

16 August 2003

Dear S. Harcharan Singh Ji:

Sat Sri Akal.

I had thought that the material I had sent for you to study would remove your doubts, but apparently it hasn't. Therefore, here, I am giving you the answers item-wise.

My response to your first letter:

All Guru Sahiban used the Bikrami calendar because that calendar was in common use. Guru Sahiban also used other units of time, weight and measure, which have been discarded and replaced. You are not using *ghati, pal, ratti, tola, masa, ser, man, and gaz*, etc. Do you ever cite *gurbani tuks* concerning these units and try to convince people to go back to them?

Do you know that the Bikrami calendar used in Punjab these days is not the same as was in use during the Guru period? If you really believe that you should adhere to the Bikrami calendar because of mention of its dates in Gurbani, then you should discard all Jantris published in Punjab, and use those based on Surya Siddhanta which was used during Guru period to calculate Bikrami calendar. Do you know what Surya Siddhanta is? There are still some Jantris calculated according to Surya Siddhanta and published from Varanasi.

Regarding past dates I would like to mention that there have been changes in calendars the world over. The change is applicable from the implementation time and not retroactively. Old dates are always interpreted in the then prevalent calendar.

I have already answered this in (1) above, but may add that Guru Ji did not create the Bikrami calendar. It was there before their time.

There is no mention of any *rasi* in Sri Guru Granth Sahib. The Hindus have defined the '*sankranti*'. (By the way the sun does not enter a new zodiac belt, it enters the next *rasi* in the same belt.) When in 1998CE Nanakshahi Jantri (Calendar) was first published we called the day 1 of the months of Nanakshahi Calendar *Mah Arambhta*, which it really is. We are not sun worshippers. We are worshippers of *Akalpurkh*. At all Gurdwaras Giani Jis mention in the *Ardaas* 'commencement of the new month' and seek Akalpurkhs blessings for the new month, and not *Rasi Pravesh* of the sun. Next time you go to the Gurdwara on a 'sangrand' day, talk to the members of the *Sangat*, and find out how many know from which *rasi* the sun has moved to which *rasi*.

Since luni-solar Bikrami calendar was being used by the people of the time, did Bhai Mani Singh have choice to use any other calendar?

The Bikrami Calendar is already out of tune from the seasons by about 24 days. Do you know what *ayanamsa* is? Please, study some books on Indian Astronomy. Buy a copy of

Panchanga Divakar (Hindi) or *Martand Panchaga* (Hindi) for 2060BK or 2061BK. In it the value of *Ayanamsa* for the first of every month is given. I leave this as an exercise for you to find out what it means. It is very relevant to why the Bikrami calendar months are shifting in seasons. Even the Hindu Pundits agree that months of the Bikrami calendar are drifting in seasons, since its year is not based on the length of the tropical year, on which most other solar calendars of the world are based. By Sri Guru Nanak Sahib's time the Bikrami calendar was out by about 16 days. There has been a further drift of about 8 days since then. Bikrami month of Chet will shift to about middle of June in 6500 years. Similar shift of other months including Vaisakh shall occur. The rate of shift is roughly 1 week in 500 years. These are basic astronomical facts. Also, buy a copy of *Ganesh Aapa Panchanga* (Hindi) for the same year. Compare the dates of *sankrantis* given in each. Which ones you would celebrate - the ones from Kurali Pundits or the one from Varanasi Pundit. Compare the dates and times of *tithis* given in each. It will be a revelation.

Do you know that Nanakshahi *mohars* were minted during the reign of Maharaja Ranjit Singh? Do you know that some old buildings still have bricks called Nanakshahi bricks? Do you know that Dr Ganda Singh compiled *Mukhtasir Nanakshahi Jantri* (Urdu) published in 1949CE by the Sikh History Society, Amritsar?

Will you use Bikrami sudi /vadi calendar used by Guru Sahiban in your day to day correspondence? But, first you will have to get a copy from Varanasi. Office of Sri Akal Takht Sahib has already started giving the Nanakshahi date with the corresponding date of the Common Era in its correspondence. Please see the latest 'Hukamnama' issued from Sri Akal Takht Sahib.

Do you know that the Sikh Panth is more united on the issue of Nanakshahi Calendar than on any other issue except on Prof. Bhullar's case? If anything, the calendar has helped unite the Panth on the issue of separate identity of the Sikhs. Even those who opposed the Nanakshahi calendar made statements to the effect that the Sikhs should have their own calendar. Here is a quote from Mapping Time by E.G. Richards: "Today each of the major religions has its own calendar which is used to programme its religious ceremonies, and it is almost as true to say that each calendar has its own religion." Remember, Sikhism is the fifth major religion of the world.

Now, reply to your second letter:

Surya Siddhanta used in Guru Sahiban's time has already been discarded in most of India. Very few almanac compilers use it these days. In 1960s they switched over to the calculation of tithis, sankrantis, etc. according to the modern astronomical methods, since Surya Siddhantic methods have been proven *by the pundits* to be erroneous for calculating the positions of sun, moon, planets, and eclipses. Guru Sahiban's mission did not include the correction of Surya Siddhanta formulas. It was left for the scientists.

Bikrami calendar was not created by *Khuda*. All calendars are created by human beings.

Like you, I have been very straightforward too.

I had already addressed all the concerns that you have mentioned in your letters, in the press, in the media, at meetings, and seminars during the past 8 years, and more recently in the meetings held at Sri Akal Takht Sahib. There is not a single question about Nanakshahi Calendar in your two letters that has not been tackled earlier.

You shouldn't have exaggerated. No, not everything has to be changed. But, if there is anything which goes against Gurbani, then why shouldn't we change it?

Does my use of surname 'Purewal' have anything to do with the Nanakshahi Calendar?

If you have further concerns, please send those to Jathedar Sahib Sri Akal Takht Sahib. I shall respond to each and every question received through him. Also, this will save you from wasting your hard earned money on expensive postage for registered letters to Canada.

By the way, 'however' in the context I used, and 'howsoever' implied by you with 'so' in parentheses have the same meaning - to whatever degree or extent (Webster's New Collegiate Dictionary).

Best wishes.

(Pal Singh Purewal)