

EDITORIAL FROM ACROSS THE WORLD

A QUESTION OF *MARYADA*

Editor

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It is disquieting that two of the most sacred institutions of the Panth have got embroiled in an avoidable controversy at the time when the Sikh community is getting set to celebrate the concluding part of the historic tercentenary of the establishment of the Khalsa. In a way, the series of developments involving Gianai Puran Singh and Bibi Jagir Kaur are a clash of personalities, probably fed on egos and certain individualistic calculations. Thought it all started with the Nanakshahi calendar row, that issue itself has taken a back seat. A number of new issues have cropped up in the wake of a new *hukmnamas*, the sacking and counter-sacking and excommunication of the SGPC President, Sikh high priests and other functionaries.

The question here is not one of who is right and who is wrong. In an emotionally surcharged atmosphere, logic becomes the first casualty and reason does not cut much ice. This is a pity. For, what is not being realized by the custodians of the Sikh faith is that the present tussle will have a direct bearing on the unity of the Panth. Actually the melodrama enacted in Amritsar on Tuesday does not revolve around Panthic matters. Several disputes, which have surfaced, carry political undertones as well as overtones. And the postures adopted by the main players are mainly prompted by personal political considerations.

How and why things drifted could be a matter of opinion, though it must be said that Chief Minister Parkash Singh Badal should have played a decisive role in reconciling the growing differences. Perhaps, this is too much to expect from Mr Badal. Ironically, both Giani Puran Singh and Bib Jagir Kaur have been

his choice. They have drifted apart, which, in turn, has virtually divided the Sikh sangat for all practical purposes. What is required now is a healing touch so that the basic values of the community are not jeopardized. The present crisis should also provide Mr Badal a lesson or two. He needs to appreciate the fact that if too much of politics get into religious matters, the result could be far from edifying.

In the present high drama, *maryada* of the various Sikh institutions has received a big jolt. This has naturally upset large sections of the Sikh community. The community does not want the true spirit of the Khalsa to be diluted in any manner and for any purpose. At stake is the sanctity of Panthic institutions of *Sarbat Khalsa*, *hukmnama*, Akal Takht, etc. have once again come under stress. If matters pertaining to them are

seen in the true tradition of Sikhism and in a spirit of reconciliation and understanding, all controversial issues can be resolved. What is at stake is *maryada* of the great Sikh institutions and the rich tradition of the Panth. In the current game plan for

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power, the Panth is surely not in danger, but it is the duty of the Sikh sangat to see that the sanctity of *maryada* is not polluted or hijacked by vested interests. **We hope that the current controversy will result in greater clarity of the role being played by the various Sikh institutions both historically and traditionally as per the perspective visualized by the great Gurus.**

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ਅੰਤਰਿ ਲੋਭ ਹਲਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭਾਰੀ ਬਿਨੁ ਬਿਬੇਕ ਭਰਮਾਇ ॥

AGGS, M 3, P 1132.

"Without the discriminating intellect One wonders around with rabid-like greed, And dangerous (heavy) ailment in the mind."