyuga.

Joint Family system

Master Tara Singh is for joint family system. All the male members are earning figures. The senior most male member should be the head of the family, however, every male member is also free to decide the questions involving his own family. In a family only male members may join service. The women may share work at home or in the fields. Master Tara Singh is aware of the plight of women specially in those situations when the only earning male member of the family dies. Master Tara Singh does not allow such a woman to choose service for her, however, he feels that such a woman should be secured financially. Master Tara Singh restricts woman for the confines of the home. She is, mainly, for the household work. This attitude of Master Tara Singh towards woman as an earning member is like that of the large number of Indians of Master Tara Singh's contemporary period.

Master Tara Singh believes that women are ordinarily generous but weak, dependent, emotional and lesser intelligent. Some women are, no doubt, crooked, overpowering, asserting and contumacious. Most of the family disputes as well as other disputes have their origin in some women at the bottom. Master Tara Singh feels that woman should be a model of simplicity, compassion, generosity, service, love etc. Woman should be

fully devoted to her religion and should impart such qualities to her children. Master Tara Singh as discussed above assigns secondary status to woman. Politically and socially woman has no role to play. Her place is in the four walls of house and she should have perfection in this field at least. Even in his assertion regarding rights he accepts equal but not the same rights for men and women. His reasoning is based on biological differences between the both.

The chief of village should be a responsible person.⁴ He should be literate, must have a lot of knowledge of worldly affairs, day-to-day routine, political environment, officials of the state, their functions, duties and activities etc. He should fully understand his responsibility. He is a noble guardian of the village community.

Being a religious man, Master Tara Singh stresses the need of religious atmosphere. He wants that every village should have a Gurdwara.⁵ He talks of Gurdwara only because when he wrote he knew that he was writing for the Sikh people, thus, here Gurdwara means the religious centre. It should be a cultural centre as well. It should be a centre which helps in inculcating higher moral and spiritual values. Keeping this in mind, Master Tara Singh says that the priest of the Gurdwara should be a generous one with high ethical qualities. He is an ideal person sans vices.⁶ His way of life should be a model

4. Prem Lagan, pp.21,25-26.

5. Prem Lagan, p.20.

6. Prem Lagan, pp.20,42.

for imitation by the people.

Guru Nanak Dev believes that caste is meaningless. It is the righteousness that is tested.⁷ God does not mind our caste or birth. One should learn the way of truthful living; for one's deeds proclaim one's caste and respect.⁸ In spite of Guru Nanak Dev's saying the sikh society is not free from casteism. It is prevalent everywhere. Disrespect, contempt and untouchability for low caste people on the one hand and exploitation of this section by using them as bonded labour on the other hand is anti-sikh. Master Tara Singh decries it.⁹ But one thing is strange that Master Tara Singh does not allow any of his characters to marry or have intimate personal or social relations with the lower caste people and rather sometimes uses traditional contemptuous mode of addressing this section. In his declarations he opposes casteism.

The aims of marriage for an Indian are said to be dharma, praja (progeny) and rati (pleasure). Though sex is one of the functions of marriage, it is given third place, indicating thereby that it is the least desirable aim of marriage.¹⁰ Marriage among sikhs is considered a very sacred institution (Performance of every ceremony before Guru Granth sahib is sacred). It is unbreakable tie.¹¹ Further, marriage is must for every sikh.

7. A.G., p.142.

8. A.G., p.1330.

9. Prem Lagan, p.53.

10. K.M. Kapadia - Marriage and Family in India, p.167.

11. Ibid., p.169.

Bachelorhood has not been accepted in Sikh society. In Hindu society an unmarried man is an outcaste and prolonged virginity a disgrace.¹² In Sikhism marriage is must and it is no obstacle in the path of salvation.¹³ Sikhism considers it a spiritual union. Only then woman is recognised as a good wife, if the bond is that of pure love.¹⁴ Bride and groom are not they who pose as one whole. Bride and groom are they who are two bodies with one soul.¹⁵ Master Tara Singh believes that marriage is must for every Sikh; it is sacrament; it is unbreakable. Before marriage both the partners to marriage should be physically fit, mentally sound and spiritually awakened. Master Tara Singh is against child marriage. Master Tara Singh believes that every Sikh couple before going through marriage must have got baptism.¹⁶ Both the partners should accept fidelity and devotion to the other as the guiding principles of a married life. It is different from the Hindu principle that this has to be observed by woman only.¹⁷ The Hindu principle culminated in the ideal of pativratya in the

12. Pritam Singh Gill - Heritage of Sikh Culture, p.103.

13. Ibid., p.103.

14. A.G., p.722.

15. A.G., p.788.

16. Prem Lagan, p.92.

17. K.M Kapadia - Marriage and Family in India, p.182.

epics and the puranas. Master Tara Singh who being a Sikh believed in equality for men and women alike. It is here that he advocates fidelity and devotion in both the partners to the marriage, however, Master Tara Singh has depicted his male characters more devoted to their wives and are thoroughly fidel.

A wedding is a time of festivity the world over.¹⁸ Master Tara Singh believes that marriage ceremony should be very simple. There should be no unnecessary jubilation, such as dances and drinking etc.¹⁹ This attitude is in consonance with Tara Singh's love for simplicity which has its source in Sikh way of life.

Dowry system is a very old custom. The bride's dowry represents daughter's share in her family inheritance, and settle all claims. Henceforth, her husband's family must accept all responsibilities for her economic needs. The dowry system which served several useful purposes, has unfortunately become a great evil at present.²⁰ Master Tara Singh has knowledge of the result of such customs. He is opposed to demanding of dowry but he is not opposed to gifts given to the bride by her parents.²¹

Master Tara Singh does not favour a second marriage for a widow. The Sikh tenets don't prohibit a second marriage for a widow. It is only in Hindu polity that Manu has prohibited

18. P.C. Deb - Rural sociology, p.81.

19. Ibid., p.80.

20. Prem Lagan, p.86.

21. Prem Lagan, p.99.

a widow's remarriage.²² Hindu reformer Raja Ram Mohan Roy's efforts and the passing of the Hindu Widow Remarriage Act of 1856, could not make any difference to the already existing situation.²³ Master Tara Singh might have this idea in his mind that the widowed woman after having played her major role (of giving birth to a son) need not remarry; but again it is not according to Sikh way of life. Further, Master Tara Singh does not accept this role even (as one of his characters Mohan Singh does not have any child) to a widower who becomes widower at a very young age²⁴ and that even without producing a child. According to Hindu scriptures (Manu samhita as well as Mahabharata) procreation is a duty in the interest of both the family and the community.²⁵ A son is who saves the father from going to hell. Master Tara Singh does not believe this notion regarding the importance of a son. Another point is noteworthy that Master Tara Singh is for smaller family. Most of his characters have either no children or at the most an average of two children. His favouring joint family system on the one hand and smaller families on the other hand solves the question of one of the demerits of joint family system. What remains is the training of the children in an atmosphere which is fit for training of their sentiments.

22. Hindu Polity - compiled by Arthur Coke Burnel (1894), IX, 65, p.255.

23. K.M. Kapadia - Family and marriage in India, p.147.

24. Prem Lagan, p.161.

25. K.M. Kapadia - Family and marriage in India, p.167.

Master Tara Singh is of the opinion that the youth should be physically healthy, mentally sound and spiritually enlightened. For these three purposes he recommends good diets²⁶ and participation in games and other physical exercises; education through the agencies of school, religion and good books; ethics and religion respectively. Master Tara Singh is for heavy and nourishing diets. In his view, a balanced diet includes milk, curd, butter-milk, ghee, fruits, fresh vegetables and mutton. He is opposed to wine but he is not much vocal against wine as he rejects some other vices.²⁷ (His opposition to gambling is more strong than that of to wine). Besides good diets he recommends participation in games for students and other physical activities for non-student youth. Being himself a renowned player of hockey and football, he has no prejudice for any game. Besides this, Master Tara Singh forbids the youth from reading erotic or romantic literature of all types, till the attainment of age of forty.²⁸ such literature apart from arousing sexual urge among the youth distracts them from their purposeful activities. Movies, theatre, vulgar, cheap and romantic jokes mislead the youth. Master Tara Singh believes that love at first sight is infatuation.²⁹ Real love is in understanding the nature of each other. Infatuation and sex are at the lowest ebb of love between human beings.

26. Prem Lagan, pp.77, 85; Baba Tega Singh, pp.5, 11, 26.

27. Gohna Singh in the novel Prem Lagan has been eulogised by him in spite of his addiction to wine, pp21.

28. Meri Yaad, p.29; Prem Lagan, pp.93-94.

29. Prem Lagan, p.97.

Master Tara Singh is an advocate of education for the common folk. Every one should be taught letters and simple arithmetic which would be helpful in one's daily life. Education should be free up to school level and those who can personally afford may join college.³⁰ Education should aim at, besides giving literacy and information, imparting moral and religious values to the students. The atmosphere of the educational centres should be carefree, humanistic, religious and intellectual. The teaching of religion and ethics should not be in a didactic tone³¹, but the teachers themselves should prove a model for the students by leading noble lives. Persuasion and not force or didacticism should be the principle behind all this.³² The teachers should be intelligent, laborious, morally sound and dedicated persons. Hypocrite teachers are a blemish and they impede the education's progress.³³ There should be a relationship of love and respect between the teachers and the students.

Master Tara Singh favours moral and religious instruction for the students. Gandhi, a contemporary of Master Tara Singh also spoke in the same tone. Gandhi observed, "...the chief goal of education is 'character building', put all your knowledge, learning and scholarship in one scale and truth and purity in the other, and the latter will, by far, outweigh the

30. Meri Yaad, pp.32-34; Prem Lagan, p.165.

31. Meri Yaad, p.40; Prem Lagan, pp.68,69.

32. Prem Lagan, p.68.

33. Meri Yaad, pp.14-16.

other.³⁴ Master Tara Singh stressed the need of religious and moral instruction in education without which, he believed, one is not going to learn way of better life.³⁵

Master Tara Singh does not like western system of dress. He favours simple local dress which he feels is symbolic of simplicity and sobriety. He has a liking for loose attire. He favours pyjama and simple shirt for gents and kameez and salwar for women. For him turban for men and dupatta to cover head for women is an essential part of dress. He is opposed to gaudy and glittering colours as well. Such colours incite the persons of the other sex, he believes.

Master Tara Singh is opposed to so-called modernity.³⁶ It has, according to Master Tara Singh, introduced films, erotic literature, fashions in dress, intoxicants among the youth. It has added to irreligious and bohemian atmosphere. People have had good-bye to simplicity, generosity and other humanistic values. Good health, good diet, physical prowess, have become matters of past. Hedonism³⁷ seems to be centre of the so-called modern values. Master Tara Singh commenting on it says that it is not progress rather it is regress. It is like a bride who outwardly looks beautiful but has no

34. The Selected Works of Mahatma Gandhi, Vol. VI, p.529.

35. Prem Lagan, pp.67-68.

36. Prem Lagan, pp.62-63.

37. Hedonism has three main forms : (1) Everyone desires only his own pleasure or happiness; (2) Everyone desires only to maximize his own pleasure; (3) Everyone always acts on his strongest desire. See - A.R. Lacey - Dictionary of Philosophy, p.80.

inner qualities. Comparing the sikhs of the eighteenth century (living in the forests in an atmosphere of bravery, religion and hope) with the modern sikhs, he says that the present day sikhs are like delicate female child in a big palace. He is sad at the sorry state of the sikhs who were, at times, taken as a model and people took pride in adopting their life style.³⁸ so called modernity, he believes, is damaging our cultural values.

Master Tara Singh was born of a Hindu family, was brought up in sikhised Hindu culture, embraced sikhism and had read much literature from West. All these influences materially affected Master Tara Singh's social thought. He was not a sociologist, so his casual and indirect comments on social points are not bound in organisation. His interest in village life, preferences for a joint but small family, advocacy for simple life, his disliking for modernity show his interest for values of past and also refer to grain of backwardness in his ideas. His views regarding marriage, place of woman, partly opposition of dowry system, casteless society, education, are mainly a sikh's approach, as well as a modern writer's outlook. While stressing moral and religious teaching and all-round development of the children, he seems to be in knowledge of Western findings in favour of these points. This sociological ideology of Master Tara Singh is an amalgam of old and new outlook, a combination of past and modern, a call for old

38. Prem Lagan, pp.60-61.

values and modern way of life. The incoherence, which is understandable due to the points quoted above, is not contradiction. Master Tara Singh wanted an advanced Sikh society based on old ethics which should be logical but in consonance with Sikh credo.

ETHICAL

"Ethics is the study and evaluation of human conduct in the light of moral principles. Moral principles may be viewed either as standards of conduct that the individual has constructed for himself or as the body of obligations and duties that a particular society requires of its members."¹ Master Tara Singh was primarily a religious leader. He was an advocate of high ethical standards. Even his political ideology has also been influenced by ethics.

Before carving out some ethical system as revealed in Master Tara Singh's writing, it must be kept in mind that he was a religiously devoted person and thus his ideology had its roots in moral values. Sikhism is the main source of such standards. Some western writers had also influenced Master Tara Singh's moral rectitude. This fact has been acknowledged by Master Tara Singh himself in his writings.² Thus Master Tara Singh's ethical system which is primarily religious has also some impact of Western culture. It, however, could not make any difference to the Sikh ethical standards already accepted by Master Tara Singh as a part of his conviction.

Truth

Truthful living has been given a very high place by

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1. The Columbia Encyclopaedia, p.896.
 2. Meri Yaad, p.28, Prem Lagan, p.93, Master Tara Singh, Jivan sangharsh Te Udesh (Edited by Jagwant Singh), p.25.

Master Tara Singh, because this is the crux of good living. The truthful person eats truth, wears truth and lives in truth.³ A truthful person always speaks truth.⁴ Truth is always pure.⁵ A temporary loss to a truthful person cannot weaken him rather it is a preparation for a higher joy. An untruthful man, even if he is a friend, is more harmful than a truthful enemy. For peace of mind truth is panacea. Truth is remedy of all ills.⁶ Truth is always rewarded. The truthful person becomes Godlike when he is alive in this world and merges in the Truth i.e. God, when he leaves this world.

purity

Without purity of body and mind one can never be truthful. Truth and purity go together. Purity is the attribute of God. We are impure. This impurity is due to ego and maya.⁷ The name of the Lord can only bring in purity. The name of Lord resides in the pure body and soul. That body is pure, which is free from sin. That person is pure, who realises his self. Purity comes with godly qualities. To the question, "How the impure mind can become pure?" he replies "when it comes into contact with Truth, it receives honour. The inner one can be purified with the word of the Guru".

3. The Adi Granth, p.69.

4. Prem Lagan, pp.93-94, 134-35, 192; Baba Tega Singh, p.7; Pirm Piala, pp.100, 108, 110.

5. The Adi Granth, p.609.

6. Ibid., p.468.

7. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.49-50.

self-Discipline

For Master Tara Singh, a virtuous life, is necessarily, a disciplined life. The actions are kept fully under control. self-control is a 'must' for an ideal person.⁸ The actions concerning an individual are born of mind, speech and body. One should not be hasty in speech.⁹ One should think about every word before one speaks. One should escape from failings of the tongue e.g. talking unnecessarily, talking about unfair dealings, quarrelling, talking maliciously, calling bad names, cursing others, making fool of others, telling lies, making false promises, censuring and condemning other, backbiting, pretending falsely etc.¹⁰

Lust

Master Tara Singh wishes that man should part company with five vices i.e. lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego. Physical body, if not controlled properly, becomes a prey to lust and anger.¹¹ As Guru says, the five thieves, lust, anger, greed, attachment and ego - live within this body and rob the infidel, who does not realise it.¹² To get rid of lust the bachelors should not read literature depicting women, should not see films or dramas, should not relish jokes inciting sexual urge or about sex organs and episodes, and finally one should be busy with religious worship and meditation, so that no vulgar idea should

8. Pirm Piala, pp.25-28.

9. Pirm Piala, p.104.

10. Pirm Piala, pp.101,104,105,109-110.

11. Prem Lagan, pp.42,47,63.

12. The Adi Granth, p.600.

affect the mind.¹³ The lust is the cause of one's entry in hell and his bewilderment in transmigration.

Anger

The anger is the basis of all quarrels. Instead of becoming wrathful at the bad deed of a person, one should work for his welfare.¹⁴ In state of anger one should keep mum and should count up to ten before speaking and if the degree of anger is higher then count hundred before speaking any word.¹⁵ About lust and anger, it has been said in sikh scripture that in their company, the body is ruined.¹⁶

Greed

Greed is like a dark prison, where one is fettered with vices. Greed is the worst type of suffering, therefore, it should be forsaken. Greed corrupts the whole mind.¹⁷

The worldly attachment, though full of relish, is only a blemish. The family is an attachment, all the work is attachment and such attachment, which is the basis of all vices should be left.¹⁸

Ego

Ego is the fundamental vice and lays the foundation of birth and death. sikh scriptures say that it is not liked by Lord God.¹⁹ All the pilgrimages, fasts, charitable acts are of

13. Prem Lagan, pp.93-94.

15. Pirm Piala, p.104.

17. Prem Lagan, pp.44-45,56,
178.

14. Prem Lagan, pp.86-87.

16. The Adi Granth, p.932.

18. Pirm Piala, pp.16-18,21,57,
112.

no avail, if they are done in ego. Whosoever is puffed up with ego, falls down. Ego is maya in essence and is an incurable disease. The person who considers himself greater than others in mind, word and deed, sinks down to hell. Even the ego of humbleness and pride of having no pride is also a form of ego.²⁰ The desire to achieve psychic power is also a form of satisfaction of ego.²¹ The desire to be considered gentle, superior or supreme is still another form of ego.²²

Virtues

Just as Master Tara Singh talks of getting rid of five major vices, he talks of achieving some virtues also. The virtues can check vices. Lust is overshadowed and affected by self-restraint, anger by toleration, greed by contentment, worldly affection by devotion to duty and ego by modesty.

self-restraint

Self-restraint is a golden principle. The Sikh Gurus also recommended self-restraint for the growth of a healthy personality.²³ The seeker must remain within limit in order to remain fit. Too much of everything is bad. Too much eating and drinking etc. makes one unhealthy. Similarly, we endanger our health if we take less than our requirement. We should sleep only according to our need. Too much accumulation of wealth also worries us. Self-restraint in sexual relation with

20. Pirm Piala, p.15.

21. Pirm Piala, pp.16-17.

22. Pirm Piala, pp.20,28.

23. The Adi Granth, p.679.

a spouse does not mean celibacy. Study of romantic literature, seeing of romantic plays and visit to theatres should not be indulged into specially by the unmarried people.²⁴ Love at first sight is infatuation and is simply sex-based.²⁵

Tolerance

Anger leads to physical violence. It is a stream of fire like attachment and greed. Therefore, virtue of tolerance should be exercised. Even if someone tries to harm us, or even has actually done a bad turn to us, one should give him time to reform himself. As Gurbani tells that we should tolerate like the trees, and even forgive.²⁶ Forgiveness, forbearance and patience are the cardinal virtues. The quality of patience makes a man large-hearted and broad like a river.

Non-attachment

Non-attachment is a virtue opposite of attachment; it means absence of worldly desires or passions. In this case the mind ceases to hop from one material object to the other material object. It rises above worldly desires and passions and becomes conscious of its duty. To achieve such a stage one should be devoted to the Name of Lord. One should remain non-attached with the world of attachment and serve the interest of his family like a duty-bound person and work for the betterment of society to the best of one's capacity.

24. Prem Lagan, pp.93-96, 203-03. 25. Prem Lagan, p.97.

26. The Adi Granth, p.1381.

Modesty

Modesty is another virtue. It brings the feeling of humility. The seeker thinks that he is the lowest of the lowly and considers everybody else superior to him. In this way ego is effaced, which is the cause of repeated births and deaths. Humility is sweet and essence of all virtues. But if humility is simply a show then it is worse than ego.²⁷ Hypocrisy has a place among vices. The service of society awakens humility, which raises the modest man to higher stages in the spiritual domain.

Master Tara Singh's writings plead for attainment of various virtues like endurance, patience, self-control, purity, restraint of senses, truth, absence of anger, non-attachment, wisdom etc. almost in every chapter of his books.

Master Tara Singh's ethical ideas can be put under seven headings :

1. Remain a householder throughout life.
2. Work for the subsistence of the family.
3. Help the needy and serve the society in diverse ways according to aptitude.
4. Imbibe godly qualities and virtues e.g. truthfulness, purity, justice, fearlessness, love, mercifulness, generosity, tolerance, sweetness, goodness etc.
5. Discard all evil forces and vices.
6. Have faith in one and only one God.
7. Attain spiritual heights with the grace of the Guru and through the remembrance of the Name of Lord.

27. Firm Piana, pp.15,21.

CHAPTER - IV**DIDACTIC ASPECT OF MASTER TARA SINGH'S WRITINGS**

- 1. Concept of an Integrated Personality.**
- 2. Depiction of Contemporary Society.**
- 3. Depiction of People of Other Religions**

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CONCEPT OF AN INTEGRATED PERSONALITY

In his writings Master Tara Singh advocates all round harmonious development of personality. His concept of an integrated personality includes physical, intellectual, moral, social and spiritual qualities.

To begin with Master Tara Singh lays stress on physically well built bodies. Like Aristotle, he believes in the dictum 'a sound mind in a sound body'. This impression seems to have been derived by Master Tara Singh from Dr. Todd's 'The Students Manual',¹ which he had read thoroughly.² This can be interpreted from another angle as well, Master Tara Singh belonged to Sikh religion and this religion stresses the Sikh as a 'mint-golder' being. Along with spiritual and ethical qualities a Sikh has a good body to defend himself, his religion, the poor, the weak and the downtrodden. For having a sound body one must have good diet and not that one which would arouse sexual impulses.³ Good diet must be enjoined by exercise. Exercise is not meant for digestion but for making one's body sturdy and strong. Exercise includes some games like hockey, football, kabaddi, wrestling⁴ as well as horse-riding

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1. Dr. Todd - The Student's Manual, p.23.
 2. Hari Yead, p.28.
 3. Prem Lagan, pp.76,77.
 4. Baba Tega Singh, pp.3,4,5 and Prem Lagan, pp.13,14,61,63,78.

and the art of use of sword.⁵ He believes that these games have recreational functions also. Master Tara Singh's liking for horse-riding and art of use of sword has its basis in the Sikh history. The Sikh history is a saga of endless chain of bravery. The Sikhs fought and won a large number of battles. Their victory has been attributed to their spirit, their courage, their sturdy bodies and their skill in horse-riding and art of use of sword. Master Tara Singh asserts that Sikh is essentially a brave man.⁶ A Sikh is brave, courageous, dutiful and benevolent. He never runs from the battlefield even if he is cut to bits. He can never be hurt in the back.⁷ In the battlefield he won't attack a woman, child, wounded soldier and a harmless unarmed person.⁸ He considers the battlefield as a situation of dharma yudha.⁹ He fights for dharma and dharma only.

Master Tara Singh considers intellectual development as an important part of an integrated personality. Education, for him, includes cultural and ethical development along with literacy and learning. It also includes sports as a part of curricula but it must be kept in mind that studies should not suffer at the cost of excessive indulgence in games.¹⁰ Education

5. Baba Tega Singh, pp.5,9,25,26,40.

6. Prem Lagan, p.36.

7. Ibid., p.35.

8. Baba Tega Singh, p.7.

9. The Daily Akali, Jan. 16, 1960.

10. Meri Yaad, pp.34-35.

imbibes the spirit of higher culture. It teaches service of humanity, nurtures the spirit of benevolence, generosity, kindness and cooperation. This part of function of education shows his trend towards social and cultural functions of education. Master Tara Singh feels that education's purpose is better served if moral and religious education is a part of the curricula, because it is this part of education which plays a major role in the formation of personality. Master Tara Singh is of the opinion that along with the student's syllabus the books of history¹¹, ethics¹², general philosophy¹³ and biographies of great men¹⁴, particularly religious men, should also be studied. Master Tara Singh, the religious leader, stresses moral aspect of personality more than any other aspect. He is vehemently opposed to romantic literature, particularly stories of love affairs and other vulgar and cheap writings which arouse sexual instinct in man.¹⁵ He feels that educational atmosphere is, now-a-days full of sexual provocations, and, is leading to deterioration of ethical values.

An ideal man cores for moral and ethical values. Master Tara Singh has laid much stress on truth, fearlessness, justice,

11. Meri Yaad, pp.17-18; Prem Lagan, pp.49-50; Baba Tega Singh, Preface.

12. Meri Yaad, p.28, Prem Lagan, p.93.

13. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.33,35, Pirm Piala, pp.45,46,49,102.

14. Prem Lagan, pp.49-50; Sant Sipahi, March 25, 1933.

15. Meri Yaad, pp.29,30; Prem Lagan, 63,93,94,97 and 98.

generosity, mercifulness, tolerance, humbleness, chastity etc.

Truthful living has been given a very high place in Sikh Ethics, because it is the crux of good living. Truth is the remedy for all ills.¹⁶ Master Tara Singh considers truth an important quality for a man who wishes to realise God.¹⁷ One should not fear anyone but God.¹⁸ An ideal person 'neither fears any one nor frightens any one'.¹⁹ Master Tara Singh wishes an ideal man to have the quality of a good 'justice'. A justice is impartial and balanced. He does not distinguish on the basis of caste, creed or religion but decides his favours on merits.²⁰ Sikhism teaches that 'he who wants to know the godly path, he has to work and earn and also give something to the needy out of his earnings'.²¹ Master Tara Singh has the same notion of generosity as an essential of an ideal man.²² Mercifulness is a godly quality. 'He who does not injure any one will be received with great honour in the house of the Lord'.²³ Master Tara Singh appreciates man with mercifulness. He

16. The Adi Granth, p.468.

17. Prem Lagan, p.94; Pirm Piala, pp.100,108.

18. Pirm Piala, p.99.

19. The Adi Granth, p.1427.

20. Baba Tega Singh, pp.20,22,23.

21. The Adi Granth, p.1245.

22. Prem Lagan, pp.55,77 and 91.

23. The Adi Granth, p.322.

believes that this godly quality is a high and precious quality.²⁴ It can win enemies without harming anyone.²⁵ A powerful man's real power is mercifulness.²⁶ Humbleness is an other virtue of an ideal man. Anger and pride of power are anti-sikh and anti-human traits. An ideal man always escapes from these vices.²⁷ Master Tara Singh has laid much stress on chastity. In the Adi Granth it is clearly stated that the company of another woman is like the company of a snake. Whoever cohabits a woman without proper marriage ceremony, he will be punished in the abode of Yama.²⁸ Master Tara Singh says that sex indulgence with a woman, other than one's wife, even in dream, is a sin.²⁹ The punishment for this sin is among the highest punishments. Master Tara Singh stresses that besides attaining the virtues of love, truth fearlessness, justice, mercifulness, generosity, tolerance, humbleness, chastity etc, one must also shun five vices.³⁰ These vices lead one to impious life. Thus, Master Tara Singh's stress on moral qualities in an ideal man is based mainly on sikh ethics.

24. Pirm Piala, p.106.

25. Ibid., p.107.

26. Ibid., p.100.

27. Baba Tega Singh, pp.8-10;
Pirm Piala, pp.105,110.

28. Rehtnama Bhai Dega Singh, No.16.

29. Prem Lagan, pp.92-93; Hari Yaad, pp.28-29.

30. The Adi Granth, p.600.

Besides physical, intellectual and moral qualities, Master Tara Singh reckons social and spiritual qualities also as essentials of an integrated personality.

Development of personality takes place in society, where one comes into contact with other men and women. There can be no character-building in isolation. Virtues and vices travel from individual to individual. That is the reason why the company of great people is always recommended.³¹

An ideal man is a householder throughout life. Master Tara Singh considers an unmarried person as an incomplete being. Sikhism dictates that alongwith and despite all the worldly activities we can achieve salvation. Master Tara Singh while propagating the Sikh principle proceeds by saying that even as married person one has to be free of attachment with this world. Such a person, he believes, lives as a useful and respectable limb of the society. He faces a test at every stage and gets elevated through it. Master Tara Singh wishes an ideal person 'not to fall a prey to his ego, realise the pure self within him and live a taintless life in this world of taints like a lotus in the muddy waters.'³²

An ideal person guards the poor and the orphan through thick and thin. For him, as Sikhism teaches, there is no

31. The Adi Granth, p.1399.

32. Pirm Piala, p.57.

enemy³³ and rather one should have goodwill even for the so-called enemies. The only enemy of an ideal man is wickedness and tyranny.³⁴

Master Tara Singh's ideal man does not distinguish between man and man on the basis of caste, religion, creed.³⁵ For him economic status is not the basis for distinction.³⁶ No one is senior or junior, superior or inferior for him.

The sikh society is necessarily a society of workers, who have to perform dual duty, firstly for subsistence of their bodies and secondly for their spirits. For physical subsistence, they have to do either manual or mental labour as a healthy constituent of society.³⁷ They have also to act as social workers with emphasis on public. He donates gaganash (tithe) out of his hard-earned labour. He donates liberally to the religious centres.³⁸ He gives assistance to economically weaker section.³⁹ An ideal person is opposed to exploitation. Even if one works for the others sheerly

33. Baba Tega Singh, p.9.

34. Ibid., p.9.

35. Pirm Piala, pp.99,105; Baba Tega Singh, p.8.

36. Baba Tega Singh, p.22.

37. The Adi Granth, p.1376.

38. Prem Lagan, p.91.

39. Ibid., pp.55,77.

out of respect for one's status, the proper return of that work is made by an ideal person.⁴⁰ Exploitation at any level is poison for him.

An ideal person is that who is a good friend and proves so in need.⁴¹ His friendship is self-less and cannot be altered by time or space. He cooperates and facilitates everyone according to his capacity. It admits no conditional situations.⁴²

Master Tara Singh believes that an ideal man is a politically conscious person. He contributes in the struggle for the welfare of one's religion, nation and country.⁴³ He keeps his interest secondary to the interested society. As a political worker (or even as a leader), he behaves as a responsible, sincere, tolerant and benevolent person. He considers his colleagues as equally important persons.⁴⁴ He is patriot from the core of his heart. An ideal man is an important part of society. Thus, Master Tara Singh stresses social qualities as necessary part of an integrated personality.

Finally, Master Tara Singh stresses on spiritual qualities in an ideal being. To begin with, one should have faith in God. God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent.⁴⁵ This world

40. Ibid., pp.52,53 and 54.

41. Prem Lagan, pp.26,27,57,58.

42. Ibid., pp.178-183.

43. Ibid., p.256; Baba Tega Singh, pp.47,64.

44. Prem Lagan, pp.265, 266.

45. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp.25,26,27,31,65 etc.

has come into being by His Hukam. Jivas are born by His Hukam. Everything happens according to His Will.⁴⁶

One must be committed to one's religious Rehat Maryada. A Sikh must embrace baptism. An ideal man gets up early in the morning and remembers Nahaguru.⁴⁷ Regular visits to the Gurdwara,⁴⁸ recitation of hymns and making of prayers is necessary for every Sikh and for others according to the instructions of their particular faith. Further, during the whole of the day and along with all activities one must remember God.⁴⁹ One must respect the priest. One should assign the priest a prior and superior status on personal and social occasions.⁵⁰

Master Tara Singh stresses simple living as an ideal of life. In his scheme one does not have attachment with the worldly belongings. His purpose of life is salvation. Our actions should be oriented towards salvation.⁵¹

46. Ibid., pp.65,88,95 etc.

47. Prem Lagan, p.91; Meri Yaad, pp.17-18, 39-40, Baha Tega Singh, p.10.

48. Meri Yaad, pp.18,39; Prem Lagan, pp.93,167.

49. Prem Lagan, p.91.

50. Ibid., p.40.

51. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.112.

To sum up, Master Tara Singh's ideal man is a physically and mentally sound, morally high, materially non-attached, socially devoted and spiritually enlightened person. Master Tara Singh has stressed all the major qualities, propagated by various Eastern and Western saints and philosophers, e.g. physical, intellectual, social, moral, spiritual, for an integrated personality.

DEPICTION OF CONTEMPORARY SOCIETY

A great writer "in writing himself, writes his time."¹ An awareness of living in a period is shared by most writers today, both imaginative and philosophical. Most of them seek a resolution of this crisis in political terms.

Master Tara Singh wrote with a purpose and that even that of amelioration of the state of society. As thus, he is more concerned with the social scene. He presents the social portrait as a reformer. Thus, his writings present both the sides of the picture of the society; the ideal and the evil. Among these two sides he justifies and glorifies the ideal picture.

Master Tara Singh has given the picture of the rural life of his times in detail. The centre of scene was mainly the village. The village is a complete unit of social life. Life in a village was like that of a bigger family living in different apartments of 'the bigger house' i.e. the village. The people lived in harmony with each other. Their joys and sorrow, their festivals, their problems, their grievances were common and collective. They loved cooperating each other through thick and thin. They worked hard, had simple diets but good health.² On the other hand the other side of the picture has also been presented. There were some persons who don't love to work. Such people felt jealous of those who were

1. T.S. Elict - selected Essays, p.137.

2. Prem Lagan, p.20.

prosperous, honest, hard-working, generous and popular with the village folk.³

The major vices in the villages were drinking, unlawful distilling of wine, gambling, prostitution etc.⁴ Disputes over land and other property were very common. Sometimes these disputes lead to quarrels, abductions, murders etc.⁵ Thus greed produced jealousy, hatred, enmity which had ushered deterioration of the state of society. Ethical values were on decline.

Caste system which had already harmed the Indian society, seemed to be a permanent phenomenon. The low-caste people were looked upon as non-human beings. They worked as labourers, shoemakers, scavengers etc. Their exploitation existed in one way or another. Though some generous people opposed exploitation yet it was in status quo because the efforts of such people were not much effective.⁶

The state of low-caste people had worsened to such an extent that they could not even protest against excesses, committed upon them. There was no question of their unity even against a common enemy. small bribes, allurement, and

3. Ibid., pp.53-58.

4. Ibid., pp.25-27.

5. Ibid., pp.117.

6. Ibid., pp.53-54.

even threats by the so-called high caste people would easily stop them from protesting against the excesses of the former on their fellow-men.⁷

Besides considering the so-called low-caste people as the inferior ones, the so-called high-caste section had internal prejudices also. The Brahmins, the Khatrias, the Aroras and the Jats had prejudices against each other. The Jats considered the Aroras and the Khatrias as inferior ones and the vice-versa.⁸

There were area prejudices as well. The area was also a consideration in social status. The people of different areas i.e. Majha, Malwa, Doaba, Rawalpindi, Multan etc. behaved the persons from other areas unfavourably as against the persons from their own areas.⁹ Each one considered the other area's persons as inferior and even alien.

The condition of women was miserable. They were suppressed and oppressed. They were considered inferior in social status. A big majority of the population was against educating the girls. Although socially women were not given such respect but at home they had much say. On the questions of treatment of and relationship with the family relatives, the women had much influence.¹⁰ Most of the male-folk (and big, influential,

7. Baba Tega Singh, pp.15-16.

8. Daily Jathedar, July 10, 1962.

9. Baba Tega Singh, pp.6,11.

10. Prem Lagan, pp.84,86.

aintly and educated persons were no exception to it) was dominated by female supremacy at home.¹¹ A big section of men behaved as henpecked husbands.

In general, women were nice, generous, emotional, honest, submissive and had a religious bent of mind.¹² A small number of women, however, indulged in criminal activities also. They planned and helped in abduction, cheating, murders etc.¹³ A large number of such women were unfaithful to their husbands and indulged in sex-crimes as well. These women went to the extent of having illicit relationship with many persons and while planning to gratify their lust, sometimes indulged in some other criminal activities also.¹⁴ In some situations they were even blackmailed by their exploiters or touts.

The main profession of the people in the villages was agriculture. Next to agriculture people favoured army jobs. The army men were given much respect by the people.¹⁵ They were known for discipline, truthful living, impartiality and character. They, being men of experience, were sought after for advice and arbitration in various disputes among the villagers.¹⁶ Even among the higher official circles, and

11. Ibid., p.91.

12. Ibid., pp.38,39,96,99,172.

13. Ibid., pp.169,170,198,202-205.

14. Ibid., pp.202-205.

15. Ibid., p.26.

16. Ibid., pp.24-25.

particularly with the British officers, they were given special treatment. Their contribution was appreciably acknowledged. They were rewarded for the acts of bravery and faithfulness. Most of the English officers behaved nicely with 'useful' persons. Such army-men were given exceptionally better treatment and the English officers had a better corner in their hearts for minorities, particularly Sikh (of the army).¹⁸

Among these professions, the Jats, and in some areas, particularly Montgomery and Gujranwala, the Aroras also, were mainly agriculturists. The Khatri and the Aroras were mostly businessmen. The low-caste people worked as labourers, shoemaker, scavengers etc.¹⁹ In the army also the Jats predominated, the Aroras being the next caste amongst the Sikhs.

In those days the spread of education had begun. A large number of schools and colleges were being opened. In spite of this a small number of children used to go to the schools.²⁰ In high schools and colleges the number of students was still smaller. Only well-to-do families could afford the cost of higher education. Some ambitious middle-class families also did cut their expenses in order to get their children educated.²¹

17. Ibid., p.147.

18. Hari Yadav, pp.33-34.

19. Prem Lagan, pp.52-53; Baba Tega Singh, pp.15-18.

20. Hari Yadav, p.12.

21. Ibid., p.32.

The schools in the villages were run by the priests but the socio-religious organisations, and at a later stage the government also, had established some schools. In some areas the students had to walk five to ten miles to attend high school classes.²² The number of the colleges could be counted on finger tips. Religious instruction was a part of education in almost all the non-government institutions.²³ Education for the females was not the trend of the day. The number of educated girls in the villages was almost cypher and in the urban areas a small number of girls were sent to schools up to middle class level and in a few cases up to secondary level. It was only in the later part of the fourth decade of the twentieth century that people had started appreciating the idea of female education.

The life in the schools was rigorous one. Fear and not discipline or respect for the teachers was the atmosphere in the schools. Caning was much popular as punishment for various lapses of the students.²⁴ In colleges, however, the atmosphere was much different. Though discipline was essential but it was not forced upon very strictly. Most of the teachers were generous, helping and hard-working. The teachers of the institutions run by socio-religious organisations were generous, helping and hard-working. The teachers of the

22. Ibid., p.12.

23. Ibid., pp.39-40; Prem Lagan, p.68.

24. Mri Yaad, pp.16,26.

institutions run by socio-religious organisations were dedicated persons.²⁵ The college students respected the teachers not out of any fear but due to the qualities of the teachers. In the secondary schools and colleges the students had developed a taste for modern games, like hockey and football etc.²⁶ The other popular games were kabaddi, wrestling, races, jumps etc.²⁷

The diet of the people was normally wheat, vegetables and pulses. Rice and mutton were considered luxury. Eating habits among men and women were alike though men were heavy-eaters. A small section of men was fond of drinking also. In most of the houses meals were first of all served to the children, then to gents and last of all the females used to have their meals. Men were heavy-eaters and even sometimes 'phulka-match' (loaves competition) was also held.²⁸ Main stress was on labour-diet. The use of fruit was not common. The maximum they got was water-melon, melon, mangoes and that even was not a routine.²⁹ Milk was popular among all the rural people with the exception of very poor people. pure-ghee was used for cooking of vegetables etc. People were fond of sweets and among them milk product, laddoos and jalebis predominated. Tea was also becoming popular in the urban areas.

25. Ibid., pp.37,39,41,42.

26. Prem Lagan, p.64; Meri Yaad, pp.32,34,35,40.

27. Ibid., p.67.

28. Prem Lagan, pp.76-77.

29. Ibid., pp.74-75.

The wardrobe in the villages was very small and the apparels were very simple and traditional. shirts and payjama or chaddar and turban for men and shirt and salwar or ghagra and dupatta for women was the main dress. In the cities an educated and elite section had adopted pantaloons and beau-shirts of western style. The yarn was mainly cotton though some rich persons wore silk-clothes also. Since the advent of the Akali movement (1920) the colour of the turbans and dupattas had become blue or black³⁰. Some Hindus had started wearing white Gandhi-cap also.

Fashion of hair style among the youth of the cities was also on increase. Under this wave the boys had adopted to keep a long lock hanging on the forehead³¹. The girls' dupatta had started slipping from the head to shoulders. These trends in fashion were looked upon with contempt by the elderly people. Master Tara Singh abhorred this type of fashions³².

The period saw a big rise in criminal activities as well. Thefts, pick-pocketing in ruzhas, were very common. Theft of arms and ammunition from private and official stores was in high spate, specially in border areas³³. Murders over petty disputes were oftenly committed. Kidnapping and

30. Prem Lagan, p.274.

31. Meri Yaad, p.25.

32. Ibid., p.25.

33. Prem Lagan, pp.10-11.

abduction was an ordinary news of the Age, cheating, looting, prostitution, blackmailing were no less common. Most of these criminal activities were either blessed by some corrupt police official or were done with the connivance of or indirect facilitation by the police³⁴.

Due to illiteracy and due to people's faith in fatalism and the otherworldliness, common folk was full of false beliefs and misconceptions. They believed that even the physical diseases, what to talk of ill-luck, were due to the position of stars and could be cured by mantras only. The simple-minded people had faith in palmistry and astrology to such an extent that even an ordinary shrewd person could cheat them. Faith in palmistry and astrology was common with the Hindus and the Sikhs.

The century saw a change in the religious outlook of the people. Visits by the people to the religious places were decreasing day-by-day. The fault lied with the priests of the shrines. Most of the priests who were holding their positions as hereditary offices had become corrupt. They considered the religious centres, of which they were simply managers, as their personal and private property which they would use for all profane tasks. The shrines under the control of such ill-reputed priests had become dens of corruption³⁵. Some other religious centres were being managed as business

34. Prem Lagan, p. 174.

35. Prem Lagan, pp. 210-223; Meri Yaad, pp. 51-89.

contra. A powerful reform movement was launched throughout the province between 1905 to 1925 out of which the last five years were a period of excesses by the government. People took much interest in the struggle for reform in sikhs shrines. Thousands went to jails, dozens were killed, hundreds were wounded and properties worth lacs of rupees were confiscated. The sikhs finally succeeded in getting a curdvara Act passed³⁶. Under this Act the control of the historical shrines of the province was transferred to the newly elected body of the sikhs. This ushered an era of religio-political consciousness among the people of the province³⁷.

On the political front also, the people fought against the foreign rule and got their country freed. Endless fight by the people and repression by the government went on till August 15, 1947, when the country was freed. The struggle for independence imbued the spirit of political consciousness among the people. It also created people's interest in indigenous products³⁸. It also ushered the spirit of nationalism. It was the foundation of the expected national integration, but, it could not be achieved for want of education among the masses and lack of sincerity in the leaders of the country.

36. Meri Yaad, p.88.

37. Ibid., p.91.

38. Ibid., pp.35-36

The over-anxious, eager, greedy and unwise politicians' behaviour was responsible for frustration on this plank.

During the struggle for reform in the Sikh shrines and for independence of the country a large number of people went to jails. They found the jails not fit for human beings. The treatment given to the political prisoners was little better than that of given to the criminals. The food provided in the jails was of low standard. The bread included more quantity of mud than flour. The vegetable was a misnomer for that-named preparation³⁹. What to talk of milk or fruit, the prisoners carved for even onions and pickles. Soap was available to some influential prisoners only. The routine of the political prisoners included eating, doing exercises, playing games, endless debates and discussions and above all recitations from the scriptures. Postal facilities, newspapers etc. were not available in the jails, however some prisoners managed books for their study⁴⁰. The jail term of some political prisoners was a bliss for many writers and some of the books written in those days in jails are among widely read books of the country. Though the facilities in the jails were almost negligible, yet most of the political prisoners remained cheerful.

While depicting the scenes from contemporary life, Master Tara Singh feels sad at the deteriorating state of moral values. He feels sorry that cinema and romantic

39. Prem Logan, p.280.

40. Ibid., pp. 287-89.

literature is adding to erotic atmosphere in schools and colleges⁴¹. The discipline in educational institutions and even among the common masses is on decline⁴². Corruption has spread in the police and other government offices⁴³. Sincerity and devotedness to one's duty is becoming unknown to various categories of citizens. This all is a part of the whole train of regression, degradation and deterioration.

Master Tara Singh, as he was a religious leader, wrote with the purpose of amelioration of the society. The dark side of the picture presented by him is by no way an exaggerated one. He reacts to minor flaws in various situations of the state of society with the fear of expansion of the situation to a more serious stage. He has, however, presented both the sides of the hedge. The people with higher ethical and moral values on the one hand and the grim picture of social degradation on the other hand. By presenting both the situations, he wishes to see that deterioration is checked by a timely consciousness. Thus, he plays the role of a socio-religious reformer.

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41. Meri Yaad, pp.29-31; Prem Lagan, pp. 93-96,
Grehet tharm sikhia, pp.96, 146.
42. Meri Yaad, p.40.
43. Prem Lagan, pps 174-75.

VIEWS ABOUT THE PEOPLE OF OTHER
RELIGIONS

Master Tara Singh, the writer was also a great leader of the Punjab. His was the age of political and religious upheavals in the sub-continent. From his birth (1885) till his death (1967), the province had been a ground of debates, disputes, as well as a struggle over religious and political questions. The politics of the sub-continent was much under the impact of communal controversies: Lucknow Pact of (1916), Nehru Report (1929), Communal Award (1932), Pakistan's Resolution (1940), Sikh State (1946), Partition of the sub-continent (1947), Equal rights for Sikh scheduled Castes (1953), Punjabi Suba (1955, 1960, 1961, 1965) etc. In all these and various other alike situations, people of different religious groups behaved differently. Master Tara Singh observed the behaviour and the traits of such persons, as to how did they behave and react to particular situations. Thus, to begin with, one thing must be kept in mind that these observations are the results of the formulations made by Master Tara Singh out of his reaction to certain incidents and events. These observations, so, are not complete analysis of the traits of the particular groups. This is simply subjective analysis of certain traits by a participant in those events and incidents from which these formulations have been made.

secondly, these observations by Master Tara Singh do not contain much about the various religions or ism. The comments

are regarding the traits and communal behaviour of the persons belonging to such religions. Master Tara Singh has not discussed ethics, credo, rituals and philosophy of different religions. Though casual references can help one to deduce some comments, but Master Tara Singh intended to discuss only the particular traits of the persons belonging to different religious groups.

Talking about Hindus he says that the Hindus are generally pragmatic. As a community, they are selfish, cunning, ungrateful and treacherous. To illustrate his point, he quotes two incidents from the history of the Punjab. The first incident is that of the arrest of the two sons and the mother of Guru Gobind Singh, which was a result of information to the Mughal ruler by the Hindu cook of the Guru. The second incident is from eighteenth century, when a Brahmin's wife had been abducted by Uthman Khan and the Sikhs fought with the Khan to get the wife of Brahmin restored to him. The Sikhs had saved thousands of the Hindu girls from the cruelty of the Pathans and the Muslims. Master Tara Singh feels that though the Hindu community is in its present state as a result of the sacrifices of the Sikhs, yet the Hindus treat the Sikhs as foreigners, as second rate citizens and oppose every demand of the Sikhs without logic. Master Tara Singh's observation has resulted from various historical situations, the immediate being the denial by the Government to give the same privileges to the Sikh scheduled castes which are being availed

of by their Hindu counterparts.¹

Master Tara Singh has grudge against the Hindus for having helped the British in the latter's wars with the Sikhs after the death of Maharaja Ranjit Singh.²

The role of Dogra Hindus of Kashmir is not unknown to the students of history. It was, mainly, their conspiracies and treason which hastened the fall of the Sikh rule in the Punjab.³

During the struggle for India's freedom, the Hindus have been using the Sikhs as their tools. They used to provoke the Sikhs and the Sikhs had been very vocal and active in their opposition to the moves to divide India. This was sufficient to keep the Sikhs busy in negative role.⁴ From these historical instances, Master Tara Singh has inferred that the Hindus are cunning, fanatic and selfish. He grudges that the Hindus have double standard. What they plead for the Pakhtoons in Pakistan, they themselves are not ready to give that to the Sikhs in Punjab and the Muslims in Kashmir.⁵

On dogmatic plan the Hindus are idolators. They have complete faith in stars, fate and supernatural powers. They blindly believe in as a remedy for all their (even physical) problems.⁶

1. Daily Akali, Oct., 3, 1953.

2. Baba Tega Singh, pp.73,93,94.

3: Ibid., p.59.

4. Meri Yaad, pp.36,37.

5. Daily Jathedar, July 8, 1966.

6. Baba Tega Singh, p.143; Meri Yaad, p.24; Prem Lagan, pp.185-88.

As slaves Hindus have shown their utter cowardice, submissiveness, humility and surrender but as rulers the Hindus are reverse of this. They are cruel, selfish, merciless, fanatic and narrow-minded. Master Tara Singh while agreeing with the Muslim leader Jinnah seconds the latter's observations of alike nature.⁷ Master Tara Singh's comments are the result of certain situations. He quotes from history of the period of Mahmud Ghanvi for the evidence of the former point and from the history of post-independence period for the second point. Master Tara Singh's comments are from the point of view of an aggrieved man who is right from his own angle.

Master Tara Singh appreciates martial qualities of the Muslims. This attitude is that of finding identity between his community and the Muslims. The Muslims-rulers have been cruel to the Sikhs till the eighteenth century but during the period of Maharaja Ranjit Singh their differences lessened.⁸ During the British period, the Muslims mostly remained pro-British. This attitude is not that of anti-patriotism but, then, the Muslims had to choose it because they wanted to get benefits from the government, which they could not have got in normal circumstances. On one hand Master Tara Singh considers the Muslims as pragmatic, on the other hand he labels them as narrow-minded and fanatic. On communal questions they were fanatic in their reactions to Hindu-Muslim compromises. They had been demanding better rights from the Hindus but on the other hand they were not ready to grant special privileges to the Sikhs

7. Sant Sipahi, April, 1950. 8. Baba Tara Singh, pp.21-23.

(in case the sikhs had opted to join the Muslim sons).

The Muslims have not got rid of caste system. Though, ideologically, the Muslims are a casteless society, yet, as they were mainly Hindus turned Muslims, they were not free from caste system. So-called low-caste Muslims were considered second rate Muslims by the so-called high-caste Muslims.⁹

The Pathans, Master Tara Singh observes, are incredible.¹⁰ A very large number of men of this community are thieves,¹¹ cheats,¹², dacoits,¹³, Thugs and murderers.¹⁴ They have cannibalistic tendency also.¹⁵ Though they are not good fighters and cannot stick in battles yet some of them are brave also.¹⁶ They are more brave than Hindus and Muslims but they are less brave as compared to sikhs. The Pathans consider sikhs martially superior to them. Master Tara Singh seems to be prejudiced against the Pathans because the history of India is very clear as to the attacks of the invaders from Kabul, who though small in number had captured a very large tract of India. Master Tara Singh wants to prove the superiority of the sikhs as a martial nation so in comparison to his community he wants to give lesser credit to the Pathans. He himself has stated that besides sikhs (in Guru Ka Bagh etc.) only Pathans had shown their bravery and had made sacrifices.¹⁷

9. Baba Tega Singh, pp.15-16.

11. Prem Lagan, p.10.

13. Ibid., pp.120-21.

15. Baba Tega Singh, p.122.

16. Ibid., p.120.

10. Ibid., p.115.

12. Baba Tega Singh, p.120.

14. Prem Lagan, p.10;
Baba Tega Singh, p.122.

17. Akali Te pardegi, May 7, 1930.

Master Tara Singh appreciates the religious attitude of the Pathans. Even the criminals, even if they are dying of hunger or are in any sort of disastrous situation, perform their religious rituals. They do not blame God and accept the Hukam of God on the Sikh pattern of "Thine Will is Sweeter".

Master Tara Singh's attitude towards the Britishers had undergone a major change. In his early life, he was a supporter of the Britishers¹⁸, but later on, as a result of some incidents, he turned hostile. The turning point was partly the peasants' agitation (1907) and the apathy of the Britishers towards Sikhs on the question of communal representation.¹⁹

Master Tara Singh considers the Britishers as shrewd diplomats²⁰, and it is due to this quality that they had conquered India.²¹ Master Tara Singh considers them very good at fighting²² but the Sikhs excel them in bravery. It is due to their treachery and their conspiracies with the traitor Sikh generals that they could win the Anglo-Sikh wars.²³ Before the Anglo-Sikh wars, the Britishers had a belief that the Rajput and the Maratha people are more brave than the Sikhs but post-war comments by the Britishers had confirmed the Sikh supremacy. Thus, the comments of Master Tara Singh on the Britishers are also in their comparison to

18. Meri Yaad, p.35.

19. Meri Yaad, pp.46-48,87.

20. Baba Tega Singh, p.126. 21. Baba Tega Singh, p.37; Firm Pials, p.86.

22. Baba Tega Singh, pp.37,40,42,43,70.

23. Ibid., p.71.

the sikhs.

The British historians are partial. Their account of the Anglo-sikh wars is prejudiced and partial. They have not given complete and the true account of the wars. Only J.D. Cunningham's account is near accuracy and due to his praise for the sikhs, he was terminated from the services of the British Government.²⁴ Master Tara Singh has not praised even the Sikh historians. He feels that they are prejudiced for the sikhs and their account is that of simple eulogical.²⁵

Master Tara Singh has appreciations for Britishers' generosity also. They had a better corner in their hearts for the sikhs and the other minorities.²⁶ Here Master Tara Singh comments that the Britishers' favour for the sikhs is not ingenuine. It is, infact, return for the sikhs' sacrifices during the two world wars.

Thus, Master Tara Singh has portrayed some of the traits of the people of the communities other than the sikhs. In his comments two points appear apparently : (1) His comments are the reactions of a sikh leader. All his comments are in relation to or in comparison and contrast with the sikhs. His observations are comparative analysis (2) secondly, his observations are as a result of his reaction (to the persons of the various communities) in historical perspective or are contextual comments. Like his pattern in the other points, here also, Master Tara Singh is speaking as a sikh but, as discussed above, he comments with evidence from the history.

24. Ibid., p.56.

25. Baba Teja Singh (Preface).

26. Prem Lagan, p.38; Meri Yaad, pp.33-34.

CHAPTER - V

A **i) Plot Construction**
 ii) Characterisation
 iii) Usage of Language

B **i) Art of Essay Writing**
 ii) Art of Editorial Writing
 iii) Art of Autobiography
 Writing

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PLOT CONSTRUCTION

The plot is important to a novel much as the skeleton is important to body. A plot is a story, a selection of events arranged in time. A true plot has a causality; one thing leads to another, and it replies why things happen. A plot has a beginning which leads through a middle to an end.¹

The neat, implausibly symmetrical plot is a thing of the past.²

Master Tara Singh has chosen the plots of his novels from Sikh history and Sikh culture. Baba Teja Singh's plot has been taken from the Sikh history of the fifth decade of the twentieth century i.e. post-Ranjit Singh period. The scenes are set on the tumultuous land of Punjab, on which a number of battles were fought between the English and the Sikhs. Prem Lagan's plot is from the cultural history of the Sikhs in particular and the Punjab in general from 1906 to 1926. It is also the history of impact of the Singh Sabha movement as well as the Akali movement for reform in Sikh shrines. The scene is set on the villages of Majha tract of Punjab, which is the centre of the culture of Punjab, and partly the city life, the base being Amritsar, also. Thus the plots of both the novels have been chosen from Sikh history and Sikh culture.

1. Marjorie Boulton - The Anatomy of Novel, p.45.

2. Ibid., p.58.

Master Tara Singh wanted to present true picture of sikh history of the concerned period; to remind the sikhs of their past glory; to stress the supremacy of sikh culture; and by doing so he wanted to create healthy atmosphere for growth of an ideal society based on sikh way of life.

Master Tara Singh declares his intention in the beginning of the novel. In the very first scene he begins with his theme, presented in miniature. Then, he constructs his plot on that central point. The beginning of the novel Prem Lagan shows the hero for the first part of the novel as a brave, chivalrous, generous, duty-ful, religious, spirited, benevolent, patriotic person. The whole plot has been constructed to prove this point. His murder by his ungrateful beneficiaries, his choice of a capable successor, his successor's ventures in advance to his prototype and, further, the third generation still advanced; Master Tara Singh constructs all this to establish his notion. In Baba Tega Singh also, the beginning declares the construction of events in the framework of the plot. Baba Tega Singh is a brave, warrior, generous, justice-loving, spirited, religious man. The plot is an attempt to verify the proposition presented in the beginning of the novel. Master Tara Singh also clarifies the background for the creation of such personality of the heroes of his novels i.e. the depiction the scenes from the administration, the recruitment of employees, the administration of justice and the style of the ruling class during the sikh rule etc. (Baba Tega Singh), the religious atmosphere of the Punjab

villages, the socio-religious reforms, the Sikh resurgence ventures, the political awakening, the glory of the Sikh way of life etc. (Prem Lagan). Thus the plots of both the novels from beginning to the end move on single track from motif point of view.

Master Tara Singh's novels present a combination of narrative, dramatic and dialogue - the three patterns of plot construction. He uses these patterns wherever the situations of the novel demand. The narrative method has been used to describe the events, the causes and the background of the happening of such events as well as the consequences of these events. No other method would have been more suitable for such situations.

The beginning of the novel Baba Tega Singh is dramatic. The writer creates curiosity by hinting at certain future situation. Though he hints indirectly, yet he hides that situation and constructs his plot on it. The novel begins with the conversation between the author and the hero of the novel.³ Though the facilitation of the author is there, yet the novel is mainly the narrative of the hero. Thus we can put this novel among the category of the novels written on the pattern of autobiography of a fictional character.

Having begun thus, the author makes the hero "relate" his story, mainly through the device of 'flash back'. Narrative

3. Baba Tega Singh, p.1.

technique has been used for most of the part of the flash back²³⁰ though dialogue has also been added in order to avoid monotony of the lecture-type autobiographic presentation. The situations depicting action have been presented through the technique of drama, e.g., quarrel between Tega Singh and Gulab Singh⁴, Tega Singh's combat with the Saives⁶ and the fight between the Pathans and Tega Singh⁷. Most of the plot of Baba Tega Singh is in the narrative. In this technique, it is likely that the interest of the reader may be marred but Master Tara Singh's switching over to dramatic technique and dialogue gives relief to the monotony created by the narrative technique. He uses the device of picturesque to describe the scenes of rivers⁸, mountains⁹ and deserts.¹⁰

The plot of the novel Baba Tega Singh is not a simple plot. It is the story of the life of the hero Tega Singh. But as already discussed, as the motive of the writer was to present the superiority of the political and judicial administration during the Sikh rule and the true history of

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4. Ibid., pp.6-7.
 5. Ibid., pp.51,52,53,66,67,68,72 and 73.
 6. Ibid., p.30.
 7. Ibid., p.115.
 8. Ibid., p.53.
 9. Ibid., pp.110-111.
 10. Ibid., p.103.

the Anglo-Sikh wars, Master Tara Singh has added sub-plots to²³¹ the main plot of the novel.

The plot of the novel Baba Tega Singh can be divided into the following parts :

1. Baba Tega Singh joins the Sikh army. The system of recruitment in the Sikh army.
2. Baba Tega Singh as a soldier. Anglo-Sikh wars, the superiority of the Sikh army, treachery in the Sikh camp, conspiracies of the Britishers. A divided house falls easily.
3. Ranjit Singh a generous administrator, brave general. Sham Singh Attarwala a brave general, impartial judge, benevolent officer etc. The concept of sant-sipahi.
4. Baba Tega Singh absconds. A freedom-lover does not surrender his freedom. A decoit who helps the poor. Semi-sovereignty. Benevolence and human qualities of a Sikh. An ideal human being in a Sikh.
5. Baba Tega Singh returns. A cheat befools village-folk. Blind faith of the rustic people and ordinary Hindu masses. Insulted by lower ranks. Slaves are never respected. Sovereignty is must for an honourable living.

The above mentioned five parts of the plot can be easily divided into two plots: the life of Baba Tega Singh, and the Sikh rule. The link, as stated previously, has been established by the chain of motif. The motif of the novel is to present the saga of the Sikh glory. The hero and the Sikh rule have been presented to establish this motif. Baba Tega Singh and the historical personalities are sant-sipahis. The sant-sipahi is a good administrator, an impartial justice, a warrior, a generous human being. He is sovereign. He is an ideal politico-socio-religious personality. To establish

this the five parts unite to form one plot. Thus the sub-plots have a link on motif-pattern.

Baba Tega Singh is a historical novel. A historical novel is a blending of history and fiction. The mingling of the both should be cared to such an extent that on the face of it, the history and the fiction aspects should not appear distinguishable. Secondly, only those incidents from history should be chosen which would fit in the framework of fiction. Baba Tega Singh is the life history of the hero. Tega Singh all the major events are concerned with his life. In the novel, the Anglo-sikh wars, the administration of justice and political officers during the sikh rule are pure history. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sham Singh Attarwala, Maharaja Sher Singh, traitors in the sikh camp and the conspirators as the generals of the British army are true historical personalities. On the other than, joining of Tega Singh in the sikh army, the incident of dacoit Man Singh's encounter with Ranjit Singh, the murder of a low-caste Muslim by a high caste Muslim etc. are pure fiction. One cannot easily distinguish between the two elements. The craftmanly mingling of history and fiction has been successfully presented because the fiction element of the novel is also in the historical setting of the age of the story of the novel. Such a successful mingling was for the first time presented in Panjabi novel by Master Tara Singh in Baba Tega Singh.

Baba Tega Singh's plot has two serious flaws. These flaws seriously affect the interest of the reader in the story of the novel.

In the whole body of the novel, the writer becomes directly didactic at various occasions. Many a time he advises the reader to be aware of disunity,¹¹ treachery¹², cruelty, sycophancy¹³, luxurious life, vanity¹⁴, etc. He, like a preacher, makes sermons to the reader. This has, not only affected the fiction element of the novel, but also has made the reader to doubt the intention of the propagandist-novelist.

Another blemish of Baba Tega Singh is the excessive use of foot-notes from the books of history. Master Tara Singh has frequently quoted from the books of Shah Mohammad¹⁵, Giani Gian Singh¹⁶, J.D. Cunningham¹⁷, B.D. Basu¹⁸, William Edward¹⁹, Sir Charles Napier²⁰, Thackwell²¹, etc. This has given authenticity to the 'history' part of the novel but the excess of this has reduced a part of the novel to history. It seems that we are studying the history instead of reading a novel.

11. Ibid., p.144.

12. Ibid., p.33.

13. Ibid., p.33.

14. Ibid., p.9.

15. Ibid., pp.37,39,48,
56 etc.

16. Ibid., pp.48,50,84.

17. Ibid., pp.42,58,66,151,
152 and 155.

18. Ibid., pp.40,41,145 and
147.

19. Ibid., pp.41,152,153
and 155.

20. Ibid., pp.157,158.

21. Ibid., pp.74,75,78-80,88.

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The second novel Prem Lagan is a picture of the sikh culture of the Punjab during the first three decades of the twentieth century. The plot of the novel deals with the growing evils in the villages and towns of the province. The socio-religious reform movements tried to ameliorate the state of affairs of the province by bringing a chain of reform-oriented ventures.

The plot of the novel Prem Lagan is a combination of narrative, dialogue and drama. The presentation of picturesque is dramatic. The rest of the novel is in the pattern of narrative and dialogue. Unlike Baba Tega Singh, in this novel, dialogue predominates the plot of the novel. Some of the chapters are totally in dialogue form.²² The novel begins with a dramatic scene of a rainy day of winter, at about midnight, outside a military camp in a deserted area of the Frontier Province of India²³ (now Pakistan). Dramatic technique has frequently been used to present such picturesque, the scene setting and the combats etc. The rest of the novel is in narrative or dialogue pattern. The narrative affects the reader's interest, particularly where it creates monotony in the detailing by the Akali leaders who narrate their information as well as their view point regarding the Gurdwara Reform Movement.²⁴

22. Prem Lagan, Chapters No. 3, 5, 8, 11, 12, 13, 20, 21, 22, 29, 30, 34.

23. Ibid., pp. 9-14.

24. Ibid., pp. 210-223.

However, the main plot of the novel has been presented in cause and effect pattern. The novelist does not sacrifice causality, though role of 'chance' has also been brought in order to suit certain situations in the plot. The novel has been set chronologically. The events occur in succession of each other. The plot of the novel has been coherently planned (with the exception of the sub-plot depicting the Akali movement). Occurrence of a large number of events has, however, not been detailed and only references in the preceding events indicate at the previously occurred situations. Many chapters describe the reaction of some already occurred situations between the ending of the previous chapter and the beginning of the new chapter. Thus the novelist leaves much as suspense and for the pondering of the reader.

The main plot of the novel is the tragic life story of the hero and all the sub-plots have been introduced to add to the intensity of the story in the main plot. The characters come and go, fall and rise, move and stop, laugh and weep, struggle, strive and pine for amelioration of the state of their lives and then leave the stage after playing their respective roles. The story is like that of Shakespearean tragedies. The characters move under the command of some Supreme Power -

As flies to wanton boys
We are to gods
They kill us for their sport²⁵

25. William Shakespeare - King Lear,
(Act. IV, Sc. i., l. 38).

6. Balbir Singh found - the accomplishment of the task of chivalrous hero, evil is punished and the noble are acknowledged.

Thus, the plot can be further reduced to two points: the story of the life of Mohan Singh, and the Gurdwara reform movement. The link has been established by the motif of the novel. The presents the struggle between good and evil, in which evil is defeated in the end. Mohan Singh, the protagonist of the right way of life, a link between past and future struggles throughout his life. His achievement in the worldly sense is nil but in wider terms, it is glorification of the path of righteousness. The plot deals with this point. The plot covering the Gurdwara reform movement adds to the evidence of the success of righteousness.

The depiction of the Akali movement (pages 209 to 292 of the novel) is much more than is needed by the plot of the novel. The only link in the story, is that two major characters of the novel participate in the movement, like various other situations, not described directly in the novel, these also could have been left to simple reference through some observations made by the other characters. This detailed description has affected the reader's interest in the novel. With this description the reader's attention shifts from the main plot of the novel to the background of the Akali movement, the problems created by and of the agitation, the state of prisons during the British regime and the personalities of the Akali leaders. It seems as if

we are reading not the novel but the history of the Akali movement. A general atmosphere of the Sikh resurgence movement is already prevalent throughout the novel, so there was no need of thrusting this portion in the body of the novel. The novel has become a conglomeration of events, character-sketches, action, debates, sceneries, setting, dialogue, ethics and pure history. One wonders whether all this is the part of the same novel.

Like Baba Tega Singh, this novel also has the blemish of sermoning by the novelist. Master Tara Singh does not leave any chance of preaching of the Sikh way of life, the Sikh ethics and the Sikh religion to the reader.²⁶

A common feature of the novels by Master Tara Singh is detective element in the plots of the novels. Prem Lagan is thoroughly a detective story; the intrigues, the murders, the abductions, the spying, the police, the heroes and the criminals (the villains) running here and there, hot chase for the criminals, the failure in tracing of the criminals and at the end the expected results of the plot. The second half of the plot of Baba Tega Singh is also like that of a detective novel. The hero absconds, wanders in the deserts and through the hills, becomes a dacoit, loots the rich and helps the poor (like Robinson Crusoe, the mythological adventurous hero), gives up dacoity and adopts the way of life of a cheat etc. All this is the pattern of a detective novel. Events happen in an unexpected manner, the complexity

26. Ibid., pp.61,92,93,98.

of the plots goes on increasing, chance helps the hero and the other noble characters, mysterious powers help the ideal personnel and finally their path is acknowledged as the true one. The detective element could have harmed the plot but the excess of history element has been compensated by it. It has saved the novel from becoming pure propaganda.

on the whole the plot construction of the novels by Master Tara Singh is faulty, though an attempt has been made to achieve unity of plot by thematic uniformity throughout the plots of both the novels. There is a lot of promiscuous mingling of material in the plots. But this could have been expected in a novel by a person like Master Tara Singh. Master Tara Singh's purpose was not to achieve heights as a novelist but was to remind the sikhs of their past glory. So the cause of the faults of plot construction is obvious. But as we are discussing the artistic aspect of his writings, the defects of plot construction have to be pointed out. This flaw has, however, been partly compensated by his art of characterization.

CHARACTERISATION

The creation of character is probably the most remarkable achievement of most great novelists. Few people can recite the plot of a novel in detail shortly after reading it; most readers of novels can remember numerous characters; we make allusions to literary characters in ordinary talk¹;

Mr. Micawber (David Copperfield by Charles Dicken), Becky Sharp (Vanity Fair by W.M. Thackeray), Tess (Tess of D'Urberville by Thomas Hardy), Kedar (Pavittar paapi by Nanak Singh), Hori (Godan by Prem Chand).

Master Tara Singh's plot construction has many flaws but this shortcoming has been compensated by his skill in characterisation. The selection, the making and the presentation of characters by Master Tara Singh is craftmanly.

The whole of the range of the characters of Master Tara Singh can be divided mainly into two categories. The one consists of the characters who are wicked, full of vices, greedy, cruel, ungrateful, cheat, murderers etc. The other category is that of the ideal characters who are symbol of goodness. Their function is to struggle for their ideal in their confrontation with evil.

In the novel Baba Tega Singh, Tega Singh, Sham Singh Attarwala, Gulab Singh and Ranjit Singh are ideal characters. They are the builders and well wishers of the Sikh rule. They are very good fighters, administrators and just people.

1. Marjorie Boulton - The Anatomy of Novel, p.71.

They are generous and justice loving officers. They are full of milk of human kindness. They are ever ready to sacrifice their life for the defence of the sovereignty of their nation. In the novel the other side of the hedge is full of wicked, cheat, greedy, coward traitors like the Dogra Gulab Singh, Tega Singh, Dhian Singh, Lal Singh, Pahara Singh etc. They are ungrateful conspirators and are always ready to join the camp of the enemy just for a handful of silver.

Likewise the characters of the novels Prem Lagan can be placed on one or another side of the straight line of ethical credo. Bhai Gurdit Singh, Mohan Singh, Balbir Singh, Gehna Singh, Partap Singh, Sheel Kaur, student friends of Mohan Singh and some Akali leaders form the cluster on one side. They are good people, helpful to others, compassionate, generous, humble, pious, truth-loving and gentle heart having persons. But Dalip Kaur, Kishan Singh, Pattu, Sharn Singh and Veero are wicked, greedy, full of vices, conspirators.

Master Tara Singh's good characters always remain good. They cannot be allured by any mean towards sin. On the other hand, the wicked characters, with the exception of a hired criminal in the novel Prem Lagan, remain wicked through and through. They preserve the qualities of their respective class till end. Master Tara Singh does not want to reform the wicked throughout the novel; he believes in punishing them. Master Tara Singh wanted to eradicate evil from the very root, so he asserts that evil should be punished, forgiveness

is possible only for those who did not know what they were doing.

Another line of demarcation can be drawn for classification of the characters in the novels of Master Tara Singh. They can be divided into two categories: Those who are religious, pious persons and those who are irreligious, blasphemous, bohemians. All the ideal characters are religious and all the wicked are irreligious. In fact Master Tara Singh wanted to present the ideal Sikh society and on this account he has presented such a world of characters. These characters live the life of the dreams of the author and also help in struggle for formation of such a society. On the other side there are such character who create obstacles in the way of ideal characters and thus impede the formation of a free-from-flaw Sikh society. The author makes his ideal characters successful against evil characters in the struggle for an ideal Sikh society.

All the religious characters in Master Tara Singh writings are men of great qualities. They are pantheists, are lovers of meditation, are helpful to the poor and the needy, are sympathetic to everyone, are intelligent, are physically well built. Every religious character is a symbol of bravery. Maharaja Ranjit Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala, Baba Tega Singh, Gulab Singh (Baba Tega Singh), Bhai Gurdit Singh, Mohan Singh, Balbir Singh (Prem Lagan) form a chain of bravery which moves from one generation to another. It is not static but is more advanced in the next generations.

In the galaxy of historical characters in the novels of Master Tara Singh, Sham Singh Attariwala (Baba Toga Singh) has the central place. He is a brave, courageous and intelligent general of Ranjit Singh's army. He has a religious bent of mind and can sacrifice his life for the cause of religion. He is a justice-loving, compassionate and a good judge of persons. All these qualities make him an ideal character. Although actual biographic history of the general is available, yet the cultural history of the province is also an evidence that such persons have been living on this part of the country.

Maharaja Ranjit Singh's depiction is also historically true. He was a very powerful and generous king. The historical evidence regarding his prowess, as presented through the anecdote of the famous dacoit Man Singh, verifies the depiction by the novelist. Along with ideal qualities in the Maharaja, the novelist has referred to the Maharaja's love for flattery² and pride of kingship.³ Thus, the depiction of the Maharaja is historical and realistic.

The writer has depicted the character of Rani Jindan as it was a part of popular belief. Master Tara Singh's novel's hero blames her for the Anglo-sikh wars and the defeat of the sikhs at the hands of the British. The history has disproved British propaganda, Shah Mohammad's version and the narration of the hero. Master Tara Singh in the later editions of novel

2. J.D. Cunningham - History of the Sikhs, pp.160-61.

3. Faqir Syed Saheedulddin - The Real Ranjit Singh, p.29.

accepted his mistake.⁴

The depiction of historical characters in the novel 'Prem Lagan' is also realistic. Almost all these characters were close acquaintances of Master Tara Singh. So, his depiction of these characters is from the nearest source.

Giani Sher Singh is a bachelor and^a blind man. Taste for heavy eating, his love for exercises and his perplexity are his particular qualities. Garmulh Singh Jhabal is a stubborn man. He is an easily mendable person. He can be affected by anyone in whose company he remains for a pretty long period. Gopal Singh Gaumi is an irresponsible person. Mehtab Singh has love for physical exercises. Principal Teja Singh is a romantic poet.

Master Tara Singh has presented these historical characters to the extent of accuracy. This accuracy has been corroborated by another jail inmate of Master Tara Singh.⁵

The presentation of non-historical characters by Master Tara Singh is by no way secondary. He has chosen minimum number of characters so as to suit to the demand of the plots of his novels.

Baba Teja Singh is such a character. He is not a historical character but seems to be almost one with the historical characters of the novel. His story has been so craftmanly grafted with the story of historical characters that

4. Baba Teja Singh (Preface).

5. Teja Singh - Aarsi, pp.80-81.

he seems to be alike them. Baba Tega Singh is a strong, sturdy, bold, skilled wrestler, young man. He has a taste for horse-riding and the use of sword. He is proud of his prowess and in order to utilise it he joins the platoon of sham Singh Attariwala. During Anglo-sikh wars, after the death of his leader, General sham Singh Attariwala, he escapes from the battle field. His introspection pushes him back into the battlefield. After the defeat of the sikh Army, he refuses to surrender his sword, which he considers a symbol of freedom and sovereignty. He flees to the hills and adopts to dacoity which is aimed at the help of the poor people. An incident arouses the emotional man in him, thus, he gives up criminal life. His anti-climax is his cheating of the innocent people who believe in his tantras. Baba Tega Singh's character is a complex character. In the beginning, he is a brave, chivalrous and generous youth, in the middle of the novel (and his life) he is a dacoit, and in the ending he is a cheat. All this does not seem to be coherent. The first and the second aspects can be reconciled but the ending seems to be a hasty step. Still he is one of the most interesting and remarkable character in the novels of Master Tara Singh.

Second fictional character of the novel Baba Tega Singh, Gulab Singh, is also like his companion Baba Tega Singh. He is an important officer in the platoon of sham Singh Attariwala. Like ordinary assertive officer he misbehaves the ordinary folk

but after having been punished he reforms himself. Like Tega Singh, the ending part of his life seems to be unrealistic. From an army officer to a dacoit and then to a vagabound, does not suit a brave, religious, far-sighted, ex-officer of the army of Maharaja Ranjit Singh. The writer could not give a suitable farewell to him and has hastily adjusted his role in the ending of the novel.

Non-historical characters of the novel 'Prem Lagan' are mostly from rural background. They represent the rural culture of central Punjab.

Mohan Singh is the hero of the novel. He is physically strong, sturdy, brave, courageous, intelligent and lives the life of a religious man. He is the ideal man of Master Tara Singh's concept. He is physically strong, intellectually sound, religiously committed, morally high, sociable and spiritually enlightened man. He is the beloved of all the good characters of the novel. Though a static person, he has angular qualities also. His life is a thoroughly tragic story leading to his death. The struggle of his life ends in negligible achievement, which is a God-gift and his role in that achievement is not even partial. (Not only in this novel but even in the novel 'Baba Tega Singh, the achievements of the heroes or the ideal characters are almost negligible). In depicting Mohan Singh, Master Tara Singh has become autobiographical. His hero, like him⁶, has been affected by the books 'character' by Samuel Smiles and 'The

6. Meri Yaad, p.28.

students' Manual' by Dr. Todd. Like Master Tara Singh the hero decides to avoid the sensuous literature, films and conversation about romantic and erotic anecdotes.⁷ Due to his autobiographic presentation through Mohan Singh, Master Tara Singh has idealised him too much.

Bhai Gurdit Singh is a prototype of the hero, Mohan Singh. He has almost all those qualities and taste which have been revealed in Mohan Singh. In fact Master Tara Singh wanted to present an ideal Sikh 'personality' with the high qualities of body, mind and soul, which he (the author) has presented in Gurdit Singh, Mohan Singh, Balbir Singh, the three generations linked with each other. It is, in fact, a chain of the ideal Sikh characters who have been presented as a type.

The most remarkable character of this novel is Gehna Singh. He is an officer of his village. He has a taste for liquor. He is the ring leader of the area. He distils illicit liquor. On the other hand he is a responsible officer, an intelligent man and is full of human kindness. Unlike most of the characters in the novels by Master Tara Singh he stands as one of the unique characters. He has his share of good and bad qualities. He is not the ideal character as conceived by Master Tara Singh but we have sympathy, love and respect for him. His faults are not too strong as his qualities are. Though he has some of the qualities of Master Tara Singh's ideal, yet

7. *Ibid.*, pp. 29-30.

he stands apart from the chain of the "type" characters. He is a complex character and continues to be so throughout the novel. Gehna Singh is a remarkable creation of Master Tara Singh.

Like his male characters, Master Tara Singh's female characters can also be put on the either side of the hedge. Sheel Kaur and Uttam Singh, though exhibited as ordinary minor characters are good characters. Both of them have qualities of generosity, sincerity, honesty etc. Both have religious bent of mind. On the other hand Dalip Kaur and Gango are female bad characters of the novel. In fact Dalip Kaur is the villain in the novel 'Prem Lagan'. Dalip Kaur is a crooked widow. Her husband was a puppet in her hands. Her sons are stupid chaps who have nothing of their own and are manned by her. She is a jealous, a cynic and a conspirator. All the conspiracies in the plot of the novel are her creations. Master Tara Singh has portrayed her character minutely. Gurdial Singh Phull is all his appreciation of Master Tara Singh's realistic portrayal of Dalip Kaur. Gurdial Singh Phull considers this portrayal as height of Master Tara Singh's art of characterisation.⁸

Unlike his predecessor Punjabi novelists he has not prejudicially presented the Sikh characters as always good, Hindus always coward and Muslims always cruel. He has chosen both the categories from the respective sections - but as he has mainly depicted the Sikh society, his Sikhs are both good

8. Gurdial Singh Phull - Punjabi Sahit De Sath Saal, pp. 186-89.

and bad, religious and bohemians, generous and cruel, brave and timid, intelligent and stupid, honest and corrupt, chivalrous and criminals, patriots and traitors. Master Tara Singh has chosen both good and bad characters from the other religions as well. An English officer is generous, helpful, sympathetic and disciplined man⁹ and on the other hand another English officer is wicked, dishonest and cheat.¹⁰ An English soldier is as much brave as an ordinary sikh.¹¹ A pathan may be a criminal; he may be a brave, gentle and sympathetic man.¹² Further, Master Tara Singh has not depicted a class as totally good or bad. A police officer may be dishonest, corrupt, shirking work¹³, but there are others who are dedicated to their jobs.¹⁴ Thus Master Tara Singh's depiction of characters is not prejudiced as far as class, caste or religion is concerned.

Master Tara Singh uses various techniques to reveal his characters. To begin with, he himself introduces the characters to the readers. This method is called direct statement. Sometimes this statement is plain and sometimes in a fancier form. This direct statement by the novelist is made, ordinarily, at the time of the first appearance of the character. For example

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- 9. Prem Lagan, pp. 16-18, 147.
 - 10. Ibid., p. 281; Baba Tega Singh, pp.
 - 11. Baba Tega Singh, p. 60.
 - 12. Prem Lagan, pp. 11-14; Baba Tega Singh, p. 129.
 - 13. Prem Lagan, p. 174.
 - 14. Prem Lagan, pp. 125, 133, 137, 307-08.

the introduction of Dalip Kaur reveals her personality and her future role in the novel.¹⁵

"ਦਲੀਪ ਕੌਰ ਬੜੀ ਚਾਲਾਕ ਤੇ ਬਾਰਾਂ ਤਾਲਣ ਸੀ। ਆਪਣੇ ਖਾਵੰਦ ਸਜਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਨੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਖੂਠ ਵਾਂਗ ਠਕ ਠਕੋਣ ਪਾਈ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਾਹੁੰਦੀ ਸੀ ਉਸ ਨੂੰ ਠਕਾਉਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਇਸ ਦਾ ਨਿਯਾਨਾ ਘੋੜੇ ਇਕੱਠੇ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸੈਨੇ ਦੇ ਰੋਖੜੂ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਲੋਕਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਨਖਰੇ ਕਰਵੇ ਫਿਰਨਾ ਸੀ। ਜਦ ਇਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਿਸੇ ਠਾਲਮਤਲਬ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਬਿਲਕੁਲ ਮੀਸਟੀ ਤੇ ਮਿਠਹ ਬਣ ਕੇ ਮਤਲਬ ਕਰ ਲੈਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਜਦ ਇਸ ਠਾਲ ਕਿਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਮਤਲਬ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਬੜੇ ਮਿਠੇ ਢੰਗ ਠਾਲ ਖਿਸਕਾ ਦੇਂਦੀ ਸੀ। ਨੂੰਹਾਂ ਲਈ ਇਹ ਹਉਂਝਾ ਬਣੀ ਹੋਈ ਸੀ। ਪੁਰਖਾਂ ਨੂੰ ਭੀ ਇਸ ਨੇ ਕਾਬੂ ਰਖਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ। ਟੀਰਖਾ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਪੁਰਲੀ ਸੀ।"

The novelist has used this technique to present Dalip Kaur, Gurdit Singh and Mohan Singh. Direct statement by the novelist has been used at places other than their introduction also. At such places the purpose of the novelist is to explain the action of the character in that particular situation.

Another technique of direct statement by one character about some other character has also been used by the novelist. Dalip Kaur while talking to Sunder Singh reveals his past as well as his present and thus his personality in a few words.¹⁶

ਦਲੀਪ ਕੌਰ - ਪਿਛਲੇ ਸਾਲ ਜਦ ਤੇਰੇ ਮਰ ਚੁਕੇ ਸਾਰ ਕਰਤਾਰ ਸਿੰਘ ਦੀ ਸਿੰਘਣੀ ਨੂੰ ਇਕ ਲੁੱਥੇ ਨੇ ਚੁਰਾ ਟਿਕੜਕ ਕੀਤੀ ਸੀ ਤੇ ਤੂੰ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਸਿਭ ਲਾਹ ਕੇ ਬੋਹ ਰਖ ਦਿੱਤਾ ਸੀ। ਉਸੇ ਖੂਠ ਵਿਚ ਤੂੰ ਚੁਟ ਨਾ ਫਿਰਦਾ ਹੋ, ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਤੇਰੇ ਘਰ, ਜ਼ਮੀਨ, ਦੇਣਤ, ਸਭ ਫੂਝ ਹੋ। ਤੇਨੂੰ ਡਾਕੇ ਮਾਰਨ ਦੀ ਕੀ ਲੋੜ ਸੀ?"

15. Prem Lagan, pp.45-46.

16. Prem Lagan, p.56.

This technique has been used to reveal the personalities of Sham Singh Attariwala, Sharn Singh and Gurdit Singh also.¹⁷

ਸੁੰਦਰ ਸਿੰਘ - ਢੇਤੇ ਰਖੇ ਤਾਈ ਉਤੇ ਹਥ ਚੁਕਣਾ ਕੋਈ ਸੋਖਾ ਕੀ ਲਗੀ ਹੈ। ਉਹ ਬੜਾ ਬਹਾਦਰ, ਬੜਾ ਫੁਰਤੀਲਾ, ਬੜਾ ਜਵਾਨ ਤੇ ਵਧੀਆ ਨਸ਼ਾਠੀ ਹੈ। ਉਸ ਦੀ ਤਾਂ ਕਖ ਦਾ ਕੁਹਬ ਫਲਿਕਾ ਠਹੀਂ ਜਾਂਦਾ।

The novelist has revealed the characters through another technique also. From the conversation of two characters he presents the personality of some other character. This is a sophisticated form of direct statement. Sohan Singh, while talking to Gurdit Singh analyses the life and style of Mohan Singh.¹⁸

ਸੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ - ਹਰ ਕੀ ਵਿਚ ਹਰ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਠਾਠੋਂ ਇਹ (ਮੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ) ਤਕੜਾ ਹੈ। ਪੜ੍ਹਾਈ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ ਤੇ ਖੇਤਾਂ ਵਿਚ ਕੀ, ਹਰ ਪਾਸਿਓਂ ਕੱਢਣ ਨੰਬਰ ਦਿਸਦਾ ਹੈ। ਇਹ ਇਹ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਮੁੰਡਿਆਂ ਦੀ ਮਚਦ ਤੀ ਬੜੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਮਜਾਨ ਹੈ ਕੋਈ ਤਕੜਾ ਮੁੰਡਾ ਕਿਸੇ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਉਤੇ ਕੋਈ ਵਾਧਾ ਕਰੇ।

Technique of self-introduction (self-statement) by the characters has also been used by the novelist. Hakoam Dhera, while boasting about himself, says:¹⁹

ਹਕੀਮ:- ਮੇਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਖਿਆਲ ਹੈ? ਮੇਰਾ ਪਿਓ ਤੀ ਹਿਕਮਤ ਕਰਦਾ ਰਿਹਾ ਹੈ। ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਚੁਕਾਨ ਤੀ ਠਾਠ ਕਰ ਲਈ ਹਾਂ, ਪਰ ਮੇਰੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਜੀ ਤਾਂ ਕੋਰ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਹੀ ਕਰਦੇ ਰਹਿੰਦੇ ਸਨ। ਮੈਂ ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਠਹੀਂ ਮੰਗਦਾ। ਮੈਂ ਹੜਾਰਾਂ ਖਾਦਮੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਇਲਾਜ ਕਰ ਚੁਕਾ ਹਾਂ। ਸੱਕੜੇ ਤਾਂ ਮੁਹਰਕੇ ਤਾਪ ਵਾਲੇ ਤੀ ਮੈਂ ਬਚਾਏ ਰਠ। ਲਾਇਲਪੁਰ ਜਿਠੇ ਵਿਚ ਤਾਂ ਸਭ ਥਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਸਦਦੇ ਰਠ। ਪਿਛੇ ਜਦੋਂ ਕੰਮਿਤਸਰ ਤੇ ਲਹੋਰ ਦੇ ਜ਼ਿਲਿਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਤੀ ਮੇਰੇ ਕੋਲ ਕੋਈ ਪੁਜਦੇ ਸਨ।

17. Ibid., p.56.

18. Ibid., p.74.

19. Prem Lagan, pp.153-54.

Master Tara Singh reveals his characters through their action also. The character of Balbir Singh (Prem Lagan) is exhibited by his aggressive behaviour, his reaction towards and the political prisoners (Prem Lagan), Sham Singh Attariwala, Ranjit Singh, Gulab Singh, the pathan dacoits and the narrator (Baba Tega Singh) have been revealed through their actions. Most of the outward qualities have been presented through their actions and the outward qualities have mostly been presented through direct statement. The technique of direct statement is in fact, a quality of dramatic genre and its excess in a novel is not quality.

Master Tara Singh has presented a plethora of ideal characters. He has, however, presented another group of wicked characters as well. Master Tara Singh was writing with a purpose of amelioration of socio-religious state of the Sikh society and he needed those characters who would give practical shape to the demand of the motif of the novels. These characters are not the creation of Master Tara Singh alone, rather in those days, under the influence of the Singh Sabha Movement and later on during the Gurdwara Reform Movement, it was easy to find such ideal characters. Besides such ideal characters as his model, Master Tara Singh has created round characters like Baba Tega Singh and Gulab Singh (Baba Tega Singh), Gehna Singh (Prem Lagan) who have their share of good and bad qualities alike. Till end Master Tara Singh does not idealise them. Gehna Singh and Tega Singh remain among the memorable characters of Punjabi fiction.

USAGE OF THE LANGUAGE

since novels are largely about human relationship, which depend largely on communication, which takes place chiefly through speech, language naturally plays a major part in the mainstream novel.¹

Personality appears in a writer's language as it does in the strokes of painter's brush or the marks of the sculptor's chisel.²

Master Tara Singh's novels present a combination of narrative, dramatic and dialogue. The language used by him for the different patterns is different. While narrating the story he is very simple. The language flows like that of narration of an ordinary man. The language of the situations where he describes a scene, a war scene, a locale or a picturesque, his language becomes technical. Like an expert of the subject, he uses most technical terminology to describe the situation. For example the description of a hockey match:

ਬੰਕ ਤੇ ਹਾਡ ਬੰਕ ਤਾ ਸਾਡ ਮੁਖ ਸਨ ਪਰ ਡਾਰਵਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਿਨਾ ਹੋਰ
ਕਿਸੇ ਤੋਂ ਕੋਢ ਨਹੀਂ ਚੁਕਦਾ ਸੀ। ਬੰਕ ਈ ਕਰਦੇ ਜਦ ਚਰ ਵੇਲੇ ਹੀ ਕੋਢ ਉੱਠਾ
ਉੱਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹਿਆ ਚੜ੍ਹਦਾ ਸੀ। ਹਾਥੀ ਨੇ ਖੁਰੇ ਟੁੱਟੇ ਲਾਏ ਪਰ ਡਾਰਵਰਡ ਤਾ ਕੋਈ
ਬਾਠ ਨੇਣ ਵਾਲਾ ਹੀ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ। ਮੁਕ ਕੋਢ ਸਾਡੀ ਕੋਠ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਚਲਾ ਜਾਦਾ
ਸੀ। ਝੋਟ ਡੀ ਹਾਡਬੋਕੀ ਫੁਡ ਕੇ ਬੰਕ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ।³

1. Marjorie Boulton - The Anatomy of the Novel, p.102.

2. David Cecil - Hardy, The Novelist, p.136.

3. Prem Lagan, p.165.

In the above description the pseudonyms of different persons seem strange but the usage of the terminology of a hockey match - half back, forward, goal, full back, forward line etc. - proves the novelist's intention to make the scene more near to verisimilitude.

Master Tara Singh, while describing the scenes of fighting or wrestling etc. is not only technical but also emotional. His words throb with life and seem to be themselves in action:

ਪਤਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਿ ਸਾਰੀ ਉਮਰ ਦਾ ਕੁਝਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸਾਰਾ ਜੋਸ਼ ਖਜ ਹੀ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਨੂੰ ਖਾ ਚਕਿਆ ਸੀ। ਜਿਥੇ ਘਮਸਾਣ ਦੀ ਲੜਾਈ ਹੋਵੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਫਟ ਬੋਕਾ ਦੁਬਕਾ ਕੇ ਉਥੇ ਪੁਜਦਾ ਸੀ। ਕਈ ਬੋਕੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦੇ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਉਸ ਦਿਠ ਕੋਲੀਆਂ ਠਾਠ ਦਮ ਟੁਟ ਕੇ ਮੋਏ। ਸਰਦਾਰ ਇਕਲਾ ਹੀ ਲੜ ਰਹੇ ਸਿੱਖ ਦੇ ਹੋਸਣੇ ਵਧਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਪੁਜ ਰਿਹਾ ਸੀ। ਇਕ ਵੇਰਾ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦੀ ਪੈਂਡ ਲੰਗ ਗਈ ਤੇ ਜਦ ਪਕ ਬੰਨਣ ਲਈ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਹਥ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਣ ਲਗਾ ਤਾਂ ਉਹਲਾ ਤਲਵਾਰ ਦੇ ਕਬਜ਼ੇ ਵਿਚ ਜੰਮੀਆਂ ਪਈਆਂ ਸਨ। ਮਾਨਸੁ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਹਲਾ ਚਿਟੀਆਂ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਸਰਦਾਰ ਦਾ ਹਥ ਖੋਲ੍ਹਿਆ ਗਿਆ।⁴

ਜਦੋਂ ਕੋਠੀਆਂ ਪਰਠੇ ਡਿਠੇ ਡਾਈ ਜੀ ਦੀ ਕਰਦਨ ਨੂੰ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਠਾਣ ਨੇ ਹਥ ਪਾਇਆ ਤਾਂ ਫਟ ਡਾਈ ਜੀ ਨੇ ਬੰਦੂਕ ਕੋਠੀਆਂ ਹੇਠਾਂ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਮੋਢਿਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਦੀ ਪਠਾਣ ਦਾ ਸਿਰ ਕੜ ਕੇ ਇਕੋ ਹੀ ਗੁਡਲਾ ਖਜੇਏ ਜ਼ੋਰ ਤੇ ਖਜੇਏੀ ਕੁਕਤੀ ਠਾਠ ਮਾਰਿਆ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਪਠਾਣ ਤਾਂ ਡਾਈ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਮੋਢਿਆਂ ਉਤੇ ਦੀ ਉਲਰਦਾ ਬਕਪ ਪਿਠ ਪਰਠੇ ਜ਼ਮੀਨ ਉਤੇ ਜ ਪਿਆ। ਡਾਈ ਜੀ ਫਟ ਉਸ ਦੀ ਛਾਤੀ ਉਤੇ ਚੜ੍ਹ ਗਏ, ਡਾਵੇਂ ਮਰਦੇ ਦੀ ਲੰਕੇ ਦੂਜੇ ਪਾਠਣ ਨੇ ਕੜਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਸੀ।⁵

The conversation or comments regarding religious or ethical points is in the style of the sermons of a

4. Baba Tega Singh, p.51.

5. Prem Lagan, p.12.

mystic :

ਅਜ ਤੇਰੇ ਮਠ ਵਿਚ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਥਾਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਤੁਰੂ ਦੀ ਡਿਰਪਾ ਘਈ ਹੈ। ਜਦ ਤੇਰੇ ਹੰਕਾਰ ਹੋਇਆ, ਤੂੰ ਮੋਇਆ। ਇਹ ਰਾਜ ਤਾਂ ਤੁਰੂ ਗੋਬਿੰਦ ਸਿੰਘ ਜੀ ਦੇ ਰੁਕਮ ਬਨੁਸਾਰ ਹੀ ਚਲੇਗਾ। ਧਰਮ ਢਟਾਉਣ ਤੇ ਦੁਸ਼ਟਪੁਟਾ ਢਟਾਉਣ ਲਈ ਤੁਰੂ ਨੇ ਖਾਲਸੇ ਨੂੰ ਰਾਜ ਦਿਤਾ ਹੈ। ਧਰਮ ਵਿਚ ਥਾਕੜ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੀ। ਜਿਥੇ ਥਾਕੜ ਥਾਈ, ਉਥੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਪਾਪ ਥਾਏ ਜਾਣੇ।¹⁶

Both of the novels of Master Tara Singh are partly-historical novels. Baba Tega Singh is more of the history of the Anglo-Sikh wars than a novel and Prem Lagan has been written in the historical background of socio-religious reform movements in the Sikh cultural zone.

The historical novel has a special problem : to try to represent the speech of a bygone age so that it suggests the historical period, but it is intelligible and credible.⁷ Master Tara Singh himself as a writer was a product of socio-religious reform movements, as such the language used by him is true to its Age. Even the language of the period described in the novel Baba Tega Singh is in its originality. When Master Tara Singh was a young boy, a number of old men, who had seen the rule of Maharaja Ranjit Singh and had even fought in the battles with the British army, were still alive. Master Tara Singh had the benefit of their company. Thus, the language of the novels is that of the Age of the background of the contents. Secondly, not much change has occurred, since then, in the Punjabi language, so it is intelligible also. The only difference,

6. Baba Tega Singh, p.8.

7. Marjouri Boulton - The Anatomy of the Novel, p.106.

now-a-days, is the replacing of Urdu and Persian vocabulary by Hindi-zone's vocabulary.

Master Tara Singh belonged to pothohar-belt of West Punjab (now Pakistan). He spent a lot of period in Majha as well. Majha is the zone of central Punjabi. out of his writings the novel Prem Lagan's cultural area is the central Punjab. Baba Tega Singh's background is partly Majha and partly Malwa. Thus, Master Tara Singh's novels should have been in Majhi Punjabi. Being a native of pothohar-belt, his vocabulary of Pothohari can also creep in his language. some of such words are:

ਬੰਬਾੜਟਾ ⁸	ਸੌਮਿ ਥਾਠ ¹⁶	ਸੌ ²⁴
ਤੰਬੜਾ ⁹	ਸੌਸੁ ¹⁷	
ਦੰਦਰਟ ¹⁰	ਕਧੁਕਾ ¹⁸	
ਪਾਦਲੀ ¹¹	ਠਿਰਠੇ ¹⁹	
ਪ੍ਰੇ ¹²	ਸੁਸਕਾਰਟਾ ²⁰	
ਗੰਧਾ ¹³	ਪੁਮਾਠ ²¹	
ਥਾਦਟਾ ¹⁴	ਥੁਕਾਟਾ ²²	
ਪ੍ਰੇਠ ¹⁵	ਦੁ ²³	

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| 8. Prem Lagan, p.175. | 9. Baba Tega Singh, p.1. |
| 10. Prem Lagan, p.117. | 11. Ibid., p.133. |
| 12. Ibid., p.147. | 13. Ibid., p.152. |
| 14. Ibid., p.153. | 15. Ibid., p.154. |
| 16. Ibid., p.159. | 17. Ibid., p.163. |
| 18. Baba Tega Singh, p.1. | 19. Prem Lagan, p.105. |
| 20. Ibid., p.198. | 21. Ibid., p.238. |
| 22. Ibid., p.238. | 23. Baba Tega Singh, p.69. |
| 24. Ibid., p.74. | |

Master Tara Singh has used a large number of words from English language. These words have been used in the chapters dealing with Khalsa College, courts, army, Anglo-Sikh wars etc. Most of these words are, however, a part of colloquial language or are strictly technical terms for which no Punjabi word was in usage in the times of Master Tara Singh or those words which were a part of natural conversation of the people who have been shown as using those words. In some cases Master Tara Singh has put them in brackets or has given nearest Punjabi synonym of the term within the brackets. Master Tara Singh's usage of such English words shows his knowledge of the terms of respective fields, particularly games and warfare :

ਪਿਕਟ ²⁵	ਰਰਾਊਰ ³⁴
ਬਰਰੇਰ ²⁶	ਬੀਟੇਰ ³⁵
ਬਰਸਰ ²⁷	ਸਟਿਕ ³⁶
ਪਲਟਨ ²⁸	ਲੰਡਚਰ ³⁷
ਕੀਪੀ ²⁹	ਬੋਰਡਿੰਗ ³⁸
ਰੇਗੁਮਾਟਰ ³⁰	ਰਰ ਬੰਕ ³⁹
ਸਟੇਰ ³¹	ਰੋਨ ⁴⁰
ਭਬਨ ³²	ਮੇਚ ⁴¹
ਬਰਰ ਰੀਬਰ ³³	ਫਾਰਵਰਡ ਲਾਇਨ ⁴²
	ਰੂਨ ਬੰਕ ⁴³

25. Baba Tega Singh, p.80.

27. Ibid., p.65.

29. Ibid., p.74.

31. Ibid., p.77.

33. Prem Lagan, p.67.

35. Ibid., p.63.

37. Ibid., p.154.

39. Ibid., p.7.

41. Ibid., p.7.

43. Ibid., p.7.

26. Ibid., p.65.

28. Ibid., p.69

30. Ibid., p.74.

32. Ibid., p.77

34. Ibid., p.67.

36. Ibid., p.151.

38. Ibid., p.71.

40. Ibid., p.7.

42. Ibid., p.7.

In the time of Master Tara Singh the official language and the medium of instruction in many of the educational institutions was Urdu. The usage and the place of Urdu language was next to English. So we find a large number of Urdu words in the novels of Master Tara Singh :

ਤਰਦਰ ⁴⁴	ਤਾਰੀਫ਼ ⁵²
ਤੜਤੀਸ਼ ⁴⁵	ਖ਼ਤਬ ⁵³
ਕਾਰਵਾਈ ⁴⁶	ਇਕਰਾਰ ⁵⁴
ਬ-ਰਸੂਖ ⁴⁷	ਦਰਬਾਰ ⁵⁵
ਵਾਕਫ਼ੀ ⁴⁸	ਸ਼ਾਬੂ ⁵⁶
ਬੇਖ਼ਬਰ ⁴⁹	ਇਨਕਾਰ ⁵⁷
ਲਮੀ ⁵⁰	ਦੁਸ਼ਮਣ ⁵⁸
ਠਰਠਰ ⁵¹	

Master Tara Singh is master of Punjabi idioms and proverbs. He has a treasure of proverbs suitable for every situation and state. He uses these proverbs in such a manner one can understand its meaning immediately :

ਕੁਸ਼ਾ ਖ਼ਾਹਲਾ ਜੁਸ਼ਾ ਬੇਹਕਾ ⁵⁹
ਪੰਜ ਟੇਟਾ ⁶⁰
ਕਲੀਯਾ ਦੇ ਕਖ਼ ਲਾਗੂ ਹੋਣਾ ⁶²
ਕਲੇਜ਼ ਮੂੰਹ ਠੰ ਖੋਣਾ ⁶²
ਕੁਸ਼ਾ ਮਾਰ ਕੇ ਵੋਣਾ ⁶³
ਸ਼ਾਬੂ ਲਾਗੂ ⁶⁴

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| 44. Prem Lagan, p.76. | 45. Ibid., p.104. |
| 46. Ibid., p.81. | 47. Ibid., p.108. |
| 48. Ibid., p.140. | 49. Ibid., p.141. |
| 50. Ibid., p.159. | 51. Ibid., p.160. |
| 52. Baba Toga Singh, p.89. | 53. Ibid., p.94. |
| 54. Ibid., p.94. | 55. Ibid., p.120. |
| 56. Ibid., p.122. | 57. Ibid., p.79. |
| 58. Ibid., p.84. | 59. Ibid., p.1. |
| 60. Ibid., p.1. | 61. Ibid., p.1. |
| 62. Ibid., p.1. | 63. Ibid., p.2. |
| 64. Ibid., p.87. | |

ਫਿਰਨੀ ਦੀ ਸਵਾਰੀ ਕਰਨਾ⁶⁵
 ਫੁੱਦਰਾ ਛੁਡਾਈਆ⁶⁶
 ਪੈਦ ਨਿਕਲਣਾ⁶⁷
 ਦੁਕਕੀ ਲਾਣਾ⁶⁸
 ਧੁਮਾ ਪੇਟੀਆ⁶⁹
 ਬੁੜ ਬੁੜ ਕਰਨਾ⁷⁰
 ਸਕਲ ਸੋਮਣਾ ਕਰਕੂਤ ਕਾਰਰਾ⁷¹
 ਆਵਾ ਖੁੰਡਣਾ⁷²
 ਟਿਡੀਆ ਨੂੰ ਮੀਮੇ ਲੜਣਾ⁷³

sometimes he uses a very large number of proverbs in a small paragraph.⁷⁴

While putting language in the mouths of his characters, Master Tara Singh has taken every care of the religion, region, education, profession, social status and class of the character. The language of the British officer of twenties and thirties of the twentieth century is error-some Urduised-Hindustani :

ਕਪੜਾਣ - ਆਪ ਨੇ ਖੁਟ ਕਿਉਂ ਵਹਾ ਰੋਕੇ ਬੇ? ਯਿਹ ਤੋ ਹਮ ਨੇ ਦੇਖ ਲੀਯ
 ਹੇ ਕਿ ਆਪ ਕੇ ਪਾਉਂ ਸਿਰਫ ਜਰਾਬੇ ਬੀ। ਇਠ ਜਰਾਬੇ ਵਾਣੇ
 ਪਾਉਂ ਸੇ ਆਪ ਪਠਾਣੋ ਕੇ ਪੀਛੇ ਲਾਈਠ ਖੱਚੇ ਜਤੇ ਬੇ।⁷⁵

65. Ibid., p.11.

67. Ibid., p.204.

69. Ibid., p.24.

71. Ibid., p.53.

73. Ibid., p.96.

75. Prem Lagan, p.34.

66. Ibid., p.148.

68. Prem Lagan, p.19.

70. Ibid., p.44.

72. Ibid., p.62.

74. Baba Tega Singh, p.1.

The students of Khalsa College speak polished Punjabi with a large number of words from the English language:

ਪੱਕਰ - ਚੀਫ਼ਸ ਕਾਲਜ ਦੀ ਟੀਮ ਖਾਈ ਸੀ। ਉਸ ਤੋਂ ਅਸੀਂ ਤਿੰਨ ਫੇਲਾ ਤੇ ਹਾਰੇ ਹਾਂ। ਬੰਕ ਤੇ ਹਾਰ ਬੰਕ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਖੂਬ ਮਨ ਪਰ ਫਾਰਵਰਡ ਵਿਚ ਮੇਰੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਕਿਸੇ ਤਾਂ ਫੇਲ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੀ ਰੁਕਦਾ।⁷⁶

Bhai Gurdit Singh and Sham Singh Attariwala's language is that of a religious leader:

ਭਾਈ ਜੀ - ਇਹ ਕੀ ਪਤਾ ਹੈ? ਜੇਬੜਾ ਅਜ ਜ਼ਹਿਰੀਲਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਕਨ੍ਹ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਤੋਂ ਖਾਲੀ ਹੋ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਤੇ ਜੇ ਅਜ ਬੀਮੁਤ ਹੈ ਕਨ੍ਹ ਜ਼ਹਿਰ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੱਜਣ ਠਗ ਵਰਕੇ ਸੁਧਰ ਰਏ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਇਹ ਨਹੀਂ ਸੁਧਰ ਸਕਦੇ।⁷⁷

Dalip Kaur's language is rustic Punjabi with a touch of vulgarity:

"ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਇਸਤਰੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਭੀ ਆਰੋਰ ਠਿਕਠਿਆਂ ਹੋਂ। ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਤੂੰ ਰੋਣ ਭਹਿ ਪਿਆ ਸੀ, ਤੇਰਾ ਤਾਂ ਡਰੋਸਾ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਰਿਹਾ। ਤੂੰ ਮੇਰੇ ਨਾਠ ਪਕੇ ਬਚਨ ਕਰਕੇ ਉਸ ਵੇਲੇ ਖਿਸਕ ਗਿਆ ਸੀ। ਕੀ ਹੁਣ ਮਰਦ ਬਣੇਗਾ ਜਾਂ ਘਰੀ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਏਥੇ ਬੈਠਣਾ ਹੋਈ?"⁷⁸

"ਮੈਂ ਇਕ ਹੋਰ ਵਿਠੂੰ ਦਸਦੀ ਹਾਂ। ਮੋਹਣ ਸਿੰਘ ਰੰਡਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਜਵਾਨ ਭੀ ਸੋਹਣਾ ਹੈ। ਜੇ ਉਹ ਕਿਸੇ ਡੀਵੀਂ ਨਾਠ ਰਸ ਜਾਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਫਿਰ ਕੋਈ ਚੰਗਾ ਰਾਹ ਨਿਕਲ ਖਾਵੇਗਾ।

Another interesting feature of Master Tara Singh's language is selection of names. The names of most of the characters are symbolic. Baba Tege Singh is master of use of sword (tsgh).

76. Prem Lagan, p.165.

77. Ibid., p.82.

78. Ibid., p.88.

79. Ibid., p.197.

Lorinda Mall is a needy man, he does not have any child. Gheel Kaur and Uttam Kaur are good natured women with high qualities. Gehna Singh is the ornament (Gehna) of his village as he has all the good qualities of an ideal man in social context but as an individual he is angular. Mohan Singh is the beloved of all his acquaintances. The nicknames⁸⁰ of the students of Khalsa college are also interesting:

ਫੋਟ, ਪੱਥਰ, ਹਾਥੀ, ਹਾਈਨੋਟਰ, ਪੀਟੋ, ਖੁਸ਼ਕੀ, ਵਰਿੰਗੀ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਖਾੜਾ ਖਾੜਾ,
ਪਾ, ਰਸੂਕੀ, ਕੱਠੂ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਡਾਂ, ਮਿਟੀ, ਮਾਸਟਰ ਖਿਚ, ਖੋਤਕਾ ਵਾਲਾ।

Thus, usage of simple language with a few words from dialects; symbolic and interesting names; technical language for games and warfare; mystic's language for religio-ethical points; words throbbing with life in the scenes of fighting; frequent usage of idiomatic and proverbial expressions; and standard of language depending upon the academic, social and maturity status of the character, are the main qualities of Master Tara Singh's language.

80. Ibid., pp.64-66.

ART OF ESSAY WRITING

Essay is a brief composition in prose that undertakes to discuss a matter, express a point of view, or persuade us to accept a thesis on any subject whatsoever.¹ Abram further explains that the formal essay is impersonal. The author writes as an authority, or at least as highly knowledgeable, on the subject and expounds it in an ordered and thorough fashion. In the informal essay, the author assumes a tone of intimacy with his audience, tends to be concerned with everyday things rather than with public affairs or specialized topics and writes in a relaxed, self-revelatory and often whimsical fashion.²

Master Tara Singh has contributed three books of essays to Punjabi literature. "Pirm Piale", "Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana" and "Grehat Dharm Sikhia", consists of thirty three essays along with above one hundred quotations. These essays cover a variety of topics : metaphysical, social, political, religious and ethical. Thus, most of the essays cover specialized topics and are serious in tone. As Abrams has put it, this type of essays come under the category of the formal essays from the content point of view. On the other hand the style of Master Tara Singh's essays is that of the informal essays. The essays have been written in an intimate tone. It seems that Master Tara Singh is talking to an intimate audience. Thus it is a combination of content of a formal essay and style of an informal essay.

1. M.H. Abrams - A Glossary of Literary Terms, p.54.

2. Ibid., pp.54-55.

Master Tara Singh, as stated above, wrote for an intimate audience. He is a Sikh speaking to Sikhs. To add intensity to intimacy, Master Tara Singh brings conversational element. Sometimes it seems that he is talking to the readers as a friend :

ਵਾਹਿਗੁਰੂ ਨੂੰ ਕੋਈ ਲੋਕ ਨਹੀਂ ਪਈ ਕਿ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਦਾਦ ਨੌਟ ਲਈ ਜਾਦੂਗਰ ਬਣਦਾ ਠਿਕੇ।
 ਠਿਕ ਇਹ ਭੀ ਤਾਂ ਸੋਚੋ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਜਰਬ ਸ਼ਕਤੀਮਾਨ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਚੰਨੀਜ ਕਰਨ ਵਾਣੇ ਇਕ
 ਚਿਠੀ ਭੀ ਨਹੀਂ; ਤਾਂ ਜੇ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਕੰਮ ਖਾ ਪਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਉਹ ਕਿਡਾ ਠੀਕਾ ਹੋਇਆ?
 ਇਕ ਠੀਕ ਸਾਨ ਦਾ ਬੱਚਾ ਜੇ ਖਾਪਣੇ ਤੀਹ ਸਾਨ ਦੇ ਪਿਤਾ ਨੂੰ ਚੰਨੀਜ ਕਰੇ, ਜਿਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ
 ਕਿ ਬੱਚੇ ਕਰਦੇ ਹਨ, ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਉਸ ਦਾ ਪਿਤਾ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਕੰਮ ਪੇ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ ਕਿ ਹਸ ਕੇ
 ਉਸ ਨਾਨ ਟਿਚਕਰ ਕਰੇਗਾ? ³

ਇਸ ਲਈ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਕੁਰਮੁਖੇ, ਵਿੱਕਾ ਟੇਕ ਤੋਂ ਬਚੋ। ਇਹ ਮਨ ਖਾਪਣੀ ਕਮਰੋਰੀ ਟੁਕਟ
 ਲਈ ਦੁੱਜਿਆ ਦੀ ਕਮਰੋਰੀ ਨਕਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੀ ਤੇ ਜੇ ਕਮਰੋਰੀ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੀ ਨਾ ਨਭੇ ਤਾਂ
 ਦੂਜੇ ਦੇ ਮਥੇ ਬਪਦਾ ਰਹਿੰਦਾ ਹੀ। ⁴

ਬਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੋ, ਚਹਿ ਪਵੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦਰ ਤੇ। ⁵

ਹੋਰ ਪਾਸਿਓ ਸੋਚੋ। ਮੈਂ ਸਕੂਲ ਵਿਚ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਤੇ ਮੈਂ ਕਹਿ ਸਕਦਾ ਸਾਂ ਕਿ ਕਲਾਣਾ
 ਮੁੰਡਾ ਪਾਸ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ, ਕਲਾਣਾ ਬਦਲ ਰਹੇਗਾ ਤੇ ਕਲਾਣਾ ਫੇਲ ਹੋਵੇਗਾ, ਖਾਦਿਕ। ⁶

ਹੋਰ ਲੋਕ। ਬਾਰਸ਼ ਸੰਬੰਧੀ ਮੌਸਮੀ ਪੇਸ਼ੀਠਕੋਈਆਂ ਤੁਸੀਂ ਹੋਰ ਪੜ੍ਹਦੇ ਹੋ। ⁷

ਇਹ ਨਾ ਸਮਝੋ ਕੇਵਲ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਮੌਤ ਹੀ ਨਿਖੀ ਹੋਈ ਹੀ, ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਹਰ ਇਕ ਪਿਆਰ ਤੇ
 ਹਰ ਇਕ ਉਦਮ ਭੀ ਨਿਖਿਆ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੀ। ⁸

ਘਾਓ ਮੁੜ ਬਸਨ ਕਨ ਉਤੇ। ⁹

In most of his essays, Master Tara Singh begins with a hypothesis or a statement. Having given a statement, he gives points for that statement. Sometimes he gives the other side of the picture also. Thus he proves his point through arguments. On some occasions, he relates some anecdote from the lives of

3. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.36.

4. Pirm Piala, p.80.

5. Ibid., p.36.

6. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.60.

7. Ibid., p.61.

8. Ibid., p.71.

9. Ibid., p.80.

others¹⁰, mostly prominent figures, or gives the evidence from personal experience.¹¹

Some of Master Tara Singh's essays begin with a question.¹² He puts the question to the reader and then himself replies that question throughout the essay. Sometimes in the essays which begin with a hypothesis (as stated above), he introduces certain questions in the main body of essays.¹³ This question-answer style is a common phenomena in Master Tara Singh's essays. This adds to reader's interest in the essay. This tone of intimacy is common in the essays of Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid, Gurbax Singh, Teja Singh etc.

Master Tara Singh creates this intimacy by talking to the reader in first person. A very large number of essays have been written in first person. He explains, comments and analysis in personal tone.¹⁴ It adds to intimacy but on the other hand, it may become a flaw if this reaches the level of ego.

Master Tara Singh's essays have quality of simplicity. He explains very serious and typical points in very simple language. By doing so, the subject matter does not loose its

10. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.23,34,35,39; Pirm Piala, pp.48, 61,62,79.

11. Pirm Piala, pp.90-91; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.20,21,22, 33,60,61,106,107.

12. Pirm Piala, p.42; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.69,81.

13. Pirm Piala, pp.9,10,12,70,73; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.14, 18,20,31,45,53,63,76,91,92,94,97,103.

14. Pirm Piala, pp.9,10,12,15,20,21,43,60,66,85,90,93; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.10,11,26,28,30,35,44,54,56,60,98,110.

gravity :

ਜਦ ਇਸ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਲਾਭ ਹੀ ਨਹੀਂ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਦਾ ਵਾਧੂ ਹੀ ਹੈ; ਪਰ ਤੁਹਾਡੀ ਦਲੀਲ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਜਦ ਮੈਂ ਮਰਨ ਦਾ ਠਕੜਾ ਬੰਨ੍ਹਾ ਤਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਉਸ ਵਿਚ ਡੀ ਏਈ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ ਲਗੀ ਆਇਆ। ਮੈਂ ਤਾਂ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਲਾਭ ਨਹੀਂ ਆਉਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਨਾ ਮਰਨ ਵਿਚ। ਹਾਂ, ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਅੰਦਰ ਦਬੀ ਪਈ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਕੁਝ ਆਸ ਲਗਦੀ ਹੈ, ਇਸ ਲਈ ਉਸ ਆਸ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਚਲੇ ਜੀਵੀ ਚਲਦੇ ਹਾਂ।¹⁵

ਸੁਖ ਕੇਵਲ ਉਹੀ ਤੋਰ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ, ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਦੁਖ ਨੂੰ ਭੋਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ, ਤੇ ਜਿਹਨਾ ਵਧ ਦੁਖ ਭੋਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ ਉਹਨਾ ਵਧ ਸੁਖ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰੇਗਾ। ਇਸੇ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੁਖ ਉਹੀ ਵਧੇਰੇ ਮਹਿਸੂਸ ਕਰੇਗਾ ਜਿਸ ਨੇ ਸੁਖ ਭੋਗਿਆ ਹੋਵੇ। ਦੁਖ ਸੁਖ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਤਾਂ ਸਰਦੀ ਰਹਮੀ ਵਾਂਗੂੰ ਇਕ ਦੂਜੇ ਦੀ ਹੋਂਦ ਦੇ ਆਸਰੇ ਹੀ ਹੈ।¹⁶

There is flow in the essays of Master Tara Singh. His arguments and findings move on without creating confusion :

ਸੁਰਧਾਵਾਨ ਤਾਂ ਖੀਮਤ ਪੀਂਦਾ ਹੈ, ਵਹਿਮੀ ਸੁਰਬਤ ਪੀਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪਖੀਲੀ ਬਿਖ ਪੀਂਦਾ ਹੈ। ਸੁਰਧਾਵਾਨ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਾਨੇ ਪਾਸੇ ਵਠ ਟੁਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਵਹਿਮੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਜੀਵਨ ਵਿਚ ਹੀ ਡਿੱਬਣ-ਫੁੱਲੇ ਖਾਂਦਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਪਖੀਲੀ ਬਾਣੀ ਸੁਣ ਕੇ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਠੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਨਸ਼ਟ ਦੀ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ।¹⁷

Master Tara Singh's essays have the quality of clarity also. He does not create complex structures. Even the complex points have been presented by him with clarity:

ਬੁਤ-ਪੁਜ ਉਹ ਹੈ ਜੋ ਖਾਤਮਾ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਕਿਸੇ ਸਰੀਰਕ ਵਸਤੂ ਦੀ ਪੂਜਾ ਕਰਦਾ ਹੈ। ਨਾਸਤਕ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਤੋਂ ਪਰੇ ਕੁਝ ਲਗੀ ਮੰਨਦੇ। ਉਹ ਤਾਂ ਇਸ ਦੁਨੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਹੀ ਸਭ ਕੁਝ ਸਮਝਦੇ ਹਨ। ਕਿਹ ਉਹ ਬੁਤ-ਪੁਜ ਨਾ ਹੋਵੇ ਤਾਂ ਕੀ ਹੋਵੇ? ¹⁸

Master Tara Singh's essays, besides having the qualities of simplicity, flow and clarity, have been presented through story-telling method.¹⁹ It adds to reader's interest and through

15. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.107.

16. Ibid., p.83.

17. Pirm Piala, p.40.

18. Ibid., p.83.

19. Ibid., pp.43-44, 45-46, 47-49.

co-relation the point becomes more clear.

Master Tara Singh goes on explaining a point unless he feels that the reader must have understood that point. Sometimes, he gives a large number of illustrations to prove the authenticity of his point. These illustrations are, mostly, from the practical experiences. To prove the existence of spirits, Master Tara Singh quotes four illustrations and these are from Indian, English and French sources. Similarly he gives illustrations to prove the role of 'fate' in human life.²⁰

In order to prove his point, he begins with a formulation. On the base of this formulation, he constructs stairs. He helps the reader in climbing at the top, and there he declares the reality to the reader from very close view. Many essays have such points explained on the "stairs" pattern:

ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮਾਂ ਕਿਸ ਨੂੰ ਕਹਿੰਦੇ? ਅਜ ਦੇ ਦਿਨ ਨੂੰ? ਨਹੀਂ, ਉਸ ਵਿਚੋਂ ਕੁਝ ਨਿੱਘ
ਕਿੱਥਾ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਕੁਝ ਆਉਣਾ ਹੈ। ਫਿਰ ਕੀ ਇਸ ਸੰਕੀਰਣ ਨੂੰ? ਨਹੀਂ ਇਸ ਦੇ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਹੋ
ਕੇ ਆਉਣ ਵਾਲੇ ਤੇ ਭੁੱਖਰ ਚੁੱਕਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਬਣ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਕੀ ਸੰਕੀਰਣ ਦੇ ਸੇਵੇਂ
ਹਿੱਸੇ ਨੂੰ? ਇਸ ਦੇ ਭੀ ਹਿੱਸੇ ਹੋ ਸਕਦੇ ਹਨ। ਇਸ ਤਰ੍ਹਾਂ ਚਲੇ ਚਲੇ। ਨਾਂ ਸੰਕੀਰਣ
ਦਾ ਲਖਵਾਂ ਹਿੱਸਾ, ਨਾਂ ਕਰੋੜਵਾਂ ਹਿੱਸਾ, ਨਾਂ ਹੋਰ ਜ਼ੋਟਾ ਹਿੱਸਾ ਹੀ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ
ਸਮਾਂ ਬਖਵਾ ਸਕਦਾ ਹੈ। ਅਸਲ ਰਨ ਤਾਂ ਇਹ ਹੈ ਕਿ ਵਰਤਮਾਨ ਸਮਾਂ ਤਾਂ ਹੈ ਹੀ
ਕੋਈ ਨਹੀਂ। ਇਹ ਤਾਂ ਕੇਵਲ ਫੂਟ ਤੇ ਭਵਿੱਖਤ ਸਮੇਂ ਦੇ ਮੇਲ ਦਾ ਹੀ ਨਾਂ ਹੈ।²¹

Except in very technical sentences where some complex idea has to be explained, Master Tara Singh uses small sentences. An illustration as given in the preceding paragraph, is a good

20. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.58,60,61.

21. Ibid., p.100. More examples can be seen on pp.45,70,82, 83,107.

example of small sentences. such paragraphs are everywhere in the books of essays by Master Tara Singh.²²

A very peculiar feature of Master Tara Singh's style as an essayist is use of bold-faced letters and inverted commas. Whenever he has to stress a word or phrase he puts that word or phrase within inverted commas. This pattern can be seen in almost all the essays by Master Tara Singh.²³ When he wants to sum up some argument, which should be linked with the next point, he uses bold-faced letters.²⁴ This usage is sometimes made to stress a particular point also.²⁵

Master Tara Singh uses two patterns of arguments. He begins with arguments from experiences of self and others; he adds evidence from the books of knowledge; then he applies them on the tests of logic. The second pattern which follows the above pattern is invariably the sanction of Gurbani. A point already proved on the former pattern is verified or is authenticated through Gurbani.²⁶ Master Tara Singh being a religious leader of the sikhs knew the psyche of his future-readers, so he invariably resorts to the sanction of the Guru (through Gurbani) and appeals through sentiments. Even the

22. Ibid., pp.10,60,61,76,110,111. Also, Pirm Piala, pp.23, 40,41,87,88,104,106,109.

23. Pirm Piala, pp.21,48,52,56,79,85,95; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.14,23,25,29,35,40,50,52,60,80,90,101,109 etc.

24. Bold-faced letters is used for those letters which are of bigger size than the usual size of letters used in a composition.

25. Pirm Piala, pp.10,13,20,25,31,34,45,49,52.

26. Pirm Piala, pp.10,16,26,52,68,79,89; Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, pp.23,30,37,43,48,56,79,84,88,91,103,112 etc.

headings of some of his essays are the quotations from Gurbani.²⁷ Sometimes he adds the stanzas from famous poets (other than the composers of Gurbani) and uses them as evidence or for creating the interest of the reader in the essay.²⁸ Thus, Master Tara Singh adds force in his essays by use of bold-faced letters, inverted commas, Gurbani, poetic stanzas etc.

Master Tara Singh is conscious about the use of words. He uses appropriate words to suit his point. When he feels that a particular word won't suffice or won't be comprehensive, then he attaches either the meaning or a very near synonym or a non-technical word in brackets, in order to make his word clear.²⁹ He does not use obsolete or hyperbolic words. He knew that he was writing for the man in the street and on the plough in the fields, so he avoids the usage of obsolete, technical or bombastic words for the sake of usage. He does not use words for the sake of words. Sometimes he uses words of other languages also. English and Urdu words have been used by him in plenty. English words have been put mostly in the brackets. The purpose of using them is to clarify the term used by him in Punjabi language. The words of Punjabi, which have been used by Master Tara Singh, were

27. Pirm Piala, pp. 11, 15, 37; Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp. 9, 49.

28. Pirm Piala, p. 56, 80; Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p. 96.

29. Pirm Piala, pp. 27, 28, 34, 43, 52, 64, 72, 78; Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, pp. 24, 35, 51, 59, 62, 70, 73, 77, 109 etc.

not popular with the common reader:

ਵਿਕਾਸ	(Evolution) ³⁰
ਰੋਸ	(Protest) ³¹
ਖਨੁਤਵ	(Intuition) ³²
ਸਬੂਤ	(Material) ³³
ਪੂਰਕ	(supplementary) ³⁴
ਮਾਦੀ	(Materialist) ³⁵
ਜਚਬਾਤ	(Feeling) ³⁶

Master Tara Singh uses English terms on such occasion also where he finds that he is not sure of the accuracy of the term in Punjabi language. sometimes he uses various Punjabi words for the same English term:

ਮਾਦੀ ਦੁਨੀਆ	(Materialist) ³⁷
ਮਾਦੀ	(Materialist) ³⁸
ਗਿਆਤ ਵਾਲਾ	(Conscious) ³⁹
ਗਿਆਤ	(Conscious) ⁴⁰
ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ	(Fully conscious) ⁴¹
ਗਿਆਨਵਾਨ	(Conscious) ⁴²
ਗਿਆਤ	(Consciousness) ⁴³

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|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 30. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.27. | 31. Ibid., p.28. |
| 32. Ibid., p.29. | 33. Ibid., p.64. |
| 34. Ibid., p.83. | 35. Pirm Piala, p.83. |
| 36. Ibid., p.78. | 37. Pirm Piala, p.43. |
| 38. Ibid., p.83. | 39. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.51. |
| 40. Ibid., p.63. | 41. Ibid., p.66. |
| 42. Ibid., p.67. | 43. Ibid., p.67. |

Master Tara Singh has used Urdu words very frequently. The official language of Master Tara Singh's age was English but the language of the common usage was Urdu. The usage of Urdu words, however, does not make them look conspicuous. These words were too popular with the masses in those days when these essays were written and even now-a-days, that the common man cannot easily sift them from Punjabi words:

ਤਰਜੀਹ ⁴⁴	ਮਾਫ਼ਿਕ ⁵²
ਮਸ਼ੁਰ ⁴⁵	
ਠਾਮਸਾਈ ⁴⁶	
ਤਹਿਜ਼ੀਬ ⁴⁷	
ਤਸੱਵਰ ⁴⁸	
ਤਕਨੀਕ ⁴⁹	
ਇਤਰਾਫ਼ ⁵⁰	
ਪੁਦਰਖਤੀ ⁵¹	

These are some flaws in the language of Master Tara Singh. He is not conscious of correct spellings of a large number of words. This flaw is more common in the neglect of vowels, particular "f" Punjabi vowels:

<u>Used by Master Tara Singh</u>	<u>Right usage</u>
ਦਮਾਫ਼ ⁵³	ਦਿਮਾਫ਼
ਵਰਾਫ਼ ⁵⁴	ਦਿਕਾਫ਼
ਦਖਲਾਫ਼ਾ ⁵⁵	ਦਿਖਲਾਫ਼ਾ

44. Pirm Piala, p.17.

46. Ibid., p.67.

48. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.55.

50. Grehat Dharm sikhia, p.97.

52. Ibid., p.99.

54. Ibid., p.19.

45. Ibid., p.25.

47. Ibid., p.87.

49. Ibid., p.82.

51. Ibid., p.98.

53. Pirm Piala, pp.24,50.

55. Ibid., p.22.

Used by Master Tara SinghRight usage

ਟਕਾਏ ਰਹੇ⁵⁶
ਨਸ਼ਾਣਾ⁵⁷
ਕਰਾਦਾ ਹੁੰ⁵⁸

ਟਿਕਾਏ ਰਹੇ
ਨਿਸ਼ਾਣਾ
ਕਿਰਾਦਾ ਹੁੰ

There are some grammatical mistakes also. The structure of a large number of sentences is faulty. Most prominent mistake is that of the adjustment of helping verb :

ਪਰ ਇਹ ਚੰਗੇ ਭੀ ਤਾਂ ਤਦ ਹੀ ਕਾਮਯਾਬ ਹੋਵੇ।⁵⁹
ਸਭ ਤੋਂ ਠੀਕੀਂ ਢਲ੍ਹੇ ਹੁੰ ਪਈਓ।⁶⁰
ਜੁਹ ਹੋ ਨਾਮ, ਸੇਵਾ ਦਾਨ ਆਦਿਕ।⁶¹
ਸੁਰਧਾ ਖੜੀ ਹੁੰਦੀ ਹੀ ਖੇਡਰਚੀ ਉਤੇ।⁶²
ਜੀਵਣ ਵਿਚ ਮਨ ਦੇ ਖੰਦਰ ਦਬੀ ਪਈ ਜੁਰਾ ਕੁਝ ਖਾਸ ਹੀ ਜੁਰੁਰ।⁶³

A dissonant - type flaw in Master Tara Singh's essays is his didactic. He invariably resorts to sermonizing the reader. Sometimes it seems as if we are not reading an essay but are listening to the sermon of a monk:

ਦੇਤਾ ਰਖੋ, ਪਾਲਿਕ ਸੇਵਕੋ: ਆਪਣੇ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਜੁਤੀ ਪਾ ਕੇ ਦੇਖੋ।
ਠਹਿਰੋ, ਸੇਠੇ ਤੇ ਸਮਝੋ।⁶⁴
ਦੇਖਰ ਦੀ ਨੁਮਾਇਸ਼ ਤੋ ਬਚੋ।⁶⁵
ਬਸ, ਠੇਕ ਬਣੋ: ਜੁਰੇ ਚਾਨ ਚਲਣ ਵਾਣੇ ਹੋਵੋ।⁶⁶
ਅਰਦਾਸ ਕਰੋ ਢਹਿ ਪਵੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਚਰ ਤੇ।⁶⁷

56. Ibid., p.81.

57. Ibid., p.16.

58. Ibid., p.12.

59. Pirm Piala, pp.65,66.

60. Ibid., p.32.

61. Ibid., p.32.

62. Ibid., p.39.

63. Kiu Varni Kiv Jaana, p.107.

64. Pirm Piala, p.18.

65. Ibid., p.23.

66. Ibid., p.27.

67. Ibid., p.36.

ਉਠੇ, ਹਿੰਮਤ ਨਾ ਚਾਰੇ, ਕਮਬਲਸੇ ਕਰ ਲਵੋ।⁶⁸

ਕੇ ਮਾਇਆ ਦੇ ਠਾਕਮਯਾਬ ਪੁਜਾਰੀਓ।⁶⁹

ਨਿਸਚਾ ਰਖ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਪਿਆਰੇ ਨੂੰ ਗੀਝਾਨ ਦੇ ਸਾਰੇ ਜਤਨ ਕਰੋ।⁷⁰

ਕਿਸਮਤ ਮੰਨਣ ਕਰ ਕੇ ਉਦਮ ਛੱਡ ਬੰਨੇਰੇ ਤੇ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਪੇ ਜਾਓ।⁷¹

ਸਾਡਾ ਕੰਮ ਤਾਂ ਸਾਰੇ ਉਪਾ ਛੱਡ ਕੇ ਉਸ ਦੇ ਦਰ ਤੇ ਚਾਹ ਪੇਣਾ ਹੈ।⁷²

In spite of the defects of language, grammar and didacticism, Master Tara Singh's essays are successful attempts. These essays were popular in the times of Master Tara Singh and even now they have appeal to the masses for whom these were written. The value of Master Tara Singh's essays can be assessed from their popularity. The popularity of these essays is so well known that some of the sentences, formulations and lists of these essays have become epigrams and are used very frequently as evidence of some statements:

ਥਾਪਣੇ ਕੋਰੁਣ ਦਾ ਪਤਾ ਨਾ ਹੋਣਾ ਸਭ ਕੋਰੁਣਾ ਵਿਚੋ ਵਡਾ ਕੋਰੁਣ ਹੈ।⁷³

ਜੇਹੜਾ ਤਾਕਤ ਪਕੜ ਕੇ ਸਮਝੋਣਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਕਰ ਸਕਦਾ, ਉਹ ਕਮਜ਼ੋਰੀ ਵਿਚ
ਫਿਰ ਕੇ ਤਰਫੇ ਕਰੇਗਾ।⁷⁴

ਵਡਾ ਦਿਲ ਕਰੋ, ਤੁਸੀਂ ਵਧੇ ਹੋਵੋਗੇ।⁷⁵

ਜੇ ਰੁਪਏ ਠਾਠ ਮਿਲਦਾ ਹੈ ਉਹ ਤੁਹਾਡਾ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੈ।⁷⁶

ਹਜ਼ਾਰ ਕੁਝ ਮਨ ਵਿਚ ਪੈਦਾ ਕਰਨ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਇਕ ਕੋਰੁਣ ਛੱਡਣਾ ਚੰਗਾ ਹੈ।⁷⁷

ਦੋਸਤ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਵਿਚ ਰਨਾਓ, ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਦੁਨੀ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗੀ। ਰੁਮ ਵਿਚ ਰੁਲਾਓ,
ਰੁਮ ਖਰਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਵੇਗਾ।⁷⁸

ਫਿਰਕੂ ਠੁਕਾਣ ਨਾਲੋਂ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਪਚਾਉਣਾ ਖੋਖਾ ਹੈ।⁷⁹

ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਵੰਗੀਆਂ ਦਾ ਬਾਹਲਾ ਡਰ ਨਾ ਰੱਖੋ, ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ 'ਠਾਹ' ਕਹਿਣ ਠਾਠ ਬਣੇ ਹਨ
ਨਾ ਉਨ੍ਹਾਂ ਦੋਸਤਾਂ ਉਤੇ ਬਾਹਲਾ ਡਰੋਸਾ ਰਖੋ ਜੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ 'ਹਾ' ਕਹਿਣ ਠਾਠ
ਬਣੇ ਹਨ।⁸⁰

68. Ibid., p.27.

69. Ibid., p.97.

70. Kiu varni Kiv Jaana, p.44.

71. Ibid., p.74.

72. Ibid., p.112.

73. Pirm Piala, p.98.

74. Ibid., p.110.

75. Ibid., p.101.

76. Ibid., p.105.

77. Ibid., p.106.

78. Ibid., p.111.

79. Ibid., p.111.

When Master Tara Singh wrote these essays, the Punjabi essay was almost in the formative stage. The Punjabi essay, under the influence of English essayist (whose essays Master Tara Singh must have read in his degree classes as a part of syllabi), had not achieved any heights. The only material before Master Tara Singh was essays by Teja Singh, Lal Singh Kamla Akali, Pura Singh etc. Gurbax Singh, Dr. Balbir Singh and Professor Sahib Singh, as essayists were the contemporaries of Master Tara Singh. From content point of view, Master Tara Singh's model is Bhai Vir Singh, Mohan Singh Vaid and Lal Singh Kamla Akali etc. Bhai Vir Singh's essays are simple but the content is mysticism and socio-religious reform and the tone is didactic. Mohan Singh Vaid and Lal Singh Kamla Akali are writers of social and moral essays. Even the tone of these too, is didactic. As far as art of essay is concerned these essayists stand nowhere. The only writer whose essays (from content and form both points of view) can be compared with is Professor Sahib Singh. Professor Sahib Singh's purpose is to remind the people that Sikhism is the best way of life. Dr. Diwan Singh places these essays in the category of moral and social essays: "Sahib Singh has justified the need of religion, morality and ethics. He preaches fundamentals of

sikhism and mysticism".⁸¹ Master Tara Singh's content, as already discussed, is almost the same as that of Professor Sahib Singh's. Both were writing with the same purpose. From form point of view, there is a difference between the two. Whereas Sahib Singh divides his essays under sub-headings and points, Master Tara Singh moves direct though he also discusses point by point. Sahib Singh sums up each point differently without linking that point to the next but Master Tara Singh links all the points and moves for a final finding. Sahib Singh gives an epitome in the end of each essay in which he sums up his arguments briefly.

Master Tara Singh moves to his final argument directly and fastly but Sahib Singh moves slowly which sometimes makes his essays monotonous. Sahib Singh's essays have philosophic arguments and serious tone but Master Tara Singh's essays are emotional in tone and sometimes he gives dictatorial judgement without even giving logic for his findings. This is because he was a leader of a band of devoted followers and this style of his life has crept in his style as an essayist.

When Master Tara Singh wrote essays, Punjabi prose was in the developing stage. This genre was only half a century old and Punjabi essay was still a child. Almost in all the languages, among the genres of prose the essay develops at the ripeness of literature in prose. So, to expect heights

81. Dr. Diwan Singh's "Preface" in "Sadachark Lakh" (by Sahib Singh), p.5.

in essay writing by Master Tara Singh cannot be expected. Still the contribution of Master Tara Singh to Punjabi essay is remarkable. The value of contribution lies in the impact of these essays on the readers, which needs no evidence.

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ART OF EDITORIAL WRITING

Editorial means the editor's comment as distinguished from the news stories written by reporters and the 'letters' contributed by readers¹.

The practice of publishing daily short articles which embodied the editor's opinion coincided with the era of violent partisan controversy at the dawn of the nineteenth century. These were the first real editorials and the editor who first began the practice of publishing editorials regularly was James Cheetham, the English radical who became editor for the 'American Citizen' in 1800².

Although since that date editorials had appeared with some regularity in several American and British papers, Nathan Hale, who became editor of Boston 'Daily Advertiser' in 1814 followed the practice of publishing editorials with so much regularity that he has frequently been called the first editorial writer³.

Until recent times, editorials have dealt, almost exclusively, with controversial subjects; but increasing mobility in modern society, political apathy and certain other factors

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1. Chilton R. Bugh - Editorial Thinking and Writing, p.1.
 2. Ibid., pp.3-4.
 3. W.G. Bleyer - Main Currents in the History of American Journalism, pp. 132-33.

have changed the character of editorials so that today their function is interpretative.

Editorials have been divided into four categories: informative, argumentative, entertaining or combination of any of these three. In informative editorial the writer aims merely to give meaning to an event - to provide the reader with the explanation of an occurrence or a situation. In argumentative editorial, the writer adopts a specific point of view with reference to the event or the condition that he is discussing and tries to convince the reader of the soundness or the desirability of his point of view. To differentiate between these two types of editorials we can say that "the purpose of the former is to help the reader to think; in the other, his purpose is to make the reader agree with the writer's opinion".

The editorial writer, in his relation to life, is both a critic and a teacher. He refines the half-truths announced by his artist colleagues who write dramatically and episodically for the first page of the paper. He trims down the sharp and jagged pieces of episodic and dramatic news to snorter nuggets of fact so that they will fit into reader's scheme of understanding. He gives proportion to events by lifting them out of the tumult of the moment and setting them down in calmer background of the past⁴.

4. Chilton R. Bush - Editorial thinking and writing, p.7.

Master Tara Singh was associated with Punjabi journalism since his youth from 1909, when he started publication of 'Sacha Bhandora' a weekly, till his death in November 1967, when his last editorials appeared in the daily 'Jathedar'. Master Tara Singh was a political leader of the Sikhs first and a journalist secondly. The period of his life was a tumultuous period in the history of Punjab as well as India. The movements for freedom of India, for reform in the Sikh shrines etc. launched in the province gave birth to numerous events. No day was an uneventful day. A journalist-cum-leader could not help reacting to all this. The result was a very large number of editorials by the pen of Master Tara Singh.

Master Tara Singh's editorials are mostly on political points. He, sometimes discussed religious and social questions also but being a political leader he dealt with every point as a politician is expected to deal with.

Most of the editorials of Master Tara Singh fall in the category of argumentative editorials. These editorials by Master Tara Singh are full of information. The information by Master Tara Singh is from Sikh point of view. The event of the condition being discussed by Master Tara Singh is oftenly, if not always, presented in a partisan way. Master Tara Singh by presenting relevant facts and after discussing the points one by one and logically, tries to convince the reader of the soundness of his point of view. Some of his editorials are

informative also. The editorials about Mad Punjab, Punjabi suba, Sachar Formula, Regional Formula, Simla Conference, Cabinet Mission Proposals, Pakistan etc. are full of information. Though these editorials provide the reader with data but we cannot put them simply under the heading 'informative editorials'. Towards the ending of such editorials also, Master Tara Singh gives some analysis or suggestions, which though do not make the editorials as belonging to argumentative editorials' category but these cannot even be called simply informative as well.

Some of the editorials of Master Tara Singh are the editorials of definition or as Bush calls them 'editorials of explanation'. These editorials are explanation of some event or some situation. In these editorials, such as "Manak ka Patishah Dilai Zahra Jio"⁵, "Main Te Maharaja Patiala"⁶, "Congress Akali Samjhauta Te Mera Stand"⁷ etc., either some concept or some event has been explained by Master Tara Singh. Chilton R. Bush adds another category of the editorials. Those editorials which are explanations of the situations, are editor's view point of some happening, or editor's reactions to some statement, are called by him occasional editorials'. Most of the editorials by Master Tara Singh, particularly those

5. Monthly 'sant sipahi', May 1950.

6. Ibid., October 1935.

7. Daily 'Akali', April 4, 1957.

of the dailies 'Akali', Akali Te Pardesi' and Jathedar, belong to this category.

The pattern of the editorials by Master Tara Singh is mostly complex. Only a few editorials can be placed under the heading of simple pattern. Editorials in complex pattern begin with the statement of the subject, the next stage is that of expansion of the subject by means of comments, and finally conclusion drawn from the comments⁸. Most of the editorials by Master Tara Singh have a complex pattern. Those editorial which explain some event in the light of the history have been dealt by Master Tara Singh with this methodology - he presents the statement, the history, the pros. and cons. of the subject of statement and finally the forewarning as to the expected results. Some of the editorials of Master Tara Singh are, however, nothing more than the statement of a subject and simple comments upon the subject. In this pattern, the editorial need to follow a logical course from the opening sentence to the final sentence - without expanding the scope of the subject in relation to totality⁹.

Titles of the editorials of Master Tara Singh are always catchy. Either the event or some satirical idiom or some slogan form the heading of the editorials of Master Tara Singh.

Master Tara Singh's editorials begin with the statement

8. Chilton R. Bush - Editorial Thinking and Writing, p.338.

9. Ibid., p.338.

of the subject. He does not begin with some sort of prologue. The background, however, sometimes follows the statement of the subject.

The Chilton R. Bush believes that an editorial should have three qualities of style: clearness, thoroughness and force¹⁰. Master Tara Singh's editorials have all these three qualities in varying degrees. In his editorials, the paragraphs are short, sentences are either short or of medium length, simple words and sometimes even colloquial words and expressions. This style suits the taste of the common readers of the village.

Master Tara Singh's editorials have the quality of thoroughness. As stated above Master Tara Singh having begun his editorials with the statement of the subject, presents all the pros. and cons. of the subject and the reactions following the event. The reader does not find any thread missing. Finally Master Tara Singh sums up the whole argumentation in a small paragraph in small sentences and in colloquial expression, which leaves nothing obscure. Even in between the paragraphs he uses bold letters for those sentences which form the gist of the argument or the paragraph.

Force means quality of discourse which gives vigour to style, which attracts and holds readers interest in the

10. Ibid., pp. 355-358.

editorial¹¹. Master Tara Singh's editorials have force to stimulate the reader's interest in the editorial. Master Tara Singh's editorials have various qualities which make the editorials forceful. He obtains force mainly by arrangement of words and emphasis, by choice of expression and by his own character for force.

Master Tara Singh's editorials are remarkable for their arrangement as far as vocabulary is concerned. He uses the words from common man's language except where he is discussing any point of Metaphysics. He consciously avoids classical words or obsolete words or their shades. Many a time colloquial words are also found and it adds to reader's understanding and thereby to interest. For every point he uses specific concrete words. The usage of some expression does not change in the same paragraph or the editorial; it moves right through the whole of the editorial. His connotations are plain and simple. As the editorials have to be read by literates but by a majority of non-academicians and even laymen so the connotations must be plain and simple¹².

The arrangement of emphasis in the editorials of Master Tara Singh always carefully observed. Stress on particular words in sentences is always clear and sometime inverted commas or bold-faced letters are also used so as to attract the reader.

11. Ibid., pp. 366-67.

12. Ibid., p.366.

This emphasis is found in phrases and sentences also. This pattern of stress, many times, runs up to climax. Repetition of words and even points also add to force of the editorials of Master Tara Singh.

Master Tara Singh's editorials were meant for Punjabi-reading masses, mostly the Sikhs. His frequent references to Punjabi culture, Punjabi idiom, Sikh history and quotations from Gurbani add to the reader's interest. His style of familiar conversation also gives force to his expression. The reader finds himself as being talked to by a close acquaintance. This may not be an artistic quality but it adds to the impact of the editorials. The history of the province has proved the impact of the editorials of Master Tara Singh.

The editorial cannot usually be permitted to taper off at the last sentence. There must be a logical stopping place. Master Tara Singh in his editorials frequently tries to reduce his whole argument to a single pungent statement, usually an epigram, an analog, a rhetorical question, or an otherwise clever and forceful expression. The ending consists of some prediction of results, warning or where he speaks more as a politician (and less as a journalist) it ends with some appeal or threat also.

Editorial is expected to make special appeal. But the editorial work in news paper cannot compare with literary work in magazines. The reason is, mainly, that this is ephemeral, too

hastily written for permanence. But between literature and the 'higher journalism' the partition is extremely thin. The higher journalism means the function of impersonal comment employed at the utmost of breadth and dignity. It gives utterance to individual judgement rather than personal interpretation. It aims to inform and to convince rather than to express. It displays real erudition, it urges admirable specifics, it produces material on practical themes addressed to the practical intelligence¹³. One perceives a close analogy between the functions of the higher journalist and those of the preacher, the lawyer and the politician. Master Tara Singh belonged to the class of preachers and politicians and his editorials were a device for his purpose.

ART OF AUTOBIOGRAPHY WRITING

"A biography of a person written by himself"; this definition of autobiography establishes the intrinsic character of the enterprise and thus the general (and generic) conditions of autobiographical writing. These conditions ensure that the identity of the narrator and the hero of the narration will be revealed in the work. They require that the work be a narrative and not merely a description. The narrative must cover a temporal sequence sufficiently extensive to allow the emergence of a contour of a life. With these conditions, autobiography may be limited to a page or extended through many volumes.¹

Talking of the style of autobiography Starobinski says, "The autobiographer is free to "contaminate" the record of the life with events which could only have been witnessed from a distance. The autobiographer then doubles as a writer of memoirs; he is free to date precisely various stages of the revisions of the text, and at the moment of composition to look back upon his situation. The intimate journal may intrude upon autobiography, and an autobiographer may from time to time become a "diarist". Thus, the conditions of autobiography furnish only a large framework within

1. Jean Starobinski - The style of Autobiography published in Literary style (Edited by Seymour Chatman, 1971), p.285.

which a great variety of particular style may occur².

Autobiography is the only one form among many in which a writer speaks of himself and the incidents of his personal experience.³

From the above definitions two points emerge: From the content of the autobiography the intrinsic character of the hero should be revealed and it should be a narrative and not a description. Secondly, the form of the autobiography may be in the style of memoirs, diary or a combination of both.

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is revelation of his intrinsic character. From his early life and from the influences made upon him, by his religious minded aunt⁴, the recitations from the books of Sikh history⁵, the books on ethic⁶, etc. we come to know of religious bent of mind of the hero. This trait, later, became the major phenomenon of his life. Throughout his life, as revealed in his autobiography, we find him moving under the influences of his early life. Most of his actions seem to be oriented by this character-formation. His hatred for romantic literature⁷, his disdain for theatre⁸, his disliking for fashions in hair style and dress⁹, his ethical code for a politician¹⁰ etc. all are the result of this aspect of his personality. Moreover, he spent whole

2. Ibid., p.285

3. Myne Shumaker-The English Autobiography (Its emergence, materials and form), p.2.

4. Meri Yaad., p.9.

5. Ibid., p.17

6. Ibid., p.28.

7. Ibid., pp.29,30.

8. Ibid., pp.29,30

9. Ibid., p.25

10. Ibid., pp.61,69,95,96 & 154.

of his life as a religious leader of a community and was given the maximum honour by his followers.

An autobiography is incomplete if it is a description and not a narrative. A narrative (autobiography) includes a story alongwith, its process. The personality of the hero should be presented in such a way that the stages and situation should become clear to the reader. In narration, the idiosyncracies, the demerits, the weaknesses and the causation of the phenomena should be clearly presented. This revelation should be accurate.

Master Tara Singh, while concluding the description of some event narrates the background and also the results of that event. While writing about the "agitation for keys of the Golden Temple", Master Tara Singh tells that the purpose of the government was to keep the managers of the Gurdwaras under its immediate control and if the managing body becomes free, the control would not be effected.¹¹ The results of this agitation were far-reaching. It boosted the morale of the sikhs. Alongwith arose the pride of victory which, as it was uncontrolled, turned into hooliganism.¹² This hooliganism could have harmed the agitation very much, had there been no reaction from the government. Though the step taken by the government was for its own cause but it did help the organisation.¹³ Here he assesses the situation that indiscipline cannot make an organisation successful. This indiscipline

11. Meri Yaad, p.57.

12. Ibid., pp.58-60

13. Ibid., p.60.

and hooliganism, he reminds, had brought an end to the sikh rule in 1849.¹⁴

similarly, while talking of his hatred for the Britishers, he counts the reasons for that. The new Acts for lands of Lyallpur district which were mainly owned by the sikhs were detrimental to the sikh interest¹⁵, the disrespect by the English officials for the honorary services of the sikh philanthropists¹⁶, the siding by the British with the mahants of the gurdwaras during the reform movement in sikh shrines¹⁷ were among the reasons which changed Master Tara Singh's (as well as of many other sikhs) attitude towards the British. Such analysis has been made by the author in many chapters of his autobiography.

Master Tara Singh does not hide his idiosyncracies. He confesses his hatred for milk¹⁸, his disliking for cinema¹⁹, his disdain for erotic literature²⁰, his rejection of fashions²¹ etc. He accepts flaws in his personality such as his rashness²² and his reactions to provocations²³. He does not conceal even his compromise with that ruler of patiala against whom he had created much hue and cry. This compromise was against principles but it did serve factional interests of Master Tara Singh²⁴.

14. Ibid., p.61.

16. Ibid., p.37.

18. Ibid., p.9.

20. Ibid., pp. 29-30.

22. Ibid., pp. 30, 31, 122.

24. Ibid., pp. 103-104.

15. Meri Yaad, p.36.

17. Ibid., pp. 74, 87.

19. Ibid., pp.29-30.

21. Ibid., pp. 25, 31.

23. Ibid., p.122.

Master Tara Singh's image with most of the non-sikh is that of an extremist who believed in violence of every type in his autobiography he refers to his opposition of violence during freedom struggle.²⁵ Master Tara Singh confesses that he, once, had soft corner for the Britishers and even at a later stage he wanted to win favours from the British.²⁶ Thus, Master Tara Singh refers even to his idiosyncracies, flaws and prejudices and does not try to conceal anything.

Master Tara Singh, in his autobiography, addresses different persons in different styles. For his teacher (though he calls him as a hypocrite) and for the priest he has due respects in his mode of addressing.²⁷ For the Christian missionary teachers, for sanataniist teachers, for false goddesses his address is not respectful.²⁸ The English Principal, the sikh leaders, have been respectfully presented by him.²⁹ For some lovely persons he uses emotive addresses.³⁰ His mode of addressing speaks of his attitude for the particular addressee.

Master Tara Singh nowhere tries to present himself as a great leader. He does not talk of his contribution, his

25. Hari Yaad, pp.150-151.

26. Ibid., pp.33,34,35,36,129.

27. Ibid., pp.15,17.

28. Ibid., pp.20-22,26.

29. Ibid., pp.17,34,36,38,39,41,42,43 and 57.

30. Ibid., p.14.

sacrifices, his sufferings, during the whole of his political career. He, however, talks of his boldness. When the ruler of Patiala refused to release Saw Singh Thikriwala, Master Tara Singh got irritated. He decided to expose and oppose the ruler of Patiala. He knew that enmity with the ruler of a state could cost him to any extent and yet he decided to proceed.³¹

A reading of Master Tara Singh's autobiography presents him as a great religio-political leader. His contribution during the Gurdwara Reform Movement, his role in "Nabha and Patiala affairs", his part in civil disobedience movement, his involvement in "Daska" and "Shahed Ganj" agitation, his facilitation to bring a compromise between Sikander and Baldev Singh, his relinquishing of the presidentship of the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal prove that his participation in the Sikh movements during the said period was remarkable. The autobiography reveals him as a hero, which is an essential feature of any autobiography.

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is close to facts. The truth of this autobiography has been verified by his various contemporary writers and also by the historians

31. Meri Yaad, pp.96-79.

writing about the age of Master Tara Singh. The references from this book speak of the authenticity of the narration of the events. The bibliographies attached to various books of the Sikh history, the Punjab history and the history of freedom struggle³² are the evidence of the value and the truth of the autobiography of Master Tara Singh.

Autobiography is interpretation of past. It is a judgement of past within the framework of the present.³³ Master Tara Singh wrote his autobiography with two purposes in his mind i.e. to present the true Sikh history of the contemporary period, and secondly, to interpret his past. The presentation of his past, is no doubt authentic data. At occasions he talks of his role and wherever some controversy had arisen at that time or later on, he tries to justify himself. His role during 'Nabha agitation'³⁴, his compromise with the ruler of Patiala³⁵, his differences with Baba Kharak

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32. Harjinder Singh Dilgeer - Shiromani Akali Dal.
 Mohinder Singh - The Akali Movement.
 Khuchwant Singh - A History of the Sikhs (Vol.II).
 K.C. Gulati - Akalis, Past and Present.
 Baldev Raj Nayyar - Minority Politics in Punjab.
33. Whyne Shumaker - The English Autobiography (Its emergence, materials and form), p.19.
34. Meri Yaad., p.81.
35. Ibid., pp.94,95,96,97,103-104.

singh³⁶, his involvement in 'Daska agitation'³⁷ his favour for recruitment of the sikhs in British army³⁸, his defence for 'sikander-Baldev singh pact'³⁹, his reactions during 'shahid Ganj agitation'⁴⁰, his relinquishing of the offices of the S.G.P.C. and the Akali Dal⁴¹, in all these situations Master Tara singh has tried to defend his role. The narration of these events seems to be the defence of a politician. Shumaker believes that almost all the autobiographies of the politicians are defensive statements.⁴² The reason behind Master Tara singh's partly-defensive approach is that he was revealing his 'past' within the framework of his 'present'. He was still to live for a number of years. He was not an old retired person sitting in a chair tilted against sunny wall.

The style of Master Tara singh in his autobiography is a combination of memoirs, reminiscences and diary.

According to Shumaker, "The autobiographies of statesmen and politicians are almost always in essence memoirs. The usual pattern includes true autobiographical material about childhood and youth".⁴³ The first two chapters of Master Tara

36. Ibid., pp.118-120.

37. Ibid., p.118.

38. Ibid., pp.109-110.

39. Ibid., p.132.

40. Ibid., p.122.

41. Ibid., pp.153-154.

42. Whyne Shumaker - The English Autobiography (Its emergence, material and form), p.5.

43. Ibid., pp.5-6.

Singh's autobiography are true autobiographical material. These chapters present the would-be 'hero' of the autobiography. Master Tara Singh who was destined to become a leader of a religious political party, who in his life loved the principles of religion and ethics, had the seeds of such formation in his activities as a child and as a youth. The early influences on him, his study of literature in his boyhood, his choice of embracing the Sikh faith were fundamentally instrumental in his future career as a politician. The remaining part of his autobiography is in the style of memoir. Master Tara Singh himself declares in the 'Preface' his intention to write memoir. He says, "Except that of the events of my childhood, I have refrained to present any material which is not of public interest." After his entry into political field, he becomes a part of the complex world of politics and appears as only a small element, fitting into a pattern, accomplishing a little here and there, aware of a host of personalities and forces around him. While talking of his career and his role in political world, he does not forget to give proper place to his contemporaries whose contribution, he acknowledges as no less remarkable. How Anar Singh Jhabal was one of the pioneers in the Gurdwara Reform Movement⁴⁴, how did Kartar Singh Jhabbar played major role in various events (and the author as a part of Jhabal's ventures),⁴⁵ the qualities of Teja Singh Samundari as an

44. Hari Yadav, p.49.

45. Ibid., p.55.

organiser⁴⁶, the sacrifice of an Akali worker⁴⁷, appreciable role of the ruler of Nabha during Gurdwara Reform Movement⁴⁸, sacrifice of Sewa Singh Thikriwala⁴⁹, emotionalism of Sarmukh Singh Jhabal⁵⁰, acceptable role of non-acceptable Sikh representatives at the Round Table Conference (1931)⁵¹, have been impartially acknowledged by Master Tara Singh. No doubt, Master Tara Singh has criticised the nature of Gopal Singh Gauri⁵², Sarmukh Singh Jhabal⁵³, Baba Kharak Singh⁵⁴, etc. but he has, nowhere, rejected their contribution for the cause of their nation. Master Tara Singh's appreciation of the generous nature of Sunder Singh Majithia⁵⁵ and later on condemnation of Sardar Majithia's role as a Minister in Sikandar Cabinet⁵⁶, speaks of Master Tara Singh's honesty in acknowledging the righteousness as base of his assessment of a person on the role of a person. Master Tara Singh has succeeded in avoiding both the extremes of the style of an autobiographer. Had he put himself into centre, he would have fallen into rank vanity and the account would have become unrealistic, inaccurate and partial. If he would have presented himself simply a tiny part of the colossal movement, the autobiography would not have been a readable material.

46. Ibid., p.69.

48. Ibid., p.71.

50. Ibid., p.75.

52. Ibid., p.81.

54. Ibid., pp.119-120.

56. Ibid., p.126.

47. Ibid., p.76.

49. Ibid., p.96.

51. Ibid., pp.99-100.

53. Ibid., p.82.

55. Meri Yaad, p.34.

Though it has been referred to in the preceding paragraphs that Master Tara Singh has tried to justify some of his actions but it must be noted that except in those mentioned events, the autobiography is not an apologia. A very significant number of autobiographies have such defects. The account of self by De Retz, Godoy, Matternich are thin and unconvincing as autobiographies.⁵⁷

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is partly in the style of a diary also. The events are in chronological order. Two sequences have been followed by him. Firstly, he has narrated the incidents in chronological order. Secondly, he has added pros and cons of the event. The first sequence is that of a diary and the second makes that diary as an autobiography. The narration of the period of his self-imposed exile is in the form of a travelogue. This portion of travelogue is, further, in diary style.⁵⁸ In some chapters he begins in the style of memoirs and then adopts the style of diary. He begins the chapter 'shahid Ganj Morcha' as a memoir⁵⁹ but having begun it in this style he starts narrating the incidents in chronological order without any comments upon them.⁶⁰

Master Tara Singh's autobiography has a major flaw which is found in most of his writings. Being a religious leader, he invariably adopts to didacticism. While analysing

57. Whyne Shumaker - The English Autobiography (Its emergence, material and form), p.6.

59. Ibid., p.121

58. Meri Yaad, pp.110-116.

60. Ibid., p.122-23.

the results of some important events or some personal experiences he generalises the situation and the consequences. Having done so, he begins sermoning the reader. For example :

ਇਸ ਥਾਂ ਮੈਂ ਪਾਠਕ ਨੂੰ ਖੁਸ਼ ਤੌਰ ਤੇ ਬੇਨਤੀ ਕਰਾਂਗਾ ਕਿ ਉਹ ਆਪਣੇ ਮੁੰਡੇ ਕੁੜੀਆਂ ਨੂੰ ਉਪਰ ਲਿਖੀਆਂ ਪੁਸਤਕਾਂ ਪੜ੍ਹਾਉਣ ਤੇ ਠੇਕੇ ਛੁੱਟੀ ਹਟੇਰੇ ਵਿਚ ਕੁਰਾਹੇ ਨਾ ਭਜ ਪੇਣ।⁶¹

ਸਿੱਖੋ! ਚਾਨ ਚਲਣ ਉਚਾ ਕਰੋ।⁶²

ਖਟਸਾ ਜੀ, ਸਮਾਂ ਜੇ ਸੰਭਲੇ ਤੇ ਹਰ ਪਾਸੇ ਵਲੋ ਸੰਭਲੇ। ਨਾਸਤਕਤਾ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ੀ ਵੇਸ਼ਣ ਨੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਉਤੇ ਹਮਲਾ ਸ਼ੁਰੂ ਕੀਤਾ ਹੋਇਆ ਹੈ ਤੇ ਇਸ ਦਾ ਟਾਕਰਾ ਧਰਮ ਪ੍ਰਚਾਰ ਤੇ ਕੌਮ ਨੂੰ ਪੂਰਾ ਜਖੇਰੀਦ ਕੀਤੇ ਬਿਨਾਂ ਨਹੀਂ ਹੋ ਸਕੇਗਾ।⁶³

ਫੜੇ ਗਿਠੇ ਤੁਹਾਡੇ ਤੇ ਫੜੇ ਸੁਰਤਾਂ, ਖਾਓ ਚਨ ਮਿਲ ਬਹੀਏ ਤੇ ਚਨ ਮਿਲ ਕੇ ਪੰਥ ਦਾ ਉਸਾਰੂ ਕੰਮ ਕਰੀਏ, ਨਿਰਾ ਵਿਰੋਧਤਾ ਕਰਨਾ ਤਾਂ ਪੰਥ ਨੂੰ ਵਾਹ ਲਾਣੀ ਹੀ ਹੈ।⁶⁴

ਪੁਸ਼ਟੀ ਪੰਜਾਬ ਦੇ ਸਿਖ ਨੂੰ ਮੈਂ ਇਹ ਸਲਾਹ ਭੀ ਦਿੰਦਾ ਹਾਂ ਕਿ ਖੁਸ਼ ਸੁਹਿਰ ਤੇ ਖੁਸ਼ ਮਹੱਲੇ ਮੁਕਰਰ ਕਰ ਰਖੋ ਜਿਥੇ ਖਰੇ ਵੇਣੇ ਇਕਠੇ ਹੋ ਜਵੇ।⁶⁵

In his autobiography Master Tara Singh sometimes becomes emotional also. Without any logic, he rejects one point for some other.⁶⁶ His didacticism is also a result of his emotionalism. The examples given above are all emotional outbursts of a religious leader.

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is the political history of his age. It is a mingling of memoirs, diary and true autobiography. In this mingling, the style assumes the dual functioning of establishing the relation between the "author" and his own past; but also in its orientation towards the future, of revealing the author to his future readers.

61. Meri Yaad, pp.110-116.

62. Ibid., p.61.

63. Ibid., p.69.

64. Ibid., p.121.

65. Ibid., p.138.

66. Ibid., pp.25,30,31.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

CONCLUSION

From my survey and evaluation of Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi literature, I have drawn the following conclusion :

In the time of Master Tara Singh, Punjab was passing through a tumultuous period on political, religious and social fronts. The freedom of the country from the British, the partition of the country on religio-national basis, concentration of Sikh population in a zone, an autonomous unit to control the historical shrines of the Sikhs, states on linguistic basis were the major political changes in the province. People became rights-conscious. More stress on political rights and democratic set-up in the country brought a change in the outlook of the people of the province. The sense of being a ruler i.e. being a part of government (in the form of franchise) added to the confidence of the people. It, however, led to degradation of level of political ethics as well.

On religious scene Hindu-Muslim conflict during pre-1947 period and Hindu-Sikh conflict after 1947 created gulf among these nations. The communal atmosphere of the state became tense. Secondly, religion began heading towards show and formal ritualism. The real spirit of religion diminished gradually. With the growth of individualism and materialism human values regressed. People became more selfish, self-centred

and opportunist. Values were changing fastly. It was against this background that Master Tara Singh produced literature.

Master Tara Singh was a prominent political leader of the Sikhs. Many a time a leader has to talk to masses through some or the other medium and literature is one of them. Master Tara Singh adopted this method and used it effectively according to the demand of the situation.

Master Tara Singh wrote novels, essays, tracts, editorials, an autobiography and a travelogue. The novels by Master Tara Singh present realistic picture of contemporary society. Rural Punjabi culture was for the first time presented in his novels. Prior to Master Tara Singh Punjabi novel was communal in colour. What Suran Singh gave to Punjabi poetry, Master Tara Singh contributed to Punjabi novel. He is the first secular novelist of Punjabi language. He is also the first successful writer of historical novel in Punjabi.

Master Tara Singh wrote three books of essays. These essays cover a variety of subjects: metaphysics, religion, social questions, ethics etc. Through these essays, written in very simple Punjabi idiom and in simple diction, Master Tara wanted to teach his religion-fellows the way to a better life. Though he has not evolved any philosophic system of his own but has translated Sikh thought in his own words. He knew that he was, then, explaining what Sikhism had taught to him.

Master Tara Singh is the first Punjabi writer to write

tracts on political topics. Before Master Tara Singh, the Singh Sabha, the Chief Khalsa Diwan and individuals like Bhai Mohan Singh Vaid had contributed a large number of tracts on moral and religious topics. The public demand for tracts on political issues was fulfilled by Master Tara Singh. These tracts are full of information regarding the concerned subject. His tracts on Sikh situation, Pakistan, Azad Punjab, Punjabi Sabha etc. are precious tracts of Punjabi language. These tracts proved a booster to attract a large number of followers for Master Tara Singh as well as a big number of volunteers to participate in politico-religious movements launched by the Akali Dal. These tracts added new readership to Punjabi literature.

Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi journalism is no less important. He was associated with Punjabi journalism for about sixty years. Since his posting as a teacher till his death, he contributed a large number of editorials in various papers e.g. Sacha Bhandora, Akali, Akali Te Pardesi, Pardesi Khalsa, Sant Sipahi, Jathedar, Parbhat etc. His editorials cover a long range of topics politics, religion, sociology, ethics, metaphysics etc. He covered almost every point of current affairs in his editorials. These editorials are on the pattern of periodical essays of Steele and Addison.

'Meri Yaad' by Master Tara Singh is the first autobiography (in prose) of Punjabi language. It is not only the

life story of the author but also an authentic history of Punjab from 1885 to 1945. The author is free from blemish of egotism which oftenly shrouds most of the autobiographies. Apart from giving valuable information about the personality of the great son of Punjab, this autobiography is a ready reference for future historians of the period as well as a light house for future generations. The book inspires us to make our lives sublime.

The travelogue by Master Tara Singh is a record of the state of the Sikhs, the Sikh Gurdwaras and the relations of the Sikhs with the natives of those areas visited by the author. It is also an interesting portrait of the hills, the forests, the river-banks of the areas journeyed by the author. Master Tara Singh has made valuable observations regarding Gandhi Ashram, Taj Mahal, Nandhari sect and the management of the Gurdwaras at Hazur Sahib. Except on the points of Sikh concern (where he behaves as an impartial Sikh leader), he is an objective observer. Besides this the travelogue is a narrative of socio-economic history of the zones visited by the author during 1934-35.

Master Tara Singh's main source of his ideological concepts is the Sikh philosophy and the Sikh history. He admitted many a time whatever he had said was based on Sikh fundamentals. On the other hand he was well acquainted with Western literature and philosophy, so he made some observations

under this impact also. His favour for welfare state, democracy, rights, limited monarchy and religion as supreme authority are an amalgam of various ideologies. There may be some incoherence in his ideas but it is due to his intention to gather every better point for the welfare state of his concept and that even in consonance with the Sikh fundamentals. His persistent stress on religion as guiding force of politics points to his intentions.

Master Tara Singh believed in One, True, Creator, All-pervading, Timeless Being, Birthless, self-existent God. God's Hukam reigns supreme. To be liberated one must follow the path of a virtuous man on human and social plank and should adopt nan-ginnan on religious side. Master Tara Singh stresses practical side of religion than that of theoretical side. He was, in fact, teaching common man who does not bother much for theory.

Master Tara Singh favoured simple life. He was opposed to urbanisation. His stress on old value system and rejection of modernity cannot be labelled as backwardness because his rejection of so-called modernity has roots in two situations: growth of hypocrisy and loss of moral and ethical values. Like a saint he preached truth, purity, self-discipline, self-restraint, tolerance, non-attachment, modesty as our ethical code.

Master Tara Singh advocated all round harmonious development of personality. He wanted his fellow-men to become

gurbani of Guru Gobind Singh's concept. He wished a society in which everyone should be physically healthy, mentally sound and spiritually enlightened. Society as a part of satyuga as viewed by Master Tara Singh is a pointer to his view of society like that of the views of a social, religious and spiritual leader. To stress his point he painted a picture of contemporary society and warned of its evils. Thus, Master Tara Singh as a writer appears as a political leader, religious preacher, social reformer and a spiritual man. He advocated such an Age which can be called satyuga and the inhabitants as Gurmukhs.

As a literary artist Master Tara Singh did not achieve heights. His novels have defects of plot-construction. Loose-knitting and mis-handling of sub-plots can be observed in his novels but this flaw has, however, been partly compensated by his art of characterization.

Master Tara Singh was the first Punjabi novelist who was impartial in choice of characters. Prior to Master Tara Singh the characters in historical, allegorical and religious novels were prejudicially presented by the Punjabi novelists. As revealed in the novels the Sikh characters were brave and generous, the Hindus coward and selfish, and the Muslims were tyrants and bohemians. Master Tara Singh presented all these types of characters from the Sikh galaxy. Thus, he is perhaps the first Punjabi novelist who is secular in choice of his characters. His art of characterization is superb. Though

sometimes he introduces the character by direct statement but he adds action so as to make his characters real beings of this earth. Mostly his characters are revealed through their action.

Master Tara Singh, though himself a Pothohari used central Punjabi language not only in his novels but also in almost all of his writings. A small number of words from English, Urdu and Hindustani have been used by him in his novels in order to make the situations appear real.

Master Tara Singh, while writing essays used very simple logic of the level of a common man. He presented various complex ideas in simple language and simple idiom. From content point of view his essays are formal and from form point of view informal. This combination is very rare to be found in essay-writing. Though sometimes he gets emotional on strict moral and religious issues, yet he is generally logical while discussing a point. He adopts the 'stairs-pattern' to prove his hypothesis. He uses such an intimate tone in his essays that the reader unembarrassedly moves with him.

Master Tara Singh's editorials are partisan in tone. These represent the views of the author or/and the party to which he belonged. Though partisan, his editorials contain up-to-date information regarding the point and he moves to the conclusion logically. He quotes the latest information in his editorials. Master Tara Singh's editorials invariably end with either announcement of a verdict or an emotional appeal and sometimes with a threat. Thus he is both a politician

and a journalist in his editorials. This pattern is common among the editors of almost all the vernacular press of Punjab.

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is political history of the province from 1935 to 1945. This is a true account of the period of the autobiographer. He has adopted impartial and balanced approach in depiction of his personality, particularly in relation to others. He is free from blemish of egotism. In simple and lucid style of story-telling he has presented himself. This autobiography is an amalgam of memoirs, diary, true autobiography and history from style point of view. This autobiography is not only the first autobiography of Punjabi language in prose but also the first successful autobiography of Punjabi language.

To sum up, Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi literature is as much valuable as his multi-dimensional contribution to Punjabi society.

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