

# INTERNATIONAL SIKH CONFEDERATION

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To

Honourable Shri Shiv Raj Patil,  
Home Minister Govt. of India,  
New Delhi.

**Sub.: AUTHENTIC TRANSLATION OF “SRI GURU GRANTH SAHIB” IN ENGLISH, HINDI AND SUBSEQUENT READ TRANSLATION IN OTHER WORLD LANGUAGES.**

Sir,

1. With reference your reported speech of your goodself in ‘The Tribune’ dated 25/07/2008 wherein you have very kindly announced a grant of Rs. 1 Crore for the above purpose.

2. In this connection it is stated that we are a world Sikh body to guide the Sikh masses all over the world. One of the major projects of this organisation is to produce authentic/standard translation of Guru Granth Sahib in English from where other translation in Hindi and world languages could be made. President SGPC Amritsar had approved the project verbally. Pending sanction/permission in writing the allotment of the funds project could not be taken up. Copy of the e-mail is attached for ready reference.

Guru Granth Sahib is, no doubt, the Guru of Sikhs for all times. Its *bani*, however, addresses the whole world, Sikhs and non-Sikhs alike, and, therefore, it is our responsibility to make it accessible to all through translation in all major Indian and foreign languages. In fact, this is a job that deserves topmost priority. Some Sikh scholars, on their own initiative, have made commendable efforts, and have come out with English translations which are indeed helpful. It must be remembered, however, that these are individual efforts, and often project contrary interpretations, leading to confusion among readers. In the very first verse of the first *bani* (*Japuji*) in Guru Granth, (ਸੋਚੈ ਸੋਚਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਜੇ ਸੋਚੀ ਲਖ ਵਾਰ), the word ਸੋਚਿ has been translated as ‘pondering’ by Manmohan Singh, ‘thinking’ by Macauliffe, and ‘meditation’ by Trumpp. On the other

hand, Talib translates it as 'ritual purification', following a similar earlier interpretation by Bhai Vir Singh and Prof Sahib Singh. The list of verses subjected to varying interpretations is long, and need not be reproduced here. It is obvious, however, that the differences need to be resolved academically.

More and more scholars want to undertake translations of Guru Granth Sahib, not only into English, but other languages also. Very few of them have any knowledge of the Punjabi language or the Gurmukhi script in which the original *bani* has been recorded. They, therefore, adopt one of the extant English translations, as basis for their exercise, so that the mistakes pass on to the new translations, adding some more in the process.

To this, may be added the possibility of motivated distortions, and deliberate misinterpretation by enemies of the Panth, so that the new version presented in translation might deviate considerably from the original text. This is something that needs to be avoided at all costs.

In view of the above, it is absolutely necessary that a Standard English translation, acceptable to all scholars and major Panthic organizations, be prepared for use as a basis for translations into other languages. The project report on the subject is attached and is self explanatory as how the project shall be executed.

The Project on 'Translation of Sri Guru Granth Sahib into English' was then discussed in some detail. The committee decided to immediately approach S. Manjit Singh Calcutta and the DSGMC for allotment of Rs.10 lakhs as the first installment to start the project under the aegis of the Advisory Council for Religious Affairs. Tentative plan approved was as follows:-

- (a) *Selection of scholars to be associated with this project.*
- (b) *Collection of all existing translations.*
- (c) *Setting up of office and computer facilities once funds are allotted.*
- (d) *Analysis and research by scholars of existing translation.*
- (e) *Production in appropriate phases of the standard translation..*

Giani Harinder Singh and Dr Gurbux Singh initiated a discussion on the tasks before their Advisory Council: - In our meeting on 21 Aug. 2006 and in the subsequent meetings.

- (a) Translation of Guru Granth Sahib into English. Dr Kharak Singh stressed the vital need to start this project earliest as soon as some funds are made available by SGPC / DSGPC who have both promised to support this project.
- (b) Dr Johl made the point that we also need to have a translation in Hindi and Pharsi/ Arabic.

In view of above background it will be a very good gesture on the part of the Govt. of India that financial assistance is given to us for this project. Its further clarified that the registered body with the Income Tax department whose account are regularly audited. Whatever grant given to us same will be audited by a chartered accountant and accounts submitted to GOI.