

Dear Respected Maskeen Sahebji,

Please accept my greetings. I received one letter from you before your departure to Simla. I was unable to reply you back as the post office, telephones and all other means of communication had stopped functioning and remained so far quite a few days. What happened here defies description. There are 350 bullet marks on the dome of the Golden Temple. Some of the bullets also hit the interior of the temple. One bullet in particular penetrated right through the cushion, the cover of the holy Granth Saheb, daily installed in the temple, and made a hole right upto its page No. 82. Some of the bullets went right through the doors of the Golden Temple. Bhai Ram Singh who was attending to the religious duties while sitting by the holy Granth Saheb was hit by a bullet which went right through his heart. His dead body was completely drenched with blood. Bhai Amrik Singh Ragi who came out after reciting the Shabad Kirtan was felled by a bullet as a result of which he died in the Parikarma itself. The main Darshani Deodhi has been completely destroyed with the bombs. Most of the things in the Toshakhana (the place where precious objects related with the Sikh history are kept) have been destroyed. The Chandni (canopy) presented by the Nizam of Hyderabad is completely burnt. The articles of Jalao (the ornamental peices of gold which are displayed on festive occasions) have somehow escaped being destroyed. A gold bound copy of the holy Granth Saheb as well as the historic copy of the Granth Sahib, belonging to Nankana Saheb are also intact. But all the Palkis along with the priceless Chandni and invaluable Rumlas (cloth coverings) were all burnt to ashes so much so that not a single chandni or rumala was left for the holy service inside the Golden Temple. The entire Darshani Deodhi has come down and would have to be rebuilt all over again. The holy Granth Saheb which was installed daily at the Bunga Baba Deep Singh Shaheed in the Parikarma had been burnt to ashes. The priceless treasure of the Sikh Panth, the Reference Library, which had so many invaluable copies of the holy Granth Saheb were completely gutted. The copy of Bhai Haridas, which was priceless, also met the same fate. It seems

this area has been deliberately set on fire. Siri Akal Takht has been turned into a ~~x~~ ruin. Anyone seeing it cant restrain his tears. The Palki in which the historic weapons including the arms belonging to Guru Gobind Singh has been burnt down. The Darshani Deodi at the side of the Ghantaghar has been perforated with bullets. The Government has cemented these holes and crossed it with fresh paint to conceal its doings. In the same way an attempt has been made to conceal the bullet marks on the Golden Temple. The floor of the Parikarma, ruined by the tanks, is hastily being repaired by the government. The tanks have also destroyed the floor in front of the stairs of the Deodi Dukh-bhanjani beri. The records of office of the Golden Temple as well as that of Shiromani Committee have been put to fire and all the cash and gold has been taken away after breaking the treasury. The houses around the Golden Temple, especially on the side of bazar where Tirlochan lives, have been demolished. The rubble lie scattered all over the bazars. People from these houses were taken out, stripped and then shot dead after tying their hands. Afterwards their houses were plundered and then set on fire. Every young man they caught was tied hand and foot and then killed by putting a bullet through him. Most of the people who were rounded up, whether the employees of the Golden Temple, the devotees or those living in the houses around, were shot dead. Those who survived, died of thirst. Not even a child, woman or an old man was spared. All the family members of Gian Singh, a granthi of the Golden Temple, were tied up, beleaguered and then made to beg for a few drops of water. Sohan Singh was not spared even when he told them that he was a granthi of Golden Temple. The family somehow reached the Kotwali where the police helped ~~it~~ <sup>him</sup> and that is how ~~it~~ <sup>he</sup> survived. They had come to assert <sup>arrest</sup> the extremist Jarnail Singh Bhindranwale but they treated every Sikh as an extremist. Out of all the Sikhs caught by the soldiers, the young ones were strangled by their own hair and later finished off with bullets. Whatever has happened here surpasses the barbarities perpetrated by the earlier Muslim invaders including that of Abdali. The statements made by

Giani Kripal Singh has angered the people. (some of them are preparing to beat him physically). As soon as the people see the Akal Takht and Golden Temple with their own eyes they swear that they will finish him off. People are terribly upset at his false statement that only a slight damage has been done, to the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple is unharmed. Now the Golden Temple is opened to public only from 6 to 8 a.m. If you want to come down, do come. Only first inform us by telephone. We will receive you at the station and bring you straight home. The rest, I will tell you when we meet. This episode has lowered the head of the Sikh community. Immence disrespect had been shown to the Akal Takht and the Golden Temple. Thousands of Sikhs have been killed, their houses and shops burnt, and their belongings plundered. To whom should we blame for this all? Give my greetings to the family of Tirlochan Singh. I received a letter from him. Show him this letter but keep it with you. Greetings ~~and~~ to everyone else.

Yours sincerely,

(Gen Chet Singh)

Deeply Respected Guru Khalsaji,

Wahe Guru ji ka Khalsa

Wahe Guru ji ke Fateh

After paying your respects to the sacred Harmandar Saheb you have now gathered under the flags of the sacred Akal Takht, the seat of Guru Hargobind, in the benign presence of the holy Granth Saheb. What happened in the recent past, during the attack of the Indian army on the Golden Temple cannot be described in words. That is why each and every future of all the Sikhs living in each and every corner of the world is filled with anguish. Furthermore, to that the Indian army, during its attack on the Golden Temple, not only subjected the employees of the Golden Temple on duty, the peaceful satyagrahis, who had come to participate in the Dharam Yudh Morcha, and the innocent devotees, to their barbarous excesses, but also indulged in activities which injured the sentiments of the Sikh community. At the time of the invasion, not only innumerable children and old men, young men and women were massacred, but also the Akal Takht was destroyed by bombardments, the bullets fired at the Golden Temple, the rich inheritance of the Sikhs that their priceless treasure the reference library with its 2500 copies of the sacred Granth Saheb and the historic Chandni (canopy) were burnt to ashes.

Outwardly, a lot was said about healing the wounds inflicted on the Sikhs. But actually the violence that has now been unleashed by the army on the innocent young Sikhs in the villages, and the way they are being killed by the police in fake encounters does not provide any evidence of that so-called healthy healing touch. Instead it is like applying salt to their wounds.

The ban should be lifted from the All India Sikh Students Federation, the organisation of the Sikh students and all false cases should be withdrawn from the students and the workers of the Shiromani Akali Dal and those arrested should be released.

I am very sorry that despite the fact that India's President is a Sikh, a circular has been issued in which all Amritdhari Sikhs have been described as extremists. This circular is

violative of the constitution of India directly and is contrary to the religious freedom granted by it. This circular reminds us of a similar document at the time of partition which the Sikhs were described as 2 "habitual criminals".

The whole world knows that the Sikh community has made great contribution in India's fight for freedom. But it is pity that every Sikh today is being treated as an extremist or a separatist. And to do that all the means of communication at the disposal of the Government, including Radio and TV are being exploited.

The Sikh soldiers always had a place of pride in the Indian army. But today every Sikh soldier is a suspect in the eyes of the Government which treats every Sikh as a second rate citizen. Even to this day the police and the army is busy spotting and arresting Sikhs from the Gurdwaras and villages. Such a thing should stop forthwith and all the individuals who had been arrested should be released. I am also sorry that the Indian Government has injured the sentiments of the Sikhs at every step by violating all the religious traditions, customs and values they hold dear to themselves. And this continues even today.

I want to emphasise that if the Government persisted in its present attitude and continued its activities in humiliating the Sikhs a situation will arise when the unity and integrity of the country will be seriously endangered. So far, the Sikhs have paid a heavy price for preserving the unity of the <sup>Country</sup> ~~courtesy~~. All the cases initiated against the brave Sikh soldiers who have always staked their lives for saving the honour and integrity of the country and have expressed resentment at the invasion of the army at the Golden Temple should be taken back.

During the invasion, many people have been ruined as a result of the indiscriminate loot and plunder by the soldiers, and their homes and shops have been destroyed. It is the responsibility of the government to look after all these people. The oppression of the Sikh youth in Punjab, Delhi, Jammu and Kashmir and other parts of the country and the way they are being tortured after being thrown in the jails, should be stopped.

The discrimination against the Sikhs and the continued injustice done to them should be stopped forthwith. This is absolutely essential to restore peace and unity between the people.