



GLOBAL SIKH COUNCIL

International Voice of The Sikhs

UK Registered Charity # 1186311

PRESS RELEASE ON CONTROL OF SIKH TAKHTS

22 JUNE 2024

GSC: TAKHT SRI PATNA SAHIB AND TAKHT SRI HAZUR SAHIB SHOULD BE BROUGHT UNDER SIKH CONTROL

The Global Sikh Council (GSC) calls for the return of the control of the Takhts of Patna Sahib and Hazur Sahib from the control of the State Governments of Bihar and Maharashtra respectively to the Sikh Community. The Takht Patna Sahib Management is governed by the Patna Sahib Constitution and Bylaws of Patna Sahib, 1957 whereas the Takht Hazur Sahib is governed by the Nanded Sikh Gurdwara Sachkhand Sri Hazur Apchalnagar Sahib Act, 1956. These Bylaws of 1957 and the Act of 1956 allows for profuse Government meddling in the Takhts affairs including their religious ceremonies and have put their management under total control of the State Governments. The Historical narrative of this 2 Takhts is as below.

History of the 2 Takhts outside Punjab

Takht Sri Patna Sahib and Takht Sri Hazur Sahib hold great reverence in Sikhism and are places of great historical importance to the Sikhs. Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji was born on December 22, 1666 at the place where the Takht Patna Sahib is today. On the other-hand Takht Sri Hazur Sahib is where Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji spent his last 9 months of his life and it was also here where Guru Ji bestowed Gurtagaddi on the Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and thus bringing to an end the Guruship of living Gurus.

After Banda Singh Bahadur's passing away in 1716, the Sikhs were hunted by the Moghuls and bounty placed on their heads. Thus, for survival the Sikhs took refuge in jungles. Only after Moghuls were defeated in 1780's and started fleeing did the Sikhs come out of the Jungles. But in the absence of Sikhs from the Gurdwaras for about 60 years, the vacuum was filled by anti-Sikh groups like the Brahmanical orientated Nirmlas, the Sri Chand followers called Udasis and self-serving Mahants who had taken control of the vast majority of the Sikh Gurdwaras and had introduced Anti-Gurmat and Brahmanical practices at this 2 Takhts. The Sudhar leher of the 1920's which led to the removal of the Udasis, Nirmlas and Mahants from the Gurdwaras, did not go out of Punjab, thus leaving Takht Patna Sahib and Takht Hazur Sahib with their Non-Gurmat and Non-Sikh Rehet Maryada compliant practices intact and did not undergo any reform.

These Takhts have continued with their practices that violate the basic tenets of the Sikh religion, that is, carrying out practices like slaughtering of goat, Parkash of Bachitter Natak (DG) in the Darbar of Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji and doing its Akhand Path, conducting rituals of Artee that is disallowed by the Sikh Rehet Maryada, etc. Further

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Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji Gurbani Shabad (Kaise Artee Hoeh, Bhav Khandana Teri Artee) advises mankind to appreciate the Artee of Nature already taking place and explaining what a wonderful Artee of Nature is taking place. The Takht Hazur Sahib conducts a

daily ritual of Artee with lighted lamps and other paraphernalia despite the SRM position and Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji's advice through Gurbani.

The 2 Takhts under State control should be brought back under Sikh Community

Takht Sri Patna Sahib

Its management came under the control of the East India Company in 1810 and was then transferred to Mohanth Ganda Singh on 11th March 1863. The last Mohanth Baba Kartar Singh Bedi was removed from his office on account of mismanagement, by the District Judge Patna on 14th of December, 1954. After this, the District Judge Patna constituted a supervising committee consisting of 15 members all of whom were appointed by him except one member who was co-opted by the other 14 members. This committee called "Parbandhak Committee Sri Takht Harimandir Ji, Patna Sahib" was constituted by Section 6 of "The Constitution and Bylaws of Sri Takht Harimandir Ji, Patna Sahib 1957". Some other relevant provisions of this constitution and Bylaws which allow for State control are:

- (i) **Section 40 provides that the existing religious worship (Maryada) and Langgar to be maintained by the Committee** in accordance with Ancient Gurnaryada and shall not be stopped or interfered with. Thus, the law (Section 40) provides that ancient Gurnaryada, **which includes the Snatan Hindu and Nirmla beliefs and practices at Takht Patna Sahib to be maintained and continued.** This law was drafted by the District Judge and thus this Snatan practices are imposed by the State although section 26 of the COI (Constitution of India) provides for each religion to manage its own affairs that is to decide what religious ceremonies are essential and to be performed.
- (ii) **Section 55 provides** that any amendment passed could come into effect only after they have been approved by the District Judge.
- (iii) The constitution and Bylaws were drafted by the District Judge and finally approved by him after incorporating any amendments which were to his liking.

Dr. Kashmir Singh at page 176 of his book 'Laws of Sikh Gurdwaras in India' says:

"Wide powers to the District Judge are clearly meant to ensure the Government control and interference into the affairs of Patna Sahib shrines which is continuing from the days of the East India Company, (that is from 1810). It is palpable intrusion

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into the fundamental freedom of the Sikhs to manage and administer their religious affairs, institutions and property attached thereto.”

Takht Sri Hazur Sahib

It is here at Sri Takht Hazoor Sahib, that Sri Guru Gobind Singh Ji had spent his last 9 months of life. Bhai Daya Singh and Bhai Dharam Singh who were closely attached to the Tenth Master, decided to stay at the departing place of Guruji. They looked after the Holy Takht for less than a year till they both passed away one after the other. **After this, the Takht Sachkhand Hazur Sahib passed into the hands of the Udasis and Nirmlas priests.**

In 1956, the Nanded Sikh Gurdwara Sachkhand Sri Hazur Apchalnagar Act, 1956 was passed under which a Board of 17 persons was constituted, all of whom are appointed by the State Government of Maharashtra. The management, control and Superintendence of the administration Sri Takht Hazur Sahib is with the Board and which board is under control of the State Government of Maharashtra. **Further control by the State is exercised by the following provisions:**

- (i) **By Section 52**, the Board is obliged to comply with any general or special directives of the State Government.
- (ii) **By Section 53**, the State Government is given powers to supersede the Board and dismiss all members of the Board and appoint new members to it.

Conclusions

Section 26 of the Constitution of India provides for each religious denomination to have the right to establish and maintain religious institutions, to manage its own affairs and to own and acquire movable and immovable property. **Thus, the Sikh religious denomination has the right to have control over the Takhts Patna Sahib and Hazur Sahib and it should not be under the control of the State Governments.** Supreme Court in “**Commissioner, Hindu religious Endowments V. Sri Lakshmindra Therta Swamiar of Sri Shirur Mutt(AIR 1954 SC282)**” stated “...A law which takes away the right of administration from the hands of a religious denomination altogether and vest in any other authority would amount to a violation of the right guaranteed under Clause(d) of Article 26.”

The Sikhs appointed to the Committee of Takht Patna Sahib and those appointed as Board members have very little say in the governance of the Takhts and over religious worship. **Even the employees at this 2 Takhts which number between 400 to 500 each, are more than 90% Non-Sikhs who are not even conversant with Gurmukhi. Even the Gianis (religious**

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priests) at this Takhts do not follow the Sikh Rehet Maryada which is a Panthic approved Code of Conduct and many of their practices are not Gurmat compliant.

Since the last few years, the Takhts Patna Sahib and Hazur Sahib have started exporting their Maryada which is not Gurmat compliant to other parts of Punjab and even to overseas countries. Most of the Sikhs outside of this 2 Takhts areas have resisted the propagation of this Non-Gurmat compliant practices and the Akal Takht Sahib has not been able to act against these 2 Takhts as Akal Takht Sahib itself has been put under direct control and supervision of the SGPC by Section 85(1) of the Sikh Gurdwaras Act, 1925.

The Global Sikh Council therefore calls on the SGPC and the Sikh diaspora worldwide to take steps to bring these 2 Takhts back under the Sikh control and be liberated from the control of the State Governments of Bihar and Maharashtra. The GSC has also put up a Paper on this issue titled “The 5 Takhts and Shiromani Gurdwara Parbandhak Committee (SGPC)” making recommendations of the steps needed to be taken to ensure that the Sikhs regain control of the two Takhts.

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Global Sikh Council is a confederation of National Level Sikh Organisations worldwide, working together for the advancement of the Sikh religion guided by the Guru Granth Sahib and the socio-economic development of the Sikh community.

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