CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION
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From my survey and evaluation of Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi literature, I have drawn the following conclusion:

In the Time of Master Tara Singh, Punjab was passing through a tumultuous period on political, religious and social fronts. The freedom of the country from the British, the partition of the country on religion-national basis, concentration of Sikh population in a zone, an autonomous unit to control the historical shrines of the Sikhs, states on linguistic basis were the major political changes in the province. People became rights-conscious. More stress on political rights and democratic set-up in the country brought a change in the outlook of the people of the province. The sense of being a ruler i.e. being a part of government (in the form to franchises) added to the confidence of the people. It, however, led to degradation of level of political ethics as well.

On religious scene Hindu-Muslim conflict during pre-1947 period and Hindu-Sikh conflict after 1947 created gulf among these nations. The communal atmosphere of the state became tense. Secondly, religion began heading towards show and formal rituals. The real spirit of religion diminished gradually. With the growth of individualism and materialism human values regressed. People became more selfish, self-centred
and opportunist, value were changing fastly. It was against this background that Master Tara Singh produced literature.

Master Tara Singh was a prominent political leader of the Sikhs. Many a time a leader has to talk to masses through some or the other medium and literature is one of them. Master Tara Singh adopted this method and used it effectively according to the demand of the situation.

Master Tara Singh wrote novels, essays, tracts, editorials, an autobiography and a travelogue. The novels by Master Tara Singh present realistic picture of contemporary society. Rural Punjabi culture was for the first time presented in his novels. Prior to Master Tara Singh Punjabi novel was communal in colour. What Suran Singh gave to Punjabi poetry, Master Tara Singh contributed to Punjabi novel. He is the first secular novelist of Punjabi language. He is also the first successful writer of historical novel in Punjabi.

Master Tara Singh wrote three books of essays. These essays cover a variety of subjects: metaphysics, religion, social questions, ethics etc. Through these essays, written in very simple Punjabi idiom and in simple diction, Master Tara wanted to teach his religion-fellows the way to a better life. Though he has not evolved any philosophic system of his own but has translated Sikh thought in his own words. He knew that he was, then, explaining what Sikhism had taught to him.

Master Tara Singh is the first Punjabi writer to write
tracts on political topics. Before Master Tara Singh, the
Singh Sabha, the Chief Khalsa Diwan, and individuals like Dhai
Mohan Singh Vaid had contributed a large number of tracts on
moral and religious topics. The public demand for tracts on
political issues was fulfilled by Master Tara Singh. These
tracts are full of information regarding the concern of the
subject. His tracts on Sikh situation, Pakistan, Amad Punjab, Punjabi
Saba etc. are precious tracts of Punjabi language. These
tracts proved a booster to attract a large number of followers
for Master Tara Singh as well as a big number of volunteers to
participate in political-religious movements launched by the
Akali Dal. These tracts added new readership to Punjabi
literature.

Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi journalism
is no less important. He was associated with Punjabi journalism
for about sixty years. Since his post in the teacher till his
death, he contributed a large number of editorials in various
papers e.g. Sacha Mandora, Akali, Akali Te Pardee, Pardee
Khalsa, Sant Sipahi, Jathedar, Parbat etc. His editorials
cover a long range of topics: politics, religion, sociology,
ethics, metaphysics etc. He covered almost every point of
current affairs in his editorials. These editorials are on the
pattern of periodical essays of Steele and Addison.

'Hari Yead' by Master Tara Singh is the first auto-
biography (in prose) of Punjabi language. It is not only the
life story of the author but also an authentic history of Punjab from 1895 to 1945. The author is free from blemish of egotism which often shrouds most of the autobiographies. Apart from giving valuable information about the personality of the great son of Punjab, this autobiography is a ready reference for future historians of the period as well as a light house for future generations. The book inspires us to make our lives sublime.

The travelogue by Master Tara Singh is a record of the state of the Sikhs, the Sikh Gurdwaras and the relations of the Sikhs with the natives of those areas visited by the author. It is also an interesting portrait of the hills, the forests, the river-sides of the areas journeyed by the author. Master Tara Singh has made valuable observations regarding Gandhi Ashram, Taj Mahal, Ramchari sect and the management of the Gurdwaras at Hazur Sahib. Except on the points of Sikh concern (where he behaves as an impartial Sikh leader), he is an objective observer. Besides this the travelogue is a narrative of socio-economic history of the zone visited by the author during 1934-35.

Master Tara Singh's main source of his ideological concepts is the Sikh philosophy and the Sikh history. He admitted many a time whatever he had said was based on Sikh fundamentals. On the other hand he was well acquainted with Western literature and philosophy, so he made some observations
under this impact also. His favour for welfare state, democracy, rights, limited monarchy and religion as supreme authority are an amalgam of various ideologies. There may be some incoherence in his ideas but it is due to his intention to gather every better point for the welfare state of his concept and that even in consonance with the Sikh fundamental. His persistent stress on religion as guiding force of politics points to his intentions.

Master Tara Singh believed in One, True, Creator, All-pervading, Timeless Being, Birthless, self-existent God. God's morpho reigns supreme. To be liberated one must follow the path of a virtuous man on human and social planks and should adopt Non-simran on religious side. Master Tara Singh stresses practical side of religion than that of theoretical side. He was in fact, teaching common man who does not bother much for theory.

Master Tara Singh favoured simple life. He was opposed to urbanisation. His stress on old value system and rejection of modernity cannot be labelled as backwardness because his rejection of so-called modernity has roots in two situations: growth of hypocrisy and loss of moral and ethical values. Like a saint he preached truth, purity, self-discipline, self-restraint, tolerance, non-attachment, modesty as our ethical code.

Master Tara Singh advocated all round harmonious development of personality. He wanted his fellow men to become
satyagrahi of Guru Gobind Singh's concept. He wished a society in which everyone should be physically healthy, mentally sound and spiritually enlightened. Society as a part of satyagraha as viewed by Master Tara Singh is a pointer to his view of society like that of the views of a social, religious and spiritual leader. To stress his point he painted a pale picture of contemporary society and warned of its evils. Thus, Master Tara Singh as a writer appears as a political leader, religious preacher, social reformer and a spiritual man. He advocated such an age which can be called satyagraha and the inhabitants as gurmukhi.

As a literary artist Master Tara Singh did not achieve heights. His novels have defects of plot-construction. Loose-knitting and mis-handling of sub-plots can be observed in his novels but this flaw has, however, been partly compensated by his art of characterisation.

Master Tara Singh was the first Punjabi novelist who was impartial in choice of characters. Prior to Master Tara Singh the characters in historical, allegorical and religious novels were prejudicially presented by the Punjabi novelists. As revealed in his novels the Sikh characters were brave and generous, the Hindus coward and selfish, and the Muslims were tyrants and bohemians. Master Tara Singh presented all these types of characters from the Sikh galaxy. Thus, he is perhaps the first Punjabi novelist who is secular in choice of his characters. His art of characterisation is superb. Though
sometimes he introduces the character by direct statement but
he adds action so as to make his characters real beings of this
earth. Mostly his characters are revealed through their action.

Master Tara Singh, though himself a Pothohari used
central Punjabi language not only in his novels but also in
almost all of his writings. A small number of words from English,
Urdu and Hindustani have been used by him in his novels in order
to make the situations appear real.

Master Tara Singh, while writing essays used very simple
logic of the level of a common man. He presented various
complex ideas in simple language and simple idiom. From content
point of view his essays are formal and from form point of
view informal. This combination is very rare to be found in
essay-writing. Though sometimes he gets emotional on strict
moral and religious issues, yet he is generally logical while
discussing a point. He adopts the 'stair-pattern' to prove
his hypothesis. He uses such an intimate tone in his essays
that the reader unembarrassedly moves with him.

Master Tara Singh's editorials are partisan in tone.
These represent the views of the author or/and the party to
which he belonged. Though partisan, his editorials contain
up-to-date information regarding the point and he moves to
the conclusion logically. He quotes the latest information in
his editorials. Master Tara Singh's editorials invariably
and with either announcement of a verdict or an emotional
appeal and sometimes with a threat. Thus he is both a politician
and a journalist in his editorials. This pattern is common among the editors of almost all the vernacular press of Punjab.

Master Tara Singh's autobiography is political history of the province from 1905 to 1945. This is a true account of the period of the autobiographer. He has adopted impartial and balanced approach in depiction of his personality, particularly in relation to others. He is free from blemish of egotism. In simple and lucid style of story-telling he has presented himself. This autobiography is an amalgam of memoirs, diary, true autobiography and history from style point of view. This autobiography is not only the first autobiography of Punjabi language in prose but also the first successful autobiography of Punjabi language.

To sum up, Master Tara Singh's contribution to Punjabi literature is as much valuable as his multi-dimensional contribution to Punjabi society.