

Sikhs Protest at UC Riverside, Chancellor meets Sikh Delegation

Dr. Baljit Singh Sahi, Riverside, CA September 26th 2008 – An estimated 500 Sikhs today demonstrated at UC Riverside protesting the appointment of Prof. Pashaura Singh to Dr. Jasbir Singh Saini endowed Chair of Sikh and Punjabi Studies. A peaceful protest was called by the Coalition of Gurdwaras of California and Sikhs for preservation of Sikhism and Sikh Heritage which lasted for two and half hours. Earlier in the day demonstrates from Fremont, Fresno, and Bakersfield, were received at Gurdwara Riverside and then proceeded to UCR. Large contingent of Sikh congregants from Buena Park, Santa Ana, Norco, Walnut, Los Angeles, and Riverside, gathered at the protest site. Sikhs have communicated with the UC Riverside authorities from the past three years regarding scholarship of Prof. Pashaura Singh. They contend that he has committed an academic fraud based on evidence used and conducted research with unauthentic sources of information to attack on concept of Sachi/Pacci Bani as enshrined in Guru Granth sahib Ji.

During the protest Dr. Baljeet Sahi, spokesperson for the watchdog group Sikhs for Preservation of Sikhism and Sikh Heritage, and Mr. Raminderjit Singh Sekhon, Spokesman for the Coalition of Gurdwaras of California addressed the Protestants. Dr. Baljeet Sahi said that “While the awareness about Sikhs post 9/11 is improving their religious beliefs have come under strict scrutiny”. He pointed to Sikhs that “even as we struggle to establish ourselves as peaceful freedom lovers, and protectors of the suppressed, an academic challenge has evolved.....self proclaimed scholars: Pashaura Singh and associates have added a new dimension, hindering efforts of Sikhs and their children to live honorably”. He ended sermonizing Prof. Pashaura Singh with a quote of Marian Wright Edelman “Education is for improving the lives of others and leaving your community and world better than you found it”. Mr. Raminderjit S. Sekhon explained to the protestors that Prof. Pashaura Singh was indulging in an “academic fraud by using inapplicable methodology of textual analysis to a written and original Sikh Scriptures. He said that this method of study “is applicable to Judo-Christian Studies” and Sikhs have no objection to it because they have oral traditions but Sikhs have in their possession original authentic version as compiled by Guru Arjan Dev Ji.

Immediately following the demonstration a delegation of Sikhs: Dr. Jasbir Singh Mann from Anaheim, Prof. Gurdev Singh Sandhu from Fontana, Dr. Dhanwant Singh Gill of Riverside, Dr. Baljeet Sahi from La Canada, and Mr. Raminderjit Singh Sekhon of Corona, California, met with Chancellor Timothy P. White. Vice Chancellor for Administration Al Diaz, and UCR spokeswomen Ms. Marcia McQuern were also present. They presented the chancellor with a memorandum detailing their grievances with regards to Prof. Pashaura Singh’s academic scholarship and fraudulency for details click on http://www.globalsikhstudies.net/r_link/pashaura.htm . They discussed seven points: Criteria used by the University of California's academic personnel process to hire a candidate demoted from Assistant Professor to a Senior Lecturer at University of Michigan?, Whether the University of California's academic personnel process was aware of Prof. Pashaura Singh’s usage of the following unauthentic manuscripts: MS# 1245 at “Guru Nanak Dev University”, Amritsar, India, Vanjara Pothi at “Javadi Taksal”, Ludhiana, India, and Bahawal Pothi at “Bhai Bir Singh Sadan”, New Delhi, India during

his research, The University of California Riverside's failure to respond to the letter of Mrs. Saini - Major Donor to the Chair for Sikh and Punjabi Studies, who appealed for global Search for a Chairperson and recommended not to offer the Chair to Prof. Pashaura Singh?, Reason for the University of California at Riverside to rescind on its promise to Sikh community that they will not hire Prof. Pashaura Singh for the Sikh Chair in 2005 and wait till 2008 to appoint him to the Chair through what seems like a Backdoor?, Due process and thorough examination of University of California's academic personnel and recommendation process in selection of only scholars like Prof. Pashaura Singh affiliated with Mr. Hew McLeod and group?, In order to promote his blasphemous research on Sikh Scriptures (Guru Granth Sahib Ji), Prof. Pashaura Singh's methodology of fabrication, falsification and ghostwriting, How a chairperson can be effective Chair holder by avoiding truth and choosing to have selective communication with Sikh community, and Discussed the forthcoming seminar at University of California Riverside on Sikh Studies - December 4 to 6, 2008, to commemorate the 300th Anniversary of the installation of the Guru Granth Sahib in 1708. During which Prof. Pashaura Singh wants to focus on the shifting paradigms in the study of the Sikh tradition and address recent developments in the field.

The Chancellor was apologetic for little erroneousness on behalf of the university's inadequacies with regards to few points and said that the university failed to respond to Mrs. Saini's letter. He assured to send her a note. He was unwilling to interfere in the affairs of the departments abiding to policies of the university. The meeting ended on a positive note. In principle he agreed for an independent investigation into the claims of Academic fraud by the Sikh community with respect to Prof. Pashaura Singh's research on Sikh Scriptures based on unauthentic documents. He recommended the Sikh community to hold a parallel seminar to the forth coming seminar being hosted by Prof. Pashaura Singh. But the university's policy for allowing such a seminar was not clear to him as he spoke but, he will look into it. As requested by the Chancellor the Sikhs are preparing Brief Academic document detailing Prof. Pashaura Singh's fraudulent research for further investigation based on Unauthentic MS#1245, Vanjara Pothi and Bahoval Pothi which has no connection with Guru Arjan Dev Ji. For textual studies on any Scripture one requires the sources that have their origin in the pre-canonical stage. There antiquity, authority and authenticity have to be established on the basis of academic norms. Besides one is required to identify the tradition from which these sources have descended. Every manuscript has a purpose therefore a scholar has to find out the purpose and use made of these manuscripts.

For Pashaura Singh any manuscript which does not conform to the standard text of the Adi Granth fits in his theory of working drafts to hammer his point of revision in the Bani.

There is no politics in this issue, the Sikh Community wants to protect the concept of Sachi/Pacci Bani as enshrined in Guru Granth Sahib Ji .