

GURDWARAS AND SIKHS OF THE FUTURE A THOUGHT

Harbans Lal, PhD., D Litt (Hons)
Professor Emeritus,
University of North Texas Health Science Center and Guru Nanak Dev University
Academy of Guru Granth Studies,
6415 Amicable Drive, Arlington, TX 76016

ABSTRACT

Today's Sikh youth will be us in a few years to define our religious and social culture. Whereas the source of Sikh theology will remain to be the Aad Guru Granth Sahib, but the future Sikh generation will be defining their religious interpretations, practices and institutions more scientifically and logically than before. Similarly, Gurdwara based congregations will remain as important medium of religious instructions, religious practices, and national expression for the future Sikh generation. However, the twenty-first century cultures will take over many twentieth century customs of the Gurdwara congregation. To stay in faith, the future youth will struggle between two conflicting yearnings: attraction to idealized versions of religious truth with repulsion to traditional practices of their ancestors. To them cultural narratives of religious teachings that are ethnically loaded will seem outmoded and often seen deceptive or exploitive, thus reducing their meaning in modern life. In response, the Gurdwara congregations will have to device drastic changes to suit the new times and be proactive to the new realities in order to insure survival of their faith among the new generation. Well-educated sevadaars (selfless workers), decentralization of religious teaching, availability of virtual libraries, progressive programming, diversity in services, services offered in the new mother tongues, interfaith dialogues, emphasis on ritual free spirituality, and investment in the youth are some of the changes expected.

INTRODUCTION

To design Gurdwaras of the future in North America the needs of our new generation must be considered. This paper first describes a likelihood of multiple subcultures among the future Sikh youths and then characterize the future Sikh Gurdwaras with a view to identify factors that will promote the youth and the congregation of the future to come together. We know that it will not be the Gurdwara alone or the youth alone that can bring them together. Both must blend together to draw the future youths to the future congregations.

My life with the All India Sikh Students' Federation in India deeply ingrained in me a special affinity for the Sikh youth. Since then, I have been watching Sikh youth closely and beyond their stereotypes. I visited numerous places and met scores of them in their homes, at college campuses, in youth camps, and in gurdwaras. I stayed in contact with them through E-mails and phone calls to listen to their stories as well as their moans and groans. I can attest that this is a type of experience that I am proud to be privileged and that will fascinate any one. This experience gives me the motivation to undertake youth

study and share their anguish and their quest with you as our community leaders. At the same time, I began practicing Gurdwara based Sikhism soon after I was born. In my life, I visited and attended thousands of Sikh congregations in almost every corner of the world. I will use my experience to narrate those Gurdwara practices that ought to change in order to meet the needs of the new Sikh youth.

I would divide the future Sikhs of America into two categories:

- A. American New Sikh Generation, born over the span of the last 20-40 years exclusively in North America.
- B. American Older Sikh Generation, born 50-70 years ago mostly in Indian sub-continent.

My hypothesis is that the New Generation is likely to alter the religious landscape of our community during the 21st century and significant changes will be appearing by year 2015.

By that time there will be mushrooming of Sikh

congregations each with somewhat different color and objective. For example, there will be (1) small neighborhood congregations that cater the needs of their neighborhoods, (2) mixed congregations which are intermediate and somewhat flexible in their management style suiting the needs of their members, (3) mega congregations which cater more to socio-cultural customs of the community at large and are influenced mostly through directions provided by their political masters, (4) staunch minded congregations who are pre-occupied mainly with interpretations of their *Rehit* with its prescribed rituals which they should fight to implant in their services, (5) congregations without walls that move from place to place to conduct their mostly worship type programs, and finally (6) congregations existing in cyberspace which are interactive and are open to participation of all who care. These do not include many Sikh groups outside the Gurdwara walls who are mostly discussion groups under socially attractive environments. All of these configurations will have different ways of designing and conducting services and programs. For many of the Sikh youth, getting their needs met in any one congregation will not be easy; as most Gurdwara congregations, if continued in today's fashion, would have lost the real spirituality of their religion for most youth.

FUTURE SIKH GENERATION

The future Sikh generation can be categorized into two major groups with two sub-groups in each as follow:

- A. Gurdwara Attending Youth: will included, (A-1) Steadfast, and (A-2) Returnee.
- B. Gurdwara Not Attending Youth: will included, (B-1) Dropout But Faithful, and (B-2) Dropout Disenchanted.

A-1. Steadfast Sikhs: The Steadfast Sikhs will be more committed to traditional lifestyles and family values, and they will be least likely to lose confidence in the religion. They are Sikhs because they were born and raised as Sikhs. They believe in the religion of their ancestors because it brought consistency to their life.

They are unlikely to get involved in the youth countercultures. They are more traditional in their attitude on the issues of abortion, substance abuse, unmarried couples living together, respect for authority, the death penalty, cheating on taxes, and other such issues. They are more likely to marry in their own ethnic community. They are not as highly committed to self-fulfillment as the other subgroups. They are somewhat more content with their lives and feel much less need for further excitement. Their greater happiness might be a result of their having somewhat lower expectations from life in favor of higher expectation from life after death.

The Steadfast, who hold to more traditional formulations

of religion, and by most measures are the most committed to religious institutions, are the title-holders. They have more close friends at Gurdwara congregation, they are more likely to see Gurdwara congregation as a means of becoming established in their community, and they are usually more involved in the life of a congregation.

A-2. Returnee Sikhs: Typically the Returnees will be those who dropped out of their congregations after attending them for a few years, and then returned. After dropping out, they pursued career for many years. They passed through years of good times and hard times, and explored most of the seductive alternatives involving the spirit and the flesh. Some of them had sad experiences in life, like a divorce or death in family, and needed to be with other people for support.

Some quitted going to Gurdwara congregation in their teen years, and had not gone back since then. The very words they used in talking about religious belief had a familiar ring about them. They will take anybody's opinion and even discuss it, but would not permit anyone to tell them what to believe. They had strong feelings about priests who seemed to hound them for money and about the Gurdwara congregation refusing to marry them to either a divorced spouse or some one from a non-Sikh family. To them, because religion was voluntary, forced belief was not to be tolerated. But at the same time, they liked to believe what made sense to them. When it did, many returned to Gurdwara.

When they begin to think seriously about the possibility of returning to Gurdwara, it usually happens when children in the family reach an age needing direction for identity for their proper growing up. Typically, one Sunday afternoon their life takes an unexpected turn. They drop in on a Sunday morning Sikh service at their neighborhood congregation with another Returnee friend. In a flash of time during the service they see their life laid out before them in ways they had not seen it before. As if in a subliminal experience, things came together for them.

The Returnees, at the time of coming back to the congregations, will bring with them memories and expectations from their young days. This is unlike those of the Steadfast, who never dropped out of religious participation and thus did not lose any memory of them. Because the returnees experienced a higher level of institutional alienation back in the earlier decades, religious congregations often will seem as strange places to them. To them, the congregations practiced odd beliefs and practices and they were composed of people who lived differently than them. They rarely saw any of their old friends.

However, in a few weeks after this experience, they become involved in a small youth group from the Gurdwara congregation and begin to explore a spiritual journey. They begin to see their life from a different angle. They see the deeper connections and more expansive framework in their daily routines, which they begin to relate to the higher meaning involving the One Creator.

Clearly, the Returnee subculture will be characterized by its moderate views, distinct from either of the extremes. They will be the young Sikhs knocking on the doors of the Gurdwara congregations but will be more moderate in their views than either those who never left or those who were unlikely to return. The Returnees will fall between Steadfast and Dropouts on all the items. They have moderate attitudes toward social institutions, more skeptical and questioning about ethnic politics and institutions than the steadfast, but less so than the Dropouts. They are more committed to principles of lifestyle freedom, choice in matters like abortion and gender equality than Steadfast but will not be as liberal in their moral values and lifestyles as Dropouts.

B-1. Dropout-Faithful Sikhs: The Dropout-Faithful Sikhs are those who consider themselves faithful to Sikh religion but show high levels of disenchantment with religious practices of their community. They will not go to Gurdwara usually but retain their intellectual identity with the religion. They say that they will return only if they were sure that it would meet their needs, which they do not think will happen.

Though the Dropout-Faithful no longer goes to Gurdwara congregation, they definitely hold on to much of their Sikh heritage. They are Sikhs whose views and sensibilities are shaped by their own imageries and symbols. They may believe in the divinity of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and ONE God; talk to their children about these matters. They occasionally and informally pray and occasionally read Gurbani. They feel that if God wants something to happen, it will happen. They see God in social relationships and in everyday life events. They think a lot about life, its meaning and purpose, about how things happen and why. Their religious world is shaped largely around their family and work. They allude to the religious significance of their relationship with family. It was in the family that religious beliefs and values were taught and lived day after day. God was meaningful to them largely in this closely-knit social realm; for their faith to be meaningful, it must extend to the family.

The Dropout Young Sikhs exhibit a healthy social and moral attitude often quoting the values imbibed in their prayer verse, *sarbat da bhalla* (wishing welfare of

everybody). They claim to harm no one, help people in the street, and express a conviction about human nature as basically good. They affirm that neither belief nor practice, but rather, high moral standards constituted their religion. They claim to help others not so much because of their religious beliefs, but simply because it is a human to help others. They did not flaunt religious beliefs; just did not pay attention to them. Rather, they rationalized their morals on reasoning and because they conformed to common sense. In many regards their moral code was not so different from those in organized religion including Steadfast and Returnees except that they do not feel getting anything out of a Gurdwara.

B-2. Dropout-Disenchanted Sikhs: The Dropout-Disenchanted Sikh Youth will be self-proclaimed agnostics. They stress that they needed freedom to be themselves. They ask for a basic sense of right and wrong but they believe it to come from within. The Gurdwara managements are too far off the track for them and would not work in their situation.

These Dropouts usually do not call themselves as atheist, they continue to have religious beliefs, but feel that their beliefs are very personal. Spirituality is often important to these young Sikhs but it is of a free-floating variety; it is without roots in a tradition of organized religions. They may be interested in the religious upbringing of their children but would want to not do so through Sunday schools of any Gurdwara.

Despite differences in these groups the Sikhs of year 2015 will see religion less in doctrinal or religious terms, and much more in personal meaning terms. To them their religion will not be so much what they believed, or how they followed it, rather that how did they live and what did they live for. To them, one religious ritual will not be much different from another as they are basically rituals only and not really related to the spirituality will be the basis for their belief. To them, there will be no real basis for arguing that one religious practice is preferable to another. What will matter be that people lived good lives, they tried to live by the Truth, their beliefs were devoid of hypocrisy, and that they meant to do the best they could; the rituals that distinguished religions will matter far less than they do today.

While many Steadfast Sikh Youth in year 2015 may not say that it did not matter what they believed, they will still put a strong emphasis on the moral aspects of faith. All Gurdwara Attending Sikh youth will exhibit a moral conviction about how they treated people or other creation of the ONE Creator, because that is really the only thing one is sure of, despite what their clerics may teach them. The attitude will be like this. You really don't know why you're here, and you don't know what happens when you die. You have to make the best of

what you have now and you could do so through your own make of religious belief.

In year 2015, the Sikh youth will be seen not only on many multicultural events but also seen at events sponsored singly by other faiths. Their presence at Hindu Yoga classes, Zen meditation, discourses on Sufism or Judaism, and some times at church or synagogue services with their Christian or Jewish spouses are just a few examples. They will join their friends from other faiths in celebrating Id, Christmas, Janam Ashtami, and Bar mitzvah. Their friends will reciprocate by joining them in the corresponding Gurdwara celebrations.

GURDWARA MAGNETISM

The overall narratives of the future Gurdwaras of year 2015 will depend on the daily practices of a Gurdwara and include religious rituals or myths, metaphors, and symbols that are projected in a Gurdwara where Sikh youth would come to see their own lives in relation to those projections. They also include the management style and level of participatory avenues offered to the members.

It is expected that less than half of the Gurdwara congregation will be made up of young Sikhs in year 2015. Feeling good and feeling that they were becoming a better person will determine the attitude of new Sikh youth toward a particular congregation. Therefore, the Gurdwaras for year 2015 will have to be different than today. In being different does not mean that they would compromise the Sikh theology. The Aad Guru Granth Sahib is eternal and will remain the source of the theology employed in every Gurdwara.

Some Returnees will look for a congregation that does not practice the culture of their ancestors the same way, as they knew it during their growing up. While going to a Gurdwara they will not have to dress up any special. They may like to go there in their jeans. This will be a congregation where they can really feel praising the ONE and listening to Guru's liturgy without pressures of imposing any old tradition or form. The outline of the liturgy will be composed before hand by a learned person from the congregation and made available to them on their web site a week earlier. The cantors would sing their tunes prescribed in the Aad Guru Granth Sahib. For example, it will not be the party of Harbans Singh Jagadhariwale, but the Australian Orchestra of Dya Singh and alike or cantors trained by Bhai Baldeep Singh and alike will be performing *kirtan* in the Gurdwara for the New Generation. The New Generation will feel good there; they will go there first with a friend but they will be so attracted after they are there that they may decide to stay adopting that particular congregation

as their own. They will like its informality, music, emphasis on experience, clear-cut moral teachings taken from reliable translations of the Word from their Guru, outlining theology suitable for middle age community, and not coming from half researched history told by either jaundiced eyed management or ill-informed preachers.

The above are some examples only. Realistically, there are no simple formulas; no simple set of criteria that will explain why some congregations will attract young Sikhs and others will repel them. The chemistry between congregation and people who come there is very complex and very unpredictable. Hence I must resist cataloging the characteristics of an attractive congregation, or of what young adults will actually looking for when they go shopping for a Gurdwara in year 2015. Instead I will look at several types of Gurdwara narratives, which will attract the young Sikhs of year 2015. I will discuss those narratives to illustrate some fundamental affinities between congregational cultures and the Sikh youth sensibilities.

A lack of training in the middle-class theology for addressing emptiness is a serious problem for our clergy today. Middle-class men and women live in a highly individualistic, competitive world and are bombarded daily by a consumer culture that tells them they are what they can purchase, consume or possess. Their lives are empty and boring, irrespective of how much money they earn. Then someone dies or something as traumatic happens in life. These conditions will bring people to Gurdwara if we and our liturgy addresses the emptiness and inspires them to the Guru's Word. Our theology should be empowering to give them a real deep sense of returning home and gives them something that was missing in their life of self-imposed exile.

The middle class lonely are hesitant and afraid to come to Gurdwara for they might be asked for commitment to their ancestral culture. Some want to be able to do nothing with that in this day and age. When they return to Gurdwara and consider assigning space to it in their heart, they might exhibit a fear of getting imprisoned and stifled; as if their spirit is going to be exterminated out of them. They may hear too much of committing to rigid dos and don'ts in many Gurdwaras or see too much of commitment to illusionary things in their materialistic life. Instead, they want good programs, inspiring worship, and meaningful ways of serving their faith. But what does the Gurdwara congregation offer today? It sticks them to listen to something they did not understand and pushed them to an ethnic Punjabi culture they were baffled with. They are expected to "fit in" to their centuries old programs and structures of Gurdwaras when their professional cultures had already nourished

them to tomorrow's technology and customs.

The future Gurdwaras will have to bridge the gap between what the new youth will look for and what is offered to them by our ill prepared clergy. The need will be to bring back a real sensitivity to the youth's deeper religious concerns and to design narratives to help them to grow spiritually without first conforming to a religiosity aspect. The overwhelming majority of Gurdwara Attending young Sikhs, whether theological liberals or theological conservatives, will prefer a Gurdwara congregation that is tolerant and widely accommodating rather than overly strict in its attitudes on dress and commitment to any life style. Most young Sikhs, including both Steadfast and Returnees, will oppose imposition of absolute morality in favor of a more individualistic, open and common sense approach to morality. These trends toward greater openness and tolerance will lie largely within the broader youth culture in America. Thus, changes towards these characteristics must occur in the religious traditions of the contemporary congregation to attract the New Generation.

PROGRESSIVE PROGRAMS

There will be some Gurdwara congregations more popular than others. In Gurdwara congregations more popular with the New Sikh Generation, the managers will go about doing things in a deliberate manner. They will try to make the congregation as a pleasant experience. They will work hard to accomplish the most possible in the couple of hours they have together. For upscale, career-oriented young Sikhs, efficiency and living by the watch are a part of life. With their busy schedules and many social or professional obligations, at work and at home, they seek their time at Gurdwara congregation as quality time.

In the popular Gurdwaras of the above kind, a visitor will definitely sense something more attractive about the place. Here most of the members are from the Sikh boomers' generation and are upscale in education. Their efforts are to make everything associated with Gurdwara congregation a quality experience. This means that they employ good cantors for music that is more to the tune of what the Aad Guru Granth Sahib prescribes, good liturgy and worship in the language or idioms that the congregation is familiar with, separate and attractive programs for children, good adult fellowship outside the congregation, good reading and library facilities, and right down to the food that they serve. In planning for food, appropriate hygiene and health benefits of the food served are never ignored. There is appropriate facility and acceptance for the disabled and physically handicapped; they are treated equal and given participatory role in all programs.

NOT BOUND BY PUNJABI TRADITIONS

Another reason why the Gurdwara congregation will attract young Sikhs is because it is not bound by Punjabi traditions. These are the new Gurdwara congregations in growing suburbs that maintain their neighborhood character. They are congregations of the working class Sikhs who run small but globally oriented Gurdwara congregations. It means that they are not hampered by legacies from back home or by having many on its management who insist on doing things the way they were always done at home. Doing things right here means something other than traditional correctness, or doing what other Gurdwara congregations do; rather, it is an affirmation of Sikh theology about openness and acceptance.

The most successful Gurdwaras for the New Sikh Generation will really function as neighborhood Gurdwara congregations that have a great deal of freedom to develop programs as they choose. Members experiment in the worship hour with innovative presentations such as dialogues and role-playing. Program combines both traditional and contemporary themes. They are remarkably successful at developing programs around social and cultural concerns. The programs are aimed at largely for married couples with children, for married dual-career couples without children, for single parents, and for young singles. A few members from older generation attend but they are of non-interfering types.

PROACTIVE GRANTHI

The Gurdwara congregation that will attract New Sikh Generation in year 2015 will endeavor to be member friendly. First of all they will recruit a Granthi who is well educated and who considers cultivation of personal relationship with the members as the job description. The Granthi and the management involve every one by giving them a role in the services. Every one takes an item to prepare and responsibility to present. In general, governance of the Gurdwara will be characterized by an open and shared leadership. Young Sikhs often will look for that; they love to run things themselves.

The members will plan the services in their newly adopted mother tongue that is English in the year 2015; the Granthi will not oppose it as the *Granthis* do today. As a result congregation members will participate more in the liturgy, even the children will join in enthusiastically. Things will be done in ways that American Sikh youth can comprehend. People's opinions are respected; their voice is heard.

The liturgy in Gurdwara will have to teach more spiritual matters than dogmatic religion. It breaks that anxiety our youth had back in year 2001, the anxiety of either

boredom itself or indoctrination that results in boredom. The door is open to respect people. It recognizes freedom of conscience and relies less on fear. It is less authoritarian, and more democratic.

INVESTMENT IN YOUTH WITH CONTEMPORARY APPROACHES?

This one is a narrative of a suburban Sikh congregation in year 2015 that prides itself in being different, not just another Gurdwara. They offer Sikh youth an opportunity to relate to their belief system in their own ways. The managing committee consists of mostly of young people with average age of around 40. They are mostly professionals and upscale in economic ranks.

The Gurdwara encourages member participation in all aspects. It has broken down gender discrimination. Men and women perform all services and serve as well as prepare food together. Women service the Aad Guru Granth Sahib as much the men; they prepare liturgy and *kirtan* performances. Similarly the physically handicapped participate as much as they could.

The Gurdwara combines traditional and contemporary Sikh services in a variety of ways; it holds a short *kirtan* and liturgy service with all of the members together and then splits the congregation in small groups. Some of these groups meet at the Gurdwara others may meet at homes of the members in the neighborhood. Many of the married Returnee Sikhs offer to meet around a fireplace or in the picnic yard around a swimming pool. Other small groups, made up of couples and their children, get together for dinner and for other format of home-centered celebrations to discuss Sikh scripture and history. Still others want to meet for *kirtan* sessions involving children and their Gurmat teachers. The Gurdwara usually provides a coordinator that acts as resource person when needed. At present about half a dozen or so of these groups of each one of the neighborhood Gurdwara congregation meet weekly.

The Gurdwara encourages the small groups because they offer members a chance to learn about Sikhism and exercise considerable freedom to interpret the teachings, as they understood. An advantage of the small groups is the informality that allows people to share their inner self. The congregation is remarkably open in allowing people to relate to Sikhism, as they like. Some are seen leaning to strict adherence to rules promoted by their central organization founded in India, and others lean toward meditative Sikhism and the mystical tradition. Still others wish more liberal services that conform more to what went on in their contemporary society.

Members of the Sikh congregation participate freely with those who do not claim to adhere to any particular

religion. They include some who know very little about Sikhism and are still exploring, others know a lot and search for their heritage in traditional ways. People are guided here to work at Sikhism permitting an open stance toward the meanings of Sikhism and toward their spiritual growth.

A new tradition that is added to the Gurdwara congregations in recent years is programs on interfaith exploration. Interfaith workshops are professional style and organized for pragmatic youth; they are held regularly and function as support groups for those in mixed marriages. The workshops are a venture in exploring Sikhism, human relationships, and how to deal with contemporary life. Except in a few places, where there is great debate about this approach, usually this approach will turn into an asset. After all, mixed marriages will be there to stay and instead of losing the Steadfast and Returnee Sikhs into the Gurdwara Not Attending Groups, the congregation takes it as an opportunity to expose the new spouses to Sikhism.

This Gurdwara has an Annex Room Group that needs separate consideration. For lack of another term, the term Annex Room Group is coined for a group who meets in the annex or basement of the Gurdwara. This group does not fit in the usual Sikh congregational mold and wishes to practice the Sikhi through its own counter culture.

The Gurdwara provides separate room facility where there is a lot of freedom in doing things, including a great deal of freedom to practice the belief in their own style. They elect to pursue activities that may often not fit into any conventional program style. Here people are very non-conformists but are let to be a part of the congregational family in their search for Truth. The management tolerates a wide range of belief including their excesses and obnoxiousness in systematic manner. If they wish to call Guru Nanak as only a wise man and consider the teachings of Nanak, the teachings of Buddha, the teachings of Jesus or Confucius, they are let lose to do so and let them experiment with the Universal Truth in their own way.

Usually the Sikh youth looks on the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and Sikhism as keys to spiritual fulfillment. However, some Gurdwara congregations use the scripture and *Rehit Maryada* as whips to force people into believing a certain way. They believe to have answers for everything, more answers sometimes than questions, but not in the Annex congregation. Here there is a range. Some people lean toward traditional belief, others would call themselves Sikhs but are unsure of what they believe, still others are exploring new spiritualities. What they all share is a conviction that everyone must grow in faith, each in his or her own way,

and that life is a journey with many religious and spiritual possibilities, waiting to be discovered. They are urged to consider Sikhism as their starting point.

In this place, with its latitude and so many ways of relating, there is inevitably a possibility of some tension developing between the two floors, between the pulpit and the Annex. It is not a serious tension, but enough that participants can recognize the subconscious delving into faith exploration. The situation is an intriguing one: a religious establishment meeting in formal worship, and the Returnee Sikhs along with other exploring groups meeting in the Annex on weeknights and weekends. A kind of ecclesiastical upper floor and more agnostic downstairs! Upstairs is a traditional religion, truth as handed down and defined by the authorities; downstairs is religion a la carte, grass-roots spirituality, truth as people know it. After some months in the Annex group many of them continue but many move to mainstream after coming to the conclusion that there was certainly enough in the mainstream for a lifetime of whatever they needed to do.

CONCLUSION

In a few decades our New Sikh Generation will become us and define our national and religious culture. Religion will be seen as a personal preference, something chosen by a free and independent individual. Further, the twenty-first century cultures will override many customs of the twentieth century in the Gurdwara programs. All indications are that the Gurdwara based religious congregations will still be the major source of religious expression and practice for the Sikhs of the twenty-first century but with many modifications.

Whereas the New Age metamorphosis in the religious practices may seem attractive, there will be a price to pay for this freedom in terms of added responsibility placed on the Gurdwara congregations to device drastic changes to respond to religious questions, often without much precedent to help. The Gurdwaras must match not only the personal preferences of its members but also be proactive to the new realities in order to insure survival of the faith. The new youth must be provided with a Gurdwara congregation where they feel comfortable.

To stay with the faith or to return to it, the youth will have to go through a psychological struggle and a series of cognitive and emotional negotiations. They will experience a fundamental clash of two conflicting yearnings: on the one hand, to hold on to their newly acquired individuality, and on the other, to be a part of a larger faith community. They will be attracted to idealized versions of religious truth, but will be repelled by their actual experiences with its working in the traditional congregation. In some respects they will be

like outsiders. They will find cultural narratives about the religious teachings as outmoded and historical narratives that are ethnic and miracles laden as alien to their education so that they will feel at odds with the traditions and its translations into the meaning of faith; they will be unable to claim them as their own without a special struggle in their intellect. The Gurdwara programs will seem to them as not meaningful and often seen as deceptive and exploitive. As a result, the New Sikh Generation are either likely to reject the traditional Gurdwara altogether, or often modify them in light of the Aad Guru Granth Sahib and their own experiences.

The New Generation Sikhs that will participate in Gurdwara management will break out of old imageries and relationships in the small neighborhood Gurdwaras and with help from new age Sikh intellectuals or cyber space libraries. They will develop new, more progressive spirituality, a good-humored and celebratory view of life, a psychology of acceptance and forgiveness, promotion of globalization in religion and still making it so that it is privatized for their life style. They will develop a positive conception of their relationship with their religion and their relationship with others. In the Gurdwara, they will replace the language of fears, anxieties, guilt, and shame often fostered by traditional religious teachings and practices with the cultural narrative of well being for all. Distinguishing between religion and spirituality, or between the outer and inner aspects of faith, will be an important theme, and it will help individuals to find a more enriching and favorable connection with the divine. Self-worth and self-esteem will be elevated to top priority in thinking about what is most important in a person's religious life.

GURU DUARAY

BWfW hCw s0ie j 0iqs0Bwvsl]

*Only that body (mind) is pure that is liked by
You (the Almighty)*

BWfW Aiq ml lXuDqW hCw n hiesl]

*The body (mind) that is extremely polluted
with vices cannot be cleansed just by washing*

grldAryhie s0l p0iesl]

*It is only when one enters the gateway (path)
of the Guru*, one can get wisdom.*

ejq dAryDie hCw h0iesl]

*It is this gateway where after entering one can
cleansed one's polluted mind.*

AGGS, M1, P 730