Sikh Singer Joins Montreal Ram Navami Celebrations
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Mukhopadhyaya, P.B.; Sharma, Arvind India's recently developed Sikh/Hindu animosity often divides even their immigrant communities in North America. Whereas once Sikhs and Hindus visited each other's temples and gurdwaras during festival celebrations, the Sikh-Hindu riots caused sufficient enmity to end this healthy interchange in most areas. But Montreal's Hindu Temple has throughout been patronized by members of both communities, and demonstrated its harmonious success at their Ram Navami celebration when Prof. Darbara Singh accepted the temple committee's invitation to sing. Though blind. Prof. Singh is a highly trained Ragi Jattha, a traditional priest-singer of the Sikh scripture, the Adi Granth. He also teaches practical and popular Hindustani music.

HINDUISM TODAY asked Prof. Singh why he decided to go to the festival. He said, "The singer must sing regardless of the composition of the audience. There is only one God and there is only one religion, devotion to God. Religious differences do not really count. I studied in Delhi, I know Hindi, I even attended the Sanatan Dharm school. This confirms that Hindus and Sikhs constitute one fraternal community."

Asked what opposition his participation had aroused, he noted that, "I experienced no opposition from any member of my family, either here in Montreal or from those who are back in India. I also experienced no opposition from my friends or from any member of the Sikh or Hindu community. I was welcomed with open arms at the temple."

Pondering how to improve Sikh/Hindu relations, Prof. Singh advised, "There are people in both the communities, Hindu and Sikh, who will sacrifice national welfare and the welfare of the two communities for personal gains. The government should keep such anti-national forces and anti-religious forces in check. Look how the two communities live in harmony in Montreal side-by-side. Why can't they do so in India? I would like to see the relationship between the Hindus and the Sikhs revert

to what it used to be before 1984. Members of the two communities even used to intermarry. I would like to see this continue. I tell you, we all have one God and we are all traveling on the same road, that of dharma."

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