

ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

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Dedicated to Glorious Guru Nanak

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ਗੁਰਦੁਆਰਾ ਸ੍ਰੀ ਪੰਜਾ ਸਾਹਿਬ, ਪਾਕਿਸਤਾਨ  
GURDWARA SRI PANJA SAHIB, PAKISTAN

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## MEDITATION

To Remember God one does not have to hurt one's body



ਰਾਮਕਲੀ ਮਹਲਾ ੧ ਅਸਟਾਪਦੀਆ  
ੴ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਪ੍ਰਸਾਦਿ ॥

ਹਨੁ ਨਿਗੁਹੁ ਕਰਿ ਕਾਇਆ ਛੀਜੈ॥  
ਵਰਤੁ ਤਪਨੁ ਕਰਿ ਮਨੁ ਨਹੀ ਭੀਜੈ॥  
ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਸਰਿ ਅਵਰੁ ਨ ਪੂਜੈ॥੧॥  
ਗੁਰੁ ਸੇਵਿ ਮਨਾ ਹਰਿ ਜਨ ਸੰਗੁ ਕੀਜੈ॥  
ਜਮੁ ਜੇਦਾਰੁ ਜੋਹਿ ਨਹੀ ਸਾਕੈ ਸਰਪਨਿ ਡਸਿ ਨ ਸਕੈ  
ਹਰਿ ਕਾ ਰਸੁ ਪੀਜੈ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

[SGGS: 905]



### Translation\*

#### RAMKALI – M. I

Undertaking the ascetic practices is wasting one's body.  
Fasting and penance soften not the SOUL.  
No worship can compare remembering the ALMIGHTY (1)

O Man! Serve your GURU and seek the company of Godman.  
Sip His Name as your ale. Neither the demon of death nor  
the serpent of MAYA will dare you assail! (1) (Pause)

\* Translation: KS Duggal's "GURUVAK": The Word Divine.  
Courtesy: UBS Publisher's Distributors Ltd., 5, Ansari Road, New Delhi. 110002.



## Books & Bookshops Etc.

I. J. SINGH\*

This essay is a revised version of one written some years ago. The Big Apple – New York City’s Manhattan – now has a brand new gurdwara; I think it is the first community space for Sikhs in the city. My regret is that, having spent many decades in it, it happened after I moved out of the city.

Just two blocks from it stands a musty old building, with its best days behind it, with the modest logo: *J. Levine Co. 1890, Judaica*.

I entered and a whole new world opened.

Years ago, the New York Times (November 25, 1991) noted: “J. Levine & Company is not the typical old-fashioned religious bookstore. The showroom has marbled floors, polished chrome and glass cases with blue neon trim. On display are hand-painted mezuzahs, Batman and Ninja Turtle yarmulkes, and gold and silver menorahs.”

It’s a place where they still love books. *Arts Judaica* for all your Jewish needs. Danny Levine, the fourth-generation scion of the family now manages this richly embellished labor of love that claims to house the world’s largest collection of Judaic books and paraphernalia.

"I've found that people are looking today for presentation or atmosphere," said the owner. "His sales," he said, "had doubled over the last three years and went up 10 percent in one year." The store also carries religious articles and furniture for synagogues and operates a successful mail-order service. Apparently, diversification has made the store recession-proof.

The store is chock full of books on a variety of topics from the Jewish perspective. Themes range the gamut, from serious theology and cook books to gay and lesbian Jew, to intermarriage in Soviet Jewry, humor and photography. A new book on or about Judaism or Jewish life is published every month or less.

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\*Editor (Overseas) - The Sikh Review [Email: [lj Singh99@gmail.com](mailto:lj Singh99@gmail.com)]

The many “Christian Book & Gift” shops that dot the landscape of this country and continent are the Christian counterparts to J. Levine, the place for the Jewish world of arts.

Walk into any Christian book store; the kindness and smiles of the staff will overwhelm you. Piped in music greets you and soothes the soul; the aura instantaneously awakens the senses and transports you into a different universe with pleasant aromas that waft in to welcome you.

What better greeting for a visitor?

There are books and religious gift-items galore. Everything is tastefully displayed such that even “window shopping” becomes both pleasant and instructive. The plethora of medallions and artifacts can become preachy but one can find books on the variety of human experience and issues that confront us in life – from drug addiction, psychosocial and sexual issues to bioethical concerns or the history and interpretation of Christian doctrines like the import of Crucifixion. The staff is most helpful and knowledgeable. I briefly encountered such lasting ruminations not so long ago.

Now for a very different experience. Amidst a brutal winter, I was in India at a conference for a week. At my request the sponsors arranged my stay in the YMCA – right in the shadow of the historic Bangla Sahib Gurduara in Delhi. I wanted the proximity of the gurduara to be refreshing, energizing and available; Bangla sahib was barely a five-minute walk from the Y.

What caught me was the stark contrast in energy, attitude and worldview exemplified by the two adjoining centers – the Christian YMCA and the Sikh Gurduara Bangla Sahib. Keep in mind that my observations are a few years old.

Half a dozen YMCA or YWCA buildings abut the entrance to Bangla Sahib. Every Christian edifice displayed huge, larger than life billboards that you couldn’t miss if you tried. They advertised services – from the religious with cake and bake sales (I was there during the Xmas season) to books and lessons in sewing for women, ESL (English as a second language) classes, tutorials in mathematics and science, driving lessons and instruction in tennis, golf, swimming and self-defense; even computer skills could be learned for a nominal sum. Signs touted a safe modestly priced residence for single working women, irrespective of religion, caught in the din and hyper-madness of the big city.

And the books, both fiction and non-fiction, ranged from poetry to cooking and, of course, a large choice on or about Christianity; they were not just modestly priced but cheap, like 3 or 4 for a hundred Rupees — about two for a dollar.

Who wouldn't be attracted? To get customers a business has to first catch and hold the eye; religion is no different. And then the seller works on building loyalty and repeat business.

In contrast, Bangla Sahib had a special strongbox on display and a larger-than-life sign to solicit donations for gold plating of the building. True, that this may have been there only for a few weeks or so. There were billboards nearby within the gurduara premises – for prayer services at various *deraas* or other gurduaras for warding off evil spirits and bad omens. Heaven only knows what they have to with Sikhi.

There were a few private business stalls just outside the gurduara perimeter hawking CD's of hymns, breviaries (*gutkas*), patkas, kirpans, karras and other paraphernalia of a Sikh life. The space was small and crowded, the merchandize not attractively or openly displayed but piled on top of each other – only the sales staff could handle it; they alone knew where to find something. One had to know exactly what to want and ask for; there was no room to sit or browse. It is as if “window shopping” is an alien idea. User friendly these stalls are not.

As large and rich as it is Bangla Sahib has no bookshop in or near it but another massive historical gurduara nearby – Rakabganj -- does. So, I trekked out to that. It's also the headquarters of the Delhi Gurduara Management Committee -- an eye-catching, expensively constructed monument fashioned largely in marble and granite.

No signs directed me to the bookshop which is in the basement and reached via a wide swirling and majestic marble staircase. I don't know the amount of space allocated to the book shop in square feet but it is beyond impressive.

Books were stacked in one huge hall in several spacious aisles. But the lighting was so dim that reading seemed both difficult and unwelcome. Books were in cloth-wrapped bundles with a couple of copies from each bundle sitting atop of each package. I failed to detect any order to their display – by author, title or topic. One would be lucky to find something one is looking for.

In summary, the bookshop was housed in a poorly lit basement, with no cataloging. Pick a book and stroll around and you just won't remember where to put it back or pick another copy.

Only one man seemed to know where any and every book could be found, and that is a credit to his phenomenal memory and dedication. But pity the poor visitor if he saw a book somewhere and now wanted to revisit that area again.

*On content I would rate the shop near a ten on a scale from one to ten but in being user friendly I would be falling off the chart on the other end.*

I wish this bookshop was in a busy public space where Sikhs and Non-Sikhs congregate or travel about and, even more importantly, if it could become user friendly in presentation and organization. To start even minimal cataloguing and signage, a few comfortable chairs and good lighting would do wonders.

There is no functioning lending library in Bangla Sahib, Rakabganj or any other gurduara anywhere in this wide world that I know of. Dear readers, before you take umbrage at my angst keep in mind that the operative idea here is *“functioning lending library.”*

Parenthetically, I have to add that both these historic gurduaras do have a functioning and busy medical clinic. I also heard of a multi-million dollars plan for a huge state of the art medical facility near Rakabganj. I celebrate this much needed facility in today’s India.

North America boasts of over 200 gurduaras but I have yet to see one with a functioning library or a book shop. Yes, many gurduaras have a collection of books that remain uncatalogued and behind closed doors inaccessible to everyone except for an hour or two on Sundays. In time, most books slowly but surely disappear. And I wonder who selects the books; there appears to be little thinking directing their acquisition.

I am aware of only one facility that I would dub half-way decent book shop for Sikh literature and artifacts in North America and that is the *Sachha Sauda* in downtown Toronto – not attached physically to any gurduara.

Once again, because it has many books and other paraphernalia – the contents rate an “A” but not always the presentation. In user friendliness it pales. One has to cover one’s head to walk in and remove one’s shoes, even though it is a bookshop and not a gurduara.

Because of its location it can and does attract people off the street as any shop should — mostly Sikhs but a fair number of non-Sikhs, too. Unfortunately, its organization and lay out does not encourage the casual and the curious to walk in and just thumb through what is available. Window shopping is not the norm. *Sachha Sauda*, our one-of-a-kind book shop in North America, like J. Levine, has a healthy mail order business as well.

Mind you, and I want to emphasize this, with *Sachha Sauda* we have come a long way forward. It’s just that we have a longer way to go. My brief negative notations about it here are not meant to disparage or diminish it but to propel it further forward.

Keep in mind that just about every town in North America has a Christian bookstore. Also, don't forget that every two-bit town in this country has a secular book shop, and a lending library; practically all of them have a section on religion where Christian and Jewish literature is easily found. One can also find a book or two on Hinduism and Islam, with a growing collection on Buddhism, but it is as if Sikhism doesn't even exist.

The story of most public libraries is similar. They may stock a few books on Sikhism that are mostly dated or poor representations of Sikhi. We have, at times, undertaken to donate and deliver collections of often poorly chosen books to libraries. They were gratefully accepted and then a year or two later, junked. Why? Simply because they were taking valuable shelf space and showed no evidence of usage. No one ever took them out. Frankly our community does not make for habitual readers.

Considering that in my house books seem to grow like crab grass I should have heeded the dubious axiom that "books like friends should be few and well chosen." But I never have. Ergo, I thirst for the Minerva Book Shop in Shimla, India that whetted my appetite for books over 60 years ago, and sometimes I think longingly of the musty smells of the Strand in New York City that boasts of eight miles of books.

My mind went to a pithy and brief comment by Danny Levine, the manager of the 121 years old J. Levine Company with which I started this column today: "I want the store to be the Henri Bendel of Judaica," he said. "People should feel, wow, this is Judaism at its best."

What a wonderful idea!

Exactly as I envision how *Sachha Sauda* and the *Rakabgunj Book Shop* might be transformed with a bit of imagination and a modicum of effort – and soon. And then may they clone rapidly all over the world.

But should we not be working on awakening the love of books first? And where does that start except in a family and school? And secular schools are not going to encourage the reading of and about Sikhi, nor should we expect them to.

The easiest way to teach the love of reading is to show that you have that love of reading within you. The most difficult, almost impossible, task is to try to teach what one does not know, does not do, or does not value.

*Forget not, words come in books and that Sikhi is a way of life for which the Word is the eternal living Guru.*

□

## Receipe for Metamorphosis of Human Mind

*BHAI HARBANS LAL, PH.D.; D.LITT. \*\**

### Aim is Metamorphosis

Guru Nanak described Guru, a spiritual teacher who transforms humans into angels/gods. I mean a god, a tinier replica of God, a human god with all god-like characters from an angel. Such transformation is a metamorphosis.

The dictionary describes metamorphosis as a change in the form or the nature of a living entity, transforming that entity into an entirely distinct entity by a natural or a supernatural means. When done right, it is like a caterpillar turning into a butterfly. The transformation of a human into a god-like entity indeed will be such a change, and we call it a metamorphosis promised by Guru Nanak.

Guru Nanak wrote,

ਬਲਿਹਾਰੀ ਗੁਰ ਆਪਣੇ ਦਿਉਹਾੜੀ ਸਦ ਵਾਰ ॥ ਜਿਨਿ ਮਾਣਸ ਤੇ ਦੇਵਤੇ ਕੀਏ ਕਰਤ ਨ ਲਾਗੀ ਵਾਰ ॥  
[SGGS: 462]

*I am a sacrifice to my Guru (enlightener) a hundred times a day as my Guru makes angels out of humans by passing all delaying ploys.*

To further illustrate the heightened image of metamorphosis, Guru Granth gives the example of a goldsmith making a jewel out of an ordinary metal.

ਲੋਹਉ ਹੋਯਉ ਲਾਲੁ ਨਦਰਿ ਸਤਿਗੁਰੁ ਜਦਿ ਧਾਰੈ ॥ [SGGS: 1399]

*Iron is transformed into a gemstone when the True Guru bestows His Vision of Spirituality on the seeker.*

### Icon for Divine to Invoke Metamorphosis

To ease into the spiritual metamorphosis, Nanak prescribed a meditation on an icon. The icon he devised is ੴ Ek Onkar to define Divine. We may describe Nanak's Icon literary to mean the *One Virtual Reality manifested in numerous ways throughout all creations*. Nanak described this icon as:

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ਅਨਿਕ ਭਾਂਤ ਹੋਇ ਪਸਰਿਆ ਨਾਨਕ ਏਕੰਕਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 296]

*Ek Onkar manifests in the creations in so many ways, says Nanak.*

Guru Nanak further said that only the EkOnkar remains to realize when one wishes to resolve doubts. And, when all doubts extinguish, one attains the intended metamorphosis.

ਭ੍ਰਮ ਛੂਟੇ ਤੇ ਏਕੰਕਾਰ ॥ [SGGS: 736]

*When we get rid of all impeding doubts, what remains is the spirituality of EkOnkaar.*

### Meme Oriented Person Fails to Realize

A person imprisoned by the overpowering commercial and material inputs, such as criminal behaviors and profit-oriented minds, fails to realize the Divine virtues.

ਮਨਮੁਖੁ ਮੁਗਧੁ ਬੂਝੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਬਾਹਰਿ ਭਾਲਣਿ ਜਾਈ ॥ [SGGS: 754]

*The foolish self-willed manmukh does not comprehend the essence; she/he goes out searching for the Divine.*

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਨ ਚੀਨਈ ਮਨਿ ਮੂਰਖੁ ਗਾਵਾਰੁ ॥ [SGGS: 86]

*Those who do not recognize God within themselves- are wasteful and foolish!*

### Purpose of Realizing Divine Within

Relevant to human life, its inter-relationships, and its practices, Guru Nanak further highlighted that EkOnkar dwells within each heart and for a purpose. The purpose is twofold. The first one is to learn from Guru the Divine Virtus that lead the wisdom-oriented person towards inculcating the divine virtues within the human mind and human consciousness.

ਕਾਇਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਆਪੇ ਵਸੈ ਅਲਖੁ ਨ ਲਖਿਆ ਜਾਈ ॥ [SGGS: 754]

*The Divine itself dwells within the body; It is invisible and may not be so realized.*

ਕਾਇਆ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਜਗਜੀਵਨ ਦਾਤਾ ਵਸੈ ਸਭਨਾ ਕਰੇ ਪ੍ਰਤਿਪਾਲਾ ॥ [SGGS: 754]

*The Life of the World, the Great Giver Divine, dwells within the body; It is the custodian of all.*

Guru Nanak's purpose of stressing the Divine within the above-described way was to lead his followers towards human life's real goal. The purpose was to Realize and instill the Divine within.

ਮਨ ਤੂੰ ਜੋਤਿ ਸਰੂਪੁ ਹੈ ਆਪਣਾ ਮੂਲੁ ਪਛਾਣੁ ॥ [SGGS: 441]

*O my mind, you are the embodiment of the Divine Light - recognize your bases.*

Then, the purpose was to emulate God by living a life that actively expresses divine attributes in everyday expressions, resulting in the desired human actions. Towards this end, Guru wrote.

ਗੁਣ ਸੰਗ੍ਰਹਿ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਰਿਦੈ ਨਿਵਾਸੀ ਭਗਤਿ ਰਤੀ ਹਰਖਾਈ ॥੫॥ [SGGS: 1273]

*The seeker enshrines God within her heart and thereby gathers divine virtues imbued with devotion and achieves contentment.*

Should a person not understand such a purpose of life, such a person would be a fool.

ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਅਵਿਨਾਸੀ ਮਨ ਮਹਿ ਲੇਖੁ ॥੨॥ [SGGS: 190]

You may realize the immortal Divine within your consciousness.

Such is the greatness of a true Guru that one realizes the Divine within one's heart through the Guru's teachings.

ਅੰਤਰਿ ਬ੍ਰਹਮੁ ਪਛਾਣਿਆ ਗੁਰ ਕੀ ਵਡਿਆਈ ॥੭॥ [SGGS: 425]

*They realize God within their hearts through the glorious greatness of the Guru.*

### **Emulating the Divine Characteristics – A Conclusion**

The Divine characteristics that Guru Nanak identified for emulation within the human mind are described in Guru Granth's commencing verse and is a topic by itself that I will discuss in future articles. Here I may only list those characters.

They are:

1. *Become Like the Creator!*
2. *Recognize Eternal Identity!*
3. *Cultivate Creative Personality!*
4. *Radiate Fearless Behaviors!*
5. *Consider No One As Enemy!*
6. *Engage in Timeless Actions!*
7. *Let No Impact of Consequences!*
8. *Cultivate the Eternal Self!*
9. *Be Thankful to The Eternal Wisdom!*



## Light the Lamp of Enlightenment

*BHUPINDER SINGH\**

The earthen lamp (*Deeva*) today has become antiquated, thanks to the invention of electricity. Still one time of the year during Diwali, it comes back as a gentle reminder of its earlier thriving heydays. But 500 years back it was ubiquitous, as well as a daily essential, providing illumination after darkness. The continued fast pace of technological advancement is soon going to relegate this icon of illumination to displayed objects in the museums. Imagine, how the coming generation, not exposed to *Deeva* could relate to metaphor of *Deeva*, when trying to explain something of significance. So, this Diwali time let us explore the metaphor of *Deeva* to get the insight that Guru Ji is sharing with us. We still have many alive who had exposure to *Deeva* in real life and can relate to it.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji has shared the significance of light of the *Deeva* in this shabad, and how it dispels darkness. Guru Ji uses the metaphor of lamp, to talk about the lamp of wisdom within:

ਦੀਵਾ ਬਲੈ ਅੰਧੇਰਾ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਬੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਮਤਿ ਪਾਪਾ ਖਾਇ ॥

*“Deeva balai andheraa jai. Bedh paath mut paapaa khai.”* [SGGS: 791]

**Translation:** (Just as) when the lamp is lit, the darkness is dispelled; (similarly) reading the scriptures (not just the Veda’s text perse, but the life molded by them) sinful intellect is purged.

Guru Nanak Dev Ji’s observation is of a common fact that the darkness is dispelled with light, and it does not have an independent existence of its own. In fact, the darkness is absence of light. When the light enters that space, the phenomenon of dispelling the darkness is automatic. But what type of darkness is being referred to by Guru Ji here? Darkness is not physical absence of light, but it is greed, covetousness, ignorance, egotism, hypocrisy, lustfulness, selfish-willed, mental delusion etc. In short that life is an unenlightened existence.

In another place in Sri Guru Granth Sahib, Guru Ji has compared the life molded from attentive study of spiritual scriptures to that lamp of enlightenment. Guru Ji says:

ਦੀਵਾ ਮੇਰਾ ਏਕੁ ਨਾਮੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਵਿਚਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਤੇਲੁ ॥ ਉਨਿ ਚਾਨਣਿ ਓਹੁ ਸੋਖਿਆ ਚੁਕਾ ਜਮ ਸਿਉ ਮੇਲੁ ॥੧॥

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*“Deeva meraa aek naam dhukh vich paiaa tel. Aun chaanan oh sokhiaa chookaa jam siau mel.”* [SGGS: 358]

**Translation:** The *Naam* alone is my lamp; I have put the oil of (worldly) suffering into it. Its flame (which provides light in this world and the after world) has dried up this oil and I have escaped my meeting with the Messenger of Death. [1]

Guru Ji says his lamp is “*Naam*”. “*Naam*” is the constant awareness of the Divine presence of the Creator in the creation. The *modus operandi* of *Naam* are that with it the sins in life are not committed. The consequence of its light shining within is the meeting with messengers of death does not take place. This aspect is not shared by our schools, higher educational institutions, parents, society or media. That unique awareness is only developed through life molded from the deep study of scriptures. Which in turn consumed all the sufferings, just as the wick soaked in oil consumed it, in the process of providing light. Imagine, with “*Naam*” all the sufferings are gone. The sufferings in life were stoically accepted, and that in turn become the impetus for spiritual growth. The bigger benefit is that the constantly wavering mind is stilled and is not affected even with worldly enticements or threats. Let us ask Guru Ji to further clarify on the type of fuel he is referring to and explain about the wick as well. Guru Ji says:

ਪੋਥੀ ਪੁਰਾਣ ਕਮਾਈਐ ॥ ਭਉ ਵਟੀ ਇਤੁ ਤਨਿ ਪਾਈਐ ॥ ਸਚੁ ਬੂਝਣੁ ਆਣਿ ਜਲਾਈਐ ॥੨॥

*“Pothee puraan kamaieeai. Bhau va Tee it tan paieeai. Sach boojhan aan jalaieeai.”* [SGGS: 25]

**Translation:** Let the implementation of the instructions of your prayer book be the oil and let the reverent fear of God be the wick for the lamp of this body. Light this lamp with the understanding of Truth. [2]

Here Guru Ji is making it clear that scriptures are not merely to be read but internalized and implemented in life. The reverent fear acts as the wick of this body-lamp. So:

Lamp = Human Body

Oil (Fuel) = meditation and reflection on the scriptures removed suffering/worries

Wick = Reverent Fear

When this lamp is lighted within, that will make one a “*Brahmgyani*” or “*Gurmukh*”, who is one with God, while alive. However, there is a strong impediment to its implementation in life. That hurdle is attachment to the illusion or “*Maya*”. The phenomenal world in which everything is perishable yet appears surreal, enticing and lasting. It attracts us making us attached to its various forms. As this illusion is perceived by mind alone, so in other words mind is “*Maya*”. What is the ‘*modus operandi*’ of *Maya* is clarified by Guru Ji as:

ਏਹ ਮਾਇਆ ਜਿਤੁ ਹਰਿ ਵਿਸਰੈ ਮੋਹੁ ਉਪਜੈ ਭਾਉ ਦੂਜਾ ਲਾਇਆ ॥

*“Eh maiaa jit har visarai moh upajai bhaau dhoojaa laiaa.”* [SGGS: 921]

**Translation:** This is Maya, by which (1) "Hari" (Mool) is forsaken; (2) (worldly) attachment is born, and (3) the love of duality wells up within.

Anything that takes us away from the remembrance of the Creator is Maya. When the camouflage of “Maya” is removed from creation, then its True essence is witnessed and experienced. Gurbani says that in order to drive away “Maya” the reverent fear needs to be inculcated. It is the fear that all my wealth, assets, power, position, family –wife, children, parents, relatives and friends cannot help me there in the world after. The fear, that the inaction or inertia on my part can make me lose my close relationship with my Guru. The fear, that the rebirth in human form may not be a future feasibility. This fear gives birth to a new awareness, which can drive away all other worldly fears. These fears are going to make the seeker bold, fearless to the world. Guru Ji says that without this reverent fear, no one ever crosses across the world-ocean.

ਭੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਕੋਇ ਨ ਲੰਘਸਿ ਪਾਰਿ ॥

*“Bhaai bin koi na langhas paar.”* [SGGS: 151]

**Translation:** Without the Fear (of God), no one crosses over the world-ocean.

This reverent fear will in turn give birth to the love for “Naam”. Guru Ji has shared that aspect in these words:

ਭੈ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਤਿ ਨ ਹੋਵਈ ਨਾਮਿ ਨ ਲਗੈ ਪਿਆਰੁ ॥ ਸਤਿਗੁਰਿ ਮਿਲਿਐ ਭਉ ਉਪਜੈ ਭੈ ਭਾਇ ਰੰਗੁ ਸਵਾਰਿ ॥

*“Bhai bin bhagat na hoviee naam na lagai piaar. Satgur miliaai bhau uoopajai bhaai bhai rang savaar.”* [SGGS: 788]

**Translation:** Without the Fear of God, there is no devotional worship, and no love for the Naam, the Name of the Lord. Meeting with the True Guru, the reverent Fear of God wells up, and one is embellished with the Fear and the Love of God.

When the lamp of wisdom is lighted within, its light, its illumination will shine all around dispelling darkness. Thus, darkness which has no independent existence of its own makes the absence of light as the prop for its existence. When that lamp is lighted, it will not be extinguished as the fuel supply will be uninterrupted. All the darkness of the world fails in anyway impacts its light. Guru Ji has said that when that light is illumined, it can even dim the other light source. It is just like that the light of sun so overwhelming that even the moon in the sky is invisible.

ਉਗਵੈ ਸੂਰੁ ਨ ਜਾਪੈ ਚੰਦੁ ॥ ਜਹ ਗਿਆਨ ਪ੍ਰਗਾਸੁ ਅਗਿਆਨੁ ਮਿਟੈਤੁ ॥

*“Ugavaai soor na jaapai chand. Jeh giaan pragaas agiaan miTant.”* [SGGS: 791]

**Translation:** (Just as) when the sun rises, the moon succumbs (by becoming invisible).(Similarly,) wherever spiritual wisdom glows, ignorance is dispelled.

Here, Guru Ji has given example of the sun to explain a phenomenon and its effect. When the spiritual (divine) wisdom appears, the mental ignorance is dispelled, along with all its hold and power. This is the ignorance which gave birth to the attachment to the false or perishable, and greed which was its collateral effect. Now, let us see what Guru Ji is saying in the subsequent lines of the shabad:

ਬੇਦ ਪਾਠ ਸੰਸਾਰ ਕੀ ਕਾਰ ॥ ਪੜ੍ਹਿ ਪੜ੍ਹਿ ਪੰਡਿਤ ਕਰਹਿ ਬੀਚਾਰ ॥

*“Bedh paaTh sansaar kee kaar. PaRi(h) paRi(h) pundit kareh beechaar.”* [SGGS: 791]

**Translation:** Reading the Vedas (has) become the world's occupation; the Pundits read them, study them and hold discourses on them.

Guru Ji is talking here about the scripture of Vedas which are read as an academic endeavor, and then the debates on their in-depth understandings amongst the scholars ensues. But this mental acrobatics is meaningless exhibition of academic acumen as no transformation has taken place within. Essentially Guru Ji is not in a favor of such scholastic endeavors. For Guru Ji, study should bring the change within.

ਬਿਨੁ ਬੂਝੇ ਸਭ ਹੋਇ ਖੁਆਰ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਉਤਰਸਿ ਪਾਰਿ ॥੧॥

*“Bin boojhe sabh hoi khuaar. Nanak gurmukh utaras paar.”* [SGGS: 791]

**Translation:** Without the understanding and transformation brought by it, all are ruined. O Nanak, the Gurmukh is carried across (as with their new awareness they do not tread the path of sins). [1]

Those who turned their face towards Guru by becoming Gurmukh and implemented Guru Ji's teachings in their lives are embellished. When the lamp is lighted, all plans, actions are weighed in under its light as a result of it sins are not committed out of ignorance. Thus, light of scriptures destroyed the evil intellect. But let us try to find what those Gurmukhs acquired when this lamp was lit within. Guru Nanak Ji says:

ਪਾਇਆ ਰਤਨੁ ਘਰਾਹੁ ਦੀਵਾ ਬਾਲਿਆ ॥

*“Paiaa rattan gharaahu deeva baaliaa.”* [SGGS: 149]

**Translation:** I have found the jewel (of Naam) within the home of my own self; the lamp within has been lit.

When that lamp of “Naam” is lighted within, then one meets the Lord within as Guru Ji shares with us:

ਕਰਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਸਾਹਿਬ ਤਉ ਮਿਲੈ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*“Kar chaanan sahib tau milai. 1.Rahaau.”* [SGGS: 25]

**Translation:** Light it (within) and meet your Lord and Master. [1]Pause.

When the lamp of awareness is lit within, the meeting and merger with God has taken place; nothing else is left to be accomplished in human life. The achievement means living a life cognizant of the constant awareness of the Creator. This is the true lamp or a compass which will keep everything in life pointing north or Holy principled. The following steps have taken to get here:

1. Study of Scriptures
2. Resulted in an Awareness of presence of consciousness in entire creation
3. Implementations of Do's and Don'ts in life from study of Scriptures
4. Inculcated healthy fear of Divine
5. Lifestyle transformed from indulgence to detachment
6. Life became principled and dedicated to selfless service

The devotee is honored in the house of the Lord with His grace becoming one with Him. When the spirit is awakened in life, the life become a principled life. It is Deewali not just on a particular day in a year, but every day, every moment, every action is principled. All the decisions in life are now made with that illumination within. A vision expansion has taken place within and now boundary of self is stretched out beyond the skin boundary to encompass the entire creation. That is the merger with the divine. Guru Ji explains:

ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਘਟਿ ਚਾਨਣੁ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਆਪੁ ਪਛਾਣਿ ਮਿਲੈ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਸੋਇ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥

*"Gurmukh bhagat ghaT channan hoi. Aap pachhaan milai prabh soi. 1. Rahaau."*

[SGGS: 364]

**Translation:** The Gurmukh has the light of devotional worship within his heart. Understanding his own self, he meets God. [1] Pause.

When that achievement has taken place, the lamp has been lighted within and nothing else is left to be achieved in life. That life is truly a successful life. □

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## Guru Nanak's Philosophy of Social Change

DR. DEVINDER PAL SINGH\*

Guru Nanak has a unique position amongst the spiritual leaders, reformers and saints of India. His teachings have universal appeal and are suitable for all ages. The impact of his teachings on Indian society has been incredible. He travelled far and wide to enlighten humanity and administered his message of love, peace, social justice, religious toleration, universal fellowship and the devotion of God.

He was a great thinker, a mystic and a revolutionary social reformer. In addition, he was a poet and scholar of high calibre, a person of extraordinary foresight and a scientific attitude. Guru Nanak's philosophy of social change based on his life and works is described herein.

### Contemporary Conditions

Guru Nanak's advent was a time of transition and turmoil in Indian society. After a short and inglorious rule of the Sayyids, the Lodis established themselves at Delhi. Bahlol Lodi, the founder of the Lodi dynasty, tried to revive the power and prestige of the sultanate. But Sikandar Lodi tried to make the state theocratic. He officially imposed Islam on the Hindu subjects. He followed the policy of persecution and destroyed temples in most parts of north India.

Ibrahim Lodi was a weak and dissolute king. The vain and arrogant ways of the sultan excited rebellion all around. The whole of Delhi kingdom was in utter confusion and disorder. Corruption was rife, and degradation and treachery stalked openly. Honour, justice and position were bought and sold. The rulers of the land were sunk in lust and debauchery. Guru Nanak, who was alive to the difficulties of the times, bitterly criticized the contemporary administrative machinery and the ruling class who had no love for justice and fair play. He has described his times most tellingly,

ਕਲਿ ਕਾਤੀ ਰਾਜੇ ਕਾਸਾਈ ਧਰਮੁ ਪੰਖ ਕਰਿ ਉਡਰਿਆ ॥ ਕੂੜੁ ਅਮਾਵਸ ਸਚੁ ਚੰਦ੍ਰਮਾ ਦੀਸੈ ਨਾਹੀ ਕਹ ਚੜਿਆ ॥

*Kal kati rajai qasayee, dharam pankh kar udarya, Kood amavas sach chandrima, disai nahi keh chadhya.*

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It is a murderous age, the Kings are butchers, and righteousness has taken on wings and disappeared. In the black night of falsehood, The moon of truth is nowhere to be seen. (M. 1, SGGS: 145)

Guru Nanak condemned the corrupt ways of the administration as vehemently.

ਅੰਧੀ ਰਯਤਿ ਗਿਆਨ ਵਿਹੁਣੀ ਭਾਹਿ ਭਰੇ ਮੁਰਦਾਰੁ ॥

*Andhi reat gjaan vihuni bhahi bhare murdar.*

The blind (ignorant) subjects are burning in the fire of official corruption.

(M. 1, SGGS: 469)

ਰਾਜਾ ਨਿਆਉ ਕਰੇ ਹਥਿ ਹੋਇ ॥ ਕਹੈ ਖੁਦਾਇ ਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਕੋਇ ॥

*Raja niauo kare hath hoae. Kahai khudaie na manai koie.*

Even the king does not accept the petition unless the petition bribes. If someone petitions only in the name of God (justice), nobody listens. (M.1, SGGS: 350)

Guru Nanak found that the people were divided and drifting culturally away from each other, viz. the Hindu society representing Indian culture, and the Muslim society representing the Semitic culture. Muslims, being conquerors, had the upper hand. The Hindus were given the status of the Zimmis (i.e. the people living under contract as second rate citizens) of the state). To their Muslim sovereigns, they had to pay many kinds of discriminatory taxes, such as Jiziya and pilgrimage tax, etc.

The Hindus contemptuously looked upon the Muslims as malechhas, and the Muslims, in turn, looked upon the Hindus as infidels or kafirs. In Hindu society, the idea of a common brotherhood was lost with the institution of castes. The Brahmin considered himself supreme over Kshatriyas, Vaishyas and Shudras. Dvijas highly exploited the Shudra. Muslim society was also divided into two main classes based on religion. Some were Shiyas, and others were Sunnis. Religion had degenerated into rituals and formalism.

The most fateful event that occurred during Guru Nanak's lifetime was the invasion of India by Babur in 1521 AD. Guru Nanak has described the suffering of the people during this invasion with deep emotion. He has uttered some of the most touching verses, which are collectively known as Babar Vani. Guru Nanak is most likely the first medieval Indian saint to condemn war and denounce exploitation as grave social maladies. In this period of religious and cultural divisions, he did his best to encourage the feeling of religious toleration, cultural coexistence and universal fellowship. He proposed newer ideals and revolutionary concepts to promote self-confidence among the masses. The most important of such ideas was the concept of Universal Fellowship and Equality.

## Universal Fellowship and Equality

During Guru Nanak's time, Indian society had two main divisions based on religion - Hindus and Muslims. As per Sikh tradition, Guru Nanak put forward a revolutionary concept and said: '*Na Hum Hindu na Musalmaan, Allah Ram ke pind praan.*' By propagating this ideal, he tried to convey that none is born as a Hindu or a Musalman; instead, all are children of the same Creator. Some call Him 'Ram' while others call Him 'Rahim.' To break the barriers' caste and class divisions' of Hindu religion and 'shrah' and 'shariat' of Islam, Guru Nanak's propagation of this revolutionary concept was a marvellous effort in the right direction. Elaborating on his new idea, he said,

ਸਭ ਮਹਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਜੋਤਿ ਹੈ ਜੋਇ ॥

*Sabh meh jot jot hai soie.*

The Divine essence (of the Creator) is within everyone. (M. 1, SGGS: 13)

He explained that as the same spirit is prevailing in all, it is not good to divide people as Hindus and Musalmans. All of us, being children of the same Creator, are equal. No one is Highborn or Lowborn. Instead, one's deeds determine whether one is good or bad. He emphasized that caste, class and religious divisions are all human made. It does not make any difference whether one is born here or anywhere. None is born 'Momin' or 'Kafir', 'Brahmin' or 'Shudra.' All belong to the same class - human beings. Hence all are equal. Thus he dared to challenge the established unfair practices of his contemporary society and propagated the message of universal fellowship and equality. To provide a practical shape to these ideas for implementation among people, he conceived the institutions of *Sangat*, *Pangat* and *Langar*.

### Sangat, Pangat and Langar

He preached these ideas among people and followed these in his life, thus setting an example for others to emulate. To remove the yawning gap among the rich and poor and discrimination between (so-called) highborn and lowborn, he founded the concepts of '*Sangat*' (religious congregation), '*Pangat*' (Sitting in a row at the same level) and '*Langar*' (Community kitchen). These symbols of Universal fellowship and equality - '*Sangat*', '*Pangat*', and '*Langar*' traditions are still prevalent in the Sikh society. There is no discrimination based on caste, colour, or creed in the concept of '*Sangat*', '*Pangat*', and '*Langar*'. There is no special treatment for the high-born (e.g. Brahmin) or the rich. There

is no separate or lowly position for the poor or the lowborn (e.g. Shudra). Guru Nanak started this tradition first at Kartarpur (now in Pakistan). Later on, the other Sikh Gurus not only carried on this tradition successfully but also enlarged it. To teach the spirit of equality among all, they built common wells (*baulies*) and water tanks (sarovars). They also got the *Dharamshalas* (prayer houses) constructed. The presence of baulies, sarovars and Gurudwaras at Goindwal Saheb, Tarn Taran, Amritsar and Anandpur Saheb, conforms to this revolutionary concept of Sikh gurus and are the symbol of human equality.

Guru Nanak dared to challenge the human distinctions based on discrimination, unfair practices and superstitions. He also proposed and implemented a successful program (i.e. *Sangat*, *Pangat* and '*Langar*') to eliminate such malpractices in society. These facts aptly reflect Guru Nanak's philosophy of social change. □

### The Seeker's Path: An Interpretation of Guru Nanak's Japji, by Sohan Singh

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## Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji - The veil of Hindostan or of entire cosmos

*DR HARDIAL SINGH DHILLON, PH.D\**

It is often said that ‘ਹੋਨਹਾਰ ਵਿਰਵਾਨ ਕੇ ਹੋਤ ਚਿਕਨੇ ਪਾਤ॥ ’ (the supreme virtues of great men are apparent in childhood). Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji was one such personality who, began to show such signs from an early age. Being the youngest child of Guru Hargobind Ji and Mata Nanaki Ji, his physique was that of an athlete, long strong arms, and a broad chest. Moreover, he showed love for the long jump, and horse riding as well.

Righteousness and life of practicality were also inherent traits to Guru Ji. When once asked by a mother of a childhood friend to advise him to stop eating jaggery, the reply was to come after few days. After this time, he said, ‘O, my friend! Please stop eating an excessive amount of jaggery.’ Hearing this, the mother said that you could have said this then, to which the reply was, ‘at that time, like him, I too was also eating jaggery. However, now that I have stopped my habit, I can advise him’.

When it came to serving, he did so with generosity, being right at the forefront. Once, he saw a child whose clothes were all tattered, and he was crying for a decent dress. So Guru Ji removed his coat and gave it to him. When Mata Nanaki Ji asked, ‘Son! What is this?’ The reply was, ‘Mum, you would buy me a new one, but no one would give him one.’ (Satbir Singh, 1988). It is also on record that well before Guru Gobind Singh’s time (about whom we know his position about tobacco), Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji too had warned his Sikhs at Barna Desh, about tobacco (not to touch, grow or smoke it. This evil had entered India during the reign of Emperor Jahangir about 1600 A.D.

ਗੰਧਾ ਧੂਮ ਬੰਸ ਤੇ ਤਿਆਗੋ ॥ ਅਤਿ ਗਿਲਾਨ ਇਸ ਤੇ ਨਰ ਭਾਗੋ ॥ (ibid, 318)

He, very earlier on, showed signs of Lord’s devotion as well. It is said that Guru Ji once described the stages of devotion as ‘firstly, to abandon every single notion that erases the presence of the Lord from one’s conscience; and secondly, to devote thyself so dearly to the Lord that all else is forgotten.’ (ibid, 310).

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Guru Ji's life has been a real struggle against the falsehood and ritualistic life of the masses at large. Apart from his personal life (from adversity at the time of his Gur-gadi, with Dhir Mal et al.), he also spent time in settling the political disputes (between Raja Ram Singh and Raja Chakar Dhvij in Assam, in 1670) and further the cause of Sikhi of Guru Nanak. His compositions include 59 shabads and 57 shlokas in 15 different Raags. He was the only one to use Raag Jaijvanti. All the bani is entirely in Hindi, with no word from Persian or Arabic. There is no mention of Islam or Islamic traditions anywhere. The entire precept revolves around the well-known tales of Daropati, Gajj, Ajamel and Dhruv Bhagat etc. Sahib Singh, (1998).

ਦੁਖ ਹਰਤਾ ਹਰਿ ਨਾਮੁ ਪਛਾਨੋ ॥ ਅਜਾਮਲੁ ਗਨਿਕਾ ਜਿਹ ਸਿਮਰਤ ਮੁਕਤ ਭਏ ਜੀਅ ਜਾਨੋ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ ਗਜ  
ਕੀ ਤ੍ਰਾਸ ਮਿਟੀ ਛਿਨਹੁ ਮਹਿ ਜਬ ਹੀ ਰਾਮੁ ਬਖਾਨੋ ॥ ਨਾਰਦ ਕਹਤ ਸੁਨਤ ਧੂਅ ਬਾਰਿਕ ਭਜਨ ਮਾਹਿ ਲਪਟਾਨੋ ॥੧॥  
[Raag Bilaval M:9,SGGS: 830]

O, brother! Remain attached with the *Naam* of the Lord. This *Naam* is the destroyer of all sorrows. Through the remembrance of this *Naam*, (both) Ajamel and Ganika were freed from vices. You too, in thy heart, continue to become acquainted with such Nam of the Lord II1II Pause II O, brother! When the elephant uttered the Nam of the Lord, its calamity too instantly disappeared. By listening to the precept of (Sage) Narad, the child Dhruv became absorbed in Lord's devotion II1II...II2II1II

His bani, time and again, depicts the world and worldly life as unstable, transient and mortal.

ਮਨ ਰੇ ਸਾਚਾ ਗਹੋ ਬਿਚਾਰਾ ॥ ਰਾਮ ਨਾਮ ਬਿਨੁ ਮਿਥਿਆ ਮਾਨੋ ਸਗਰੋ ਇਹੁ ਸੰਸਾਰਾ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥  
[Jatshiri M: 9, SGGS: 703]

O, my mind! Enshrine this eternal maxim (within thee) – except Lord's Naam, know that the entire world is perishable II1II Pause II...II2II3II

ਜਿਉ ਸੁਪਨਾ ਅਰੁ ਪੇਖਨਾ ਐਸੇ ਜਗ ਕਉ ਜਾਨਿ ॥ ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸਾਚੇ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਬਿਨੁ ਭਗਵਾਨ ॥੨੩॥  
[M: 9, SGGS: 1427]

O, Nanak, say: (O, brother!) As (when one has) dream (in sleep), and (in that dream many objects) are seen, likewise, is this world. Except for Lord's Naam, no other (visible objects in the world) shall accompany you forever II23II

To Guru ji, those relations for whom we would do anything in the world, while care and love for them were justified, the attachment was not; at the time of demise, nothing accompanied the being. Instead, devotion to the Lord is the only thing that is regarded as being real.

ਧਨੁ ਦਾਰਾ ਸੰਪਤਿ ਸਗਲ ਜਿਨਿ ਅਪੁਨੀ ਕਰਿ ਮਾਨਿ ॥ ਇਨ ਮੈ ਕਛੁ ਸੰਗੀ ਨਹੀ ਨਾਨਕ ਸਾਚੀ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੫॥

[M: 9, SGGS: 1426]

O, Nanak, say: O, brother! Do not regard the wealth, wife and all property as being owned by thee. Know this to be certain that amongst these, none is thy (real) companion ॥5॥

ਨਿਜ ਕਰਿ ਦੇਖਿਓ ਜਗਤੁ ਮੈ ਕੋ ਕਾਹੂ ਕੋ ਨਾਹਿ ॥ ਨਾਨਕ ਥਿਰੁ ਹਰਿ ਭਗਤਿ ਹੈ ਤਿਹ ਰਾਖੇ ਮਨ ਮਾਹਿ ॥੪੮॥

[M: 9, SGGS: 1429]

O, Nanak! (Say, O, brother!) (So far, I) continued to witness the world as of mine, (but) no one (here belongs to anyone) forever. (Only) Lord's devotion is eternal. O, brother! Continue to enshrine this (devotion of the Lord) in (thy) mind ॥48॥

The cycle of weal and woes is described as normal through which the Lord arranges its affairs. By ignoring worldly honours and disgrace, being praised or denigrated, one should seek the state of equipoise, where sensualities have no effect.

ਸੁਖੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਦੋਨੋ ਸਮ ਕਰਿ ਜਾਨੈ ਅਉਰੁ ਮਾਨੁ ਅਪਮਾਨਾ ॥ ਹਰਖ ਸੋਗ ਤੇ ਰਹੈ ਅਤੀਤਾ ਤਿਨਿ ਜਗਿ ਤਤੁ ਪਛਾਨਾ ॥੧॥  
ਉਸਤਤਿ ਨਿੰਦਾ ਦੋਉ ਤਿਆਗੈ ਖੋਜੈ ਪਦੁ ਨਿਰਬਾਨਾ ॥ ਜਨ ਨਾਨਕ ਇਹੁ ਖੇਲੁ ਕਠਨੁ ਹੈ ਕਿਨਹੂੰ ਗੁਰਮੁਖਿ ਜਾਨਾ ॥੨॥੧॥

[Raag Gaurhi Mahala 9; SGGS: 219]

(O, saintly folks!) The one who treats comforts and sorrows alike, and regards honour and disgrace (taunts) to be alike (too), and the one who remains indifferent about joys and sorrows – (i.e. when happy, avoids being hankered and at sadness, avoids being worried) such being has realised the meaning of life in the world ॥1॥ O, saintly folks! Such being has found the essence who) neither praises nor slanders anyone, and who is always in pursuit of a state (of mind) where one is not enticed by sensuality. (But) O, Nanak! So arduous is this game (of life to play and) rare is the individual who, in the sanctuary of the Guru, succeeds ॥2॥1॥

So, enticement had to be forsaken at all levels.

Since the Akal Purakh equally abides in everyone, the foe and friend should be treated alike. There should be no malice, simply because of who one is. Only such a person is truly enlightened, who neither coerces anyone nor is enslaved by threats.

ਹਰਖੁ ਸੋਗੁ ਜਾ ਕੈ ਨਹੀ ਬੈਰੀ ਮੀਤ ਸਮਾਨਿ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਮੁਕਤਿ ਤਾਹਿ ਤੈ ਜਾਨਿ ॥੧੫॥ ਭੈ ਕਾਹੂ ਕਉ ਦੇਤੁ ਨਹਿ ਨਹਿ ਭੈ ਮਾਨਤੁ ਆਨ ॥ ਕਹੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਸੁਨਿ ਰੇ ਮਨਾ ਗਿਆਨੀ ਤਾਹਿ ਬਖਾਨਿ ॥੧੬॥ [M:9; SGGS:1427]

O, Nanak, say: O, (my) mind! The being whose mind is undeterred by the joys and sorrows, for whom friends and foes are alike, know (for sure) that such being is freed from the attachment of maya ॥15॥ Nanak, says: O, (my) mind! The being who neither threatens anyone nor fears any, know such being to be truly living a life of spirituality ॥16॥



**Historical Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib & Gurdwara Rakab Ganj Sahib (Delhi, India) where Guru Teg Bahadur Ji was Martyred (beheaded) and cremated in Nov.1675.**

So much so, Guru Ji, practically demonstrated every single word of his composition. When it came to saving the lives of those who approached him for help. Regardless of who they were or their belief, Guru Ji, voluntarily championed their cause, and single handily challenged, without any weapons, the Mughal Empire in Delhi, and gave the ultimate sacrifice of his life. Guru Gobind Singh Ji describes it as:

ਤਿਲਕ ਜੰਤੂ ਰਾਖਾ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਤਾਕਾ ॥ ਕੀਨੋ ਬਡੋ ਕਲੂ ਮਹਿ ਸਾਕਾ ॥ ਸਾਧਨਿ ਹੇਤਿ ਇਤੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਕਰੀ ॥ ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰ ਸੀ ਨ ਉਚਰੀ ॥ ਧਰਮ ਹੇਤ ਸਾਕਾ ਜਿਨਿ ਕੀਆ ॥ ਸੀਸ ਦੀਆ ਪਰੁ ਸਿਰਰੁ ਨ ਦੀਆ ॥ (Bachitar-natak, DG, 54)

Teg Bahadur broke the mortal vessel of his body by striking it at the head of Emperor of Delhi and retreated to his 'Original Abode,' the Lord. Truly incomparable is this deed which he did to assert and protect three basic human rights. Firstly, liberty to worship; secondly, to uphold the dignity of every person's private and personal point of contact with God and his right to observe *righteousness*, what s/he conceives as basic principles of cosmic or individual existence; and thirdly, to uphold every person's inalienable right to pursue his/her own vision of happiness and self-fulfilment.' (Kapur Singh, (1992)

And, so, Guru Tegh Bahadur was publicly beheaded in Delhi on 11th November 1675, in Chandani Chowk, Delhi, where now a Gurdwara Sis Ganj Sahib stands to commemorate his sacrifice and those of his brave Sikhs. Indeed a remarkable sacrifice for the concept of 'live and let live', unparalleled in world history. It is so belittling to say that Guru Ji was a veil of Hindostan. Kavi Senapati describes it as,

ਪ੍ਰਗਟ ਭਏ ਗੁਰੂ ਤੇਗ ਬਹਾਦਰ ॥ ਸਗਲ ਸ੍ਰਿਸਟ ਪੈ ਜਾ ਕੀ ਚਾਦਰ ॥ ਕਰਮ ਧਰਮ ਕੀ ਜਿਨਿ ਪਤਿ ਰਾਖੀ ॥ ਅਟਲ ਕਰੀ ਕਲਿਯੁਗ ਮੈਂ ਸਾਖੀ ॥੧੪॥ (Shri Gur-shoba Granth). This is supported by a renowned historian

and scholar, Principal Satbir Singh, as 'ਸਗਲ ਸਿ੍ਰਸਟ ਪੈ ਢਾਪੀ ਚਾਦਰ'] - a veil of the entire cosmos. Satbir Singh, (1998).

His verses and salokas reflect that Guru Ji was highly patient, forgiving, fearless, steadfast, and had leadership qualities unparalleled in the world, ultimately voluntarily sacrificing his own life for the freedom of all. His composition in Shiri Guru Granth Sahib is highly revered, particularly the salokas which appear in the final concluding part and are sung by all. It is a pity that even such a saintly Guru's Gurudwara was not spared from being stoned in Delhi in November 1984 by a small minority of those for whom it laid down his life. Self-less leadership, like Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji, is needed more than ever today to the Sikhs and the world at large. □

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## Peek in some of the life aspects of Guru Nanak

*Tarsem Singh\**

As per one of the *Vars* (chapters) of Bhai Gurdas: When the earth was fully loaded with sins it shrieked under their load and called out to its master – the Lord, He sent Guru Nanak to provide the relief to the world suffering on account of social, religious and political system prevailing at time..

Guru Nanak has written about the situation at length in his hymns in *Asa-di-Var*, from it a brief summary is stated below:

There was famine for the truth and the seed of the religion had divided into two parts hence the chance of its germinating and growth seemed not possible, meaning for the people to become religious was not possible. There was division in the Hindu religion on the basis of castes. The highest caste of Brahmin was responsible to impart education to the others but had restricted it to themselves and Kshatriyas, considered the next high caste. All the holy books being in Sanskrit could not be accessible to other than these since the Sanskrit in which these were written was taught these two only. The greatest weakness of Hindu religion was worship of millions of demigods. Hence there were various sects, some were worshipping one demi god and the others were different demigod. Due to this there was inherent cause of division in the followers of religion due to quarrel amongst them concerning superiority and inferiority of these demigods; On the other hand Muslims being the rulers, were full of pride for their religion and they were considering Hindus being idol worshipper as *Kafir* who cannot get liberated unless they adopt Islam, hence they were always trying to create means to convert Hindus to Islam; such as keeping taxing them, not allowing them to keep weapons and riding on horses.. Bhai Gurdas describes the effect of coming of Guru Nanak as thus;

With the appearance of Satguru Nanak on the scene the fog of illusion like above, formed in the mind of people got eliminated and world came under illumination of the divine wisdom. This was in the same manner as when sun dawns, stars are dimmed and darkness vanishes.

Although Guru had come to world under the order of God coming to the world he was feeling the pangs of separation from Him and was appearing abnormal and his parents

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thought that he was suffering from some ailment and the best physician was called for his treatment. The dialogue between Guru Nanak and the physician reflects it as below:

ਵੈਦੁ ਬੁਲਾਇਆ ਵੈਦਗੀ ਪਕੜਿ ਢੰਦੋਲੇ ਬਾਂਹ ॥ ਭੋਲਾ ਵੈਦੁ ਨ ਜਾਣਈ ਕਰਕ ਕਲੇਜੇ ਮਾਹਿ ॥੧॥ [SGGS: 1279]

*The physician was called in for diagnosing the ailment; he felt my pulse by holding the arm. The simple physician did not know that the pain was in the bosom.*

Physician asked Guru to tell the symptoms of his ailment himself to diagnose it Guru replied, my malady is the separation from God creating great hunger and yearning for uniting with Him; additionally I have the fear of death generating anguish that my body will perish one day; hence it beyond him to treat him. The hymn concerning the above reply is given below:

ਦੁਖੁ ਵੇਛੋੜਾ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਭੁਖ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਸਕਤਵਾਰ ਜਮਦੂਤ ॥ ਇਕੁ ਦੁਖੁ ਰੋਗੁ ਲਗੈ ਤਨਿ ਧਾਇ ॥ ਵੈਦੁ ਨ ਭੋਲੇ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਾਇ ॥੧॥ [Malaar M. 1 SGGS: 1256]

*One pain is due to separation, another pain is due to hunger. Another pain is due to the powerful Messenger of Death. Another pain is when the disease comes running and attaches to the body. O innocent doctor, your medicine is not effective for these pains hence don't dispense with any medicine.*

ਵੈਦੁ ਨ ਭੋਲੇ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਾਇ ॥ ਦਰਦੁ ਹੋਵੈ ਦੁਖੁ ਰਹੈ ਸਰੀਰ ॥ ਐਸਾ ਦਾਰੂ ਲਗੈ ਨ ਬੀਰ ॥੧॥ ਰਹਾਉ ॥ [SGGS: 1256]

*O innocent doctor, don't give me medicine, since with it also the pain will persist, and the body will continue to suffer. hence your medicine may not effective at all. || 1 || Pause ||*

Above brings out for the Sikhs also to realize that they are also separated from God and they also undergo many worldly miseries; hence for overcoming them, they need to unite with God. Two more incidents from his initial life are worth narrating here since these bring out what Guru intended to do in future; first one occurred;

When Nanak attained the age of five years, as per the custom, he had to undergo the thread ceremony. Baba Kalyan Das (Kalu) Mehta, his father arranged a function on a grand scale inviting all his relatives, friends on an auspicious day fixed by the family priest Hardial; as Hardial took out the thread in his hand to put on the body of Nanak, he caught hold his arm and asked him to make him first understand what for this thread is and what are its merits?

Hardial replied the sacred thread is indicator of higher social status of the wearer amongst Hindus; besides it will bring you honour in both the worlds.

**Nanak asked how by simply wearing a cotton thread if a man who is engaged in sinful actions, hence being of low status, can he be converted to high status? For having the higher status one is supposed to do noble actions.**

Hardial replied this is a tradition which has been followed from ages started by great seers and holy since the thread brings to one honour in both this world as well in the next. If it is broken new one can be put.

**Guru Nanak told how it was to get one honour in the next world when it gets burnt with the body after the death. Additionally from the time of breaking the thread till replaced by the new one, whether one's status will remain low?**

Priest had no answer to these query, in frustration he asked Guru whether he knows any type of thread which goes with one after death and does not break once worn.

Nanak uttered the hymn elaborating about the customary thread as well suggested by him as thus:

ਚਉਕੜਿ ਮੁਲਿ ਅਣਾਇਆ ਬਹਿ ਚਉਕੈ ਪਾਇਆ ॥ ਸਿਖਾ ਕੰਨਿ ਚੜਾਇਆ ਗੁਰੁ ਬ੍ਰਾਹਮਣੁ ਥਿਆ ॥ ਓਹੁ ਮੁਆ ਓਹੁ ਝੜਿ ਪਾਇਆ ਵੇਤਗਾ ਗਇਆ ॥੧॥[SGGS: 471]

*You buy the thread for a few shells, and seated in your enclosure, you put it on. Whispering instructions into others' ears, the Brahmin becomes a guru. But he dies, and the sacred thread falls away, and the soul departs without it.*

ਦਇਆ ਕਪਾਹ ਸੰਤੋਖੁ ਸੂਤੁ ਜਤੁ ਗੰਢੀ ਸਤੁ ਵਟੁ ॥ ਏਹੁ ਜਨੇਊ ਜੀਅ ਕਾ ਹਈ ਤ ਪਾਡੇ ਘਤੁ ॥ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਤੁਟੈ ਨਾ ਮਲੁ ਲਗੈ ਨਾ ਏਹੁ ਜਲੈ ਨਾ ਜਾਇ ॥ ਧਨੁ ਸੁ ਮਾਣਸ ਨਾਨਕਾ ਜੋ ਗਲਿ ਚਲੇ ਪਾਇ ॥ [SGGS: 471]

*Make compassion the cotton, contentment the thread, celibacy the knot and the righteous character the twist. This is the sacred thread of the soul; if you have it, then go ahead and put it on me. It does not break, it cannot be soiled by filth, and it cannot be burnt, or lost. Blessed are those mortal beings, O Nanak, who wear such a thread around their necks.*

It shows Guru was totally against rituals and was interested that people cultivate virtues, in this particular case, the indicated virtues are compassion, contentment, pure conduct and the righteous character.

In case of the second incident, Guru was sent by his father along with an elderly person Bhai Bala to strike a profitable deal for learning the way to earn his livelihood. As they were proceeding to a nearest town, on the way they came across a group of sadhus who were engaged in the devotional worship of God. Guru was always fascinated for meeting saintly persons hence he joined their company and exchanged views on various

topics. During the dialogues he came to know from them that they are hungry from three days, It occurred to Guru that what a better profitable deal be other than feeding them, hence he offered 20 Rupees for the arrangement of food even after being reminded by saintly persons that; on this account, he might have to suffer. Guru did suffer the consequences by undergoing slapping from his father. Actually this was the first step of setting up an institute for providing food to needy and hungeries in future when he settled at Kartarpur after ending his travelogues and started farming and proceed from it was used for the holy and needy. The institute did not die till today and serves millions and millions of hungries and holy people not only in India but all over the world.

Guru also intended to demonstrate how one has to earn honestly and donate out of it for the needy when he was employed as as *Modi* - an incharge of the treasury of Nawab Daulat Khan Lodhi at Sultanpur Lodhi. At that time barter system was in vogue, all the taxes were paid in the form of grains from different crops and the manager has to get these accounted and deposited these in the store house. Then these were provided to persons in the service of Nawab as salary and also sold to public. The service of Guru was appreciated due to his dealings with all concerned since it was based on equality, love and honestly. Here his daily routine was to take early morning bath in the river *Bein* and than remain absorbed in the meditation of God till the time possible, keeping in mind the opening of store in time. After closing it he was attending the congregation of holy. It is said that One day when a Sadhu came to buy flour from the store; Guru Started weighing it in the scale and also counted each time he delivered it, when he reached the number thirteen (ਤੇਰਾ) , to him it was meaning every thing is thine; he went on uttering this number and went on weighing and delivering the flour to the astonishment of the customer.

Sadhu told Guru if he continued weighing and delivering this way, in few days the store may get emptied. To this, Guru replied, oh holy man; realize this that when it is uttered thine, thine meaning everything belongs to God, there never can be shortage; world faces problem only when it is attached with mineness.

This event however gave earliers employees who were dishonest and were jealous due to glory of Guru being spread, complained to Nawab that Guru was squandering the treasury. Under the order of Nawab, Guru was summoned and asked to clarify the matter. After the store provisions got audited; it was found that the provisions in the store were excess than required to be there. Actually Guru was offering extra provision out of the contribution made to the provisions in store by buying it out of salary. The complaints were made to Nawab not once but two three time and each time result of the audit was in favour of Guru. Hence Nawab was fully convinced about the honesty and integrity of Guru.

It is indicated after some times some relatives along with Bhai Mardana, a Mirasi from profession, came from Talwandi to meet Guru and Bebe Nanaki; Guru gave a instrument of reveck which he has got made as per his design to Mardana to play it as his companion when Guru was to sing the songs of glory of God. Now the congregation was regularly held and, there, besides singing the glory of God, Guru also gave discourses about the whole reality as well as about the way of true living and inspiring his followers by his teachings; this way many persons became his devotees

One day Guru as per his daily routine went to take bath in the river bein, he dived in the water and disappeared and did not return to his home; even the divers were employed to search the bed of the river but it was of no avail; his relatives and followers were upset with the disappearance of Guru; some slanderers even spread the news that after squandering the stores, he has disappeared to save from the wrath of Nawab; once again the store was audited and no irregularity was detected.

It is stated that Guru reached to the court of God and was offered a cup filled to brim to Guru and said that this is an exilir, the Amrit, the embodiment of my name and drink it; Guru complied the order. God said further, Myself has become merciful to you and I am with you; I have exalted you and whosoever utter your name he shall also be exalted; You go to world and chant my name and made others also to do the same; and remain unattached from the world; remain engaged with *Naam*, charity purity, service and meditation on naam. I have bestowed you my name; perform these deeds. God further ordered Guru that by encamping at only one place and preaching is not enough, the whole world is need of redeeming since the people are burning under influence of prevalence of falsehood, discord, enmity, jealousy, hostility, pride anger and fire of sins; you have to cool it by sprinkling *Naam* (Lord's Name) over it and make the wordly people to follow the true religion embedded with unity, love, benevolence for true living. Guru saluted God; and was sent back.

Under the order of God, Guru Nanak commenced his travelogues, six in numbers, out of these two were of shorter duration and were within Punjab and remaining four were in four directions lasting for the total time of 22 years; after each travelogue Guru returned home and remained with his family members for some time. During these travlogues which are known as *Udassian* (missionary journey) Guru covered the entire country and also many others countries bordering it, in order to remove the illusions and doubts within the mind of people.

Bhai Gurdas has uttered the following words in his var about taking up the travlogues known as *Udassi*, by Guru for redeeming the world.

ਭਾਬੇ ਭੇਖ ਬਣਾਇਆ, ਉਦਾਸੀ ਕੀ ਰੀਤਿ ਚਲਾਈ॥ ਚੜਿਆ ਸੋਧਿਣ ਧਰਤ ਲੁਕਾਈ॥ - Var 1, Pauri 23

Here Guru is mentioned as Baba, the embodiment of wisdom, adopted the garb and set the tradition of travelling for the sake of redemption of people;

Guru redeemed/ reformed many sinners as well many religious leaders who were under great illusions and doubts. He selected those who had attained higher mental intellect or who were making efforts to attain higher religious state; first ones employing their capability for doing evil deeds and the second ones had developed misgivings about the way for higher attainments. Guru channelized their energy and transformed them to become his followers for carrying out his preaching.

Guru preached a large numbers of people of the world; this can be judged from the distance of around 50,000 Km, he covered for propagating his teachings.

One of the greatest gift of Guru to mankind was building a light house and he stated that whosoever will move under the light of this, he will never come under the darkness of illusions, doubts and superstitions. This light house was the Gurbani-the spoken words of Guru which descended from God to him when his mind was fully absorbed in naam and presented them in the common spoken language Not only this, he also collated the words of so many devotees of God collected during his interaction and discourses during his sojourns. Guru collated them with the addition of his own hymns and the succeeding Guru Angad Devji inherited this great treasure. This way collating the hymns with the addition of each Guru; by the time of fifth Guru who, after the addition of his hymns, compiled and edited these resulted in the form of holy book for the followers of Guru, the Sikhs called as Sri Guru Granth Sahib which was awarded the Guruship by the tenth Guru Gobind Singh before he left this physical world.

Primarily there were three main teachings of Guru; Chanting the Naam; Honest Earning and Sharing it with the needy. Additionally wherever he went, he beckoned his followers to establish Sangats and Dharamshals to gather in it to sing his hymns and contemplate these and also chanting and meditation on Naam collectively because it generates its good impact on the concentration of mind.

At the end of his travelogues he settled at KartarPur and started farming himself just for setting the example for honest earning and sharing with others since the produce from the farm was utilized for the preparation of Langer for the Sikhs and others who were visiting to Guru. At the age of 70 year Guru's light enjoined with God's light; before his departure from the world, Guru passed on his light to Bhai Lehna who was named Guru Angad after subjecting him and his sons to a number of tests in which his sons could not qualify and Guru Angad succeeded.

Bhai Gurudas in his *Var 1, Pauri 23* sums up about the situation of the redeemed world as thus:

ਸੁਣੀ ਪੁਕਾਰਿ ਦਾਤਾਰ ਪ੍ਰਭੁ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਜਗ ਮਾਹਿ ਪਠਾਇਆ॥

*After listening to the outcry of the people undergoing sufferings, the God, the great giver sent Guru Nanak to the world.*

ਚਰਨ ਧੋਇ ਰਹਰਾਸਿ ਕਰਿ ਚਰਣਾਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਿਖਾ ਪੀਲਾਇਆ ॥

*Guru setting up the tradition of washing the feet by water and made theamrit to drink by the Sikhs.*

ਪਾਰਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਪੂਰਨ ਬ੍ਰਹਮ ਕਲਿਯੁਗ ਅੰਦਰਿ ਇਕ ਦਿਖਾਇਆ ॥

*He firmed up the oneness of the perfect God in the dark age of Kaliyuga.*

ਚਾਰੇ ਪੈਰ ਧਰਮ ਦੇ ਚਾਰਿ ਵਰਨ ਇਕ ਵਰਨੁ ਕਰਾਇਆ ॥

*He made the religion totally balanced (the four aspects) and thereby establishing brotherhood amongst people.*

ਰਾਣਾ ਰੰਕ ਬਰਾਬਰੀ ਪੈਰੀ ਪਵਣਾ ਜਗਿ ਵਰਤਾਇਆ ॥

*He made a rich and a poor to be treated equally and made to prevail the tradition falling at the feet of each other to inculcate humility.*

ਉਲਟਾ ਖੇਲ ਪਿਰੰਮ ਦਾ ਪੈਰਾ ਉਪਰ ਸੀਸੁ ਨਿਵਾਇਆ ॥

*He made the head considered to be exalted to bow at the feet taken as low; this being a upturned sport of the beloved God.*

ਕਲਿਯੁਗੁ ਬਾਬੇ ਤਾਰਿਆ ਸਤਿਨਾਮੁ ਪੜਿ ਮੰਤ੍ਰੁ ਸੁਣਾਇਆ ॥

*Guru Nanak, the provided salvation to public of the dark age of Kalyjug by firming up the mantra of true Naam.*

ਕਲਿ ਤਾਰਣਿ ਗੁਰੁ ਨਾਨਕ ਆਇਆ ॥ ੨੩

Because Guru Nanak has come to provide salvation in the public,

From the text one can easily realise the effort which Guru made to redeem the world in the prevailing dark age when falsehood overshadowed the truth and successfully removed the people's sufferings due to so many delusion and illusion in their mind under which they they were indulging in so many rituals and atrocities at the same time feeling satisfied that they were practising the religion. □



## Baba Buddha Ji, Warrior – Saint – Scholar, The Epitome of Sikhism

PROF. (DR.) SURJIT SINGH BHATTI\*

A unique personality of Sikh History, Baba Buddha Ji was born in village Kathunangal of the Amritsar district of Punjab in 1506. His father, Bhai Sugha Randhawa, was a Sikh farmer. Nobody would have imagined that this child, named *Boora*, would live for 125 years, or he would become one of the staunchest and earliest devotees of Guru Nanak Dev (1469-1539), the founder of Sikhism. The 3rd Guru Sahib, Gur Amar Das (1479-1574), called him "The Pillar of Sikhism." Today, he is remembered as the renowned Warrior-Saint-Scholar invited to anoint five Sikh Gurus who succeeded Guru Nanak.

### From "Boora" to "Baba Buddha"

As a child, Boora used to go to nearby meadows to graze the family cattle. One day he happened to meet Guru Nanak, who was passing through the place. During their conversation, Boora started asking many questions from Guru Nanak, such as What is the purpose of human life? What happens after death? What is *Dharma*? Who is God, and Why worship it? Guru Nanak answered the questions to the child's satisfaction but found them unusual for his tender age. It is believed that Guru Nanak said that Boora's name should be *Baba Buddha*, which means wise old man.

As a young man, Baba Buddha acquired the skills of horse-riding, swordsmanship and other accomplishments of warriors. He also learnt the Punjabi language and *Gurmukhi* script from Bhai Lehna Ji, who later became Guru Angad Dev (1504-1552), the 2nd Sikh Guru. In addition, he often volunteered for the service of *Sangat* (congregations of devotees), who used to assemble to listen to the teachings of the Gurus. Also, he brought milk from his farm daily for use in the *Community Langar*, where the free meals were served to all on such occasions.

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### **Baba Buddha Invited to Crown Five Sikh Gurus**

The intellectual and spiritual status of Baba Buddha became so high with the time that people respected him as a *Brahmgyani* (a perfect saint-scholar). As a result, he was given the rare honour of being invited to anoint the five Sikh Gurus (who succeeded Guru Nanak) at their ascending the Spiritual Throne called *Gur-Gaddi* at their formal coronation. Thus, he became the only person to meet six Sikh Gurus in his lifetime and acquire divine knowledge from them.

### **Construction work supervised and performed by Baba Buddha**

Guru Amar Das asked him to supervise the construction work of the main Gurdwara at *Goindwal* (called *Axis of Sikhism*), a city near Amritsar. This shrine has a unique attached Baoli for taking a bath, 84 steps downwards leading to a well. The 4th Guru Sahib, Guru Ram Das (1534-1581), entrusted him the responsibility of excavation of the *Sarovar* (water tank) at Amritsar, in the midst of which holy Darbar Sahib (Golden Temple) was constructed. He not only supervised but performed the work manually, with dedication. The *ber* (berry or jujube) tree under which he used to rest is now called *Baba Buddha's Beri*. He was also assigned construction work of the historic Akal Takht (Eternal Throne) by the 6th Sikh Guru, Guru Har Gobind (1595-1644), the son of the 5th Sikh Guru, Guru Arjan Dev (1563-1606).

According to a popular story, Guru Arjan Dev was blessed with the birth of his son on the prayer of Baba Buddha to God. He was also entrusted with the education and training of young Har Gobind. *Akal Takht* represents the assertion of *Sikh Sovereignty* by Guru Har Gobind Sahib, defying the Moghul Emperor Jahangir, who had banned wearing a sword, horse-riding, and sitting on an elevated throne more than three feet high. Baba Buddha anointed Guru Sahib on *Akal Takht*, the 12 feet high throne, and gave two swords and applied all marks of Royalty to Guru Sahib. One sword represents *Royalty* while the other stands for *Spiritualism* of the Sikhs. The two *Nishan Sahibs* (Sikh Flags) on the Akal Takht indicate the same concept.

An exciting event in his life shows how resourceful Baba Buddha was. It is said that Guru Amar Das went into solitary meditation at an undisclosed location after he learnt that the two sons of Guru Angad Dev were not happy with his becoming the successor of their father. After some time, when Sikhs requested Baba Buddha to

find the whereabouts of Guru Amar Das, he found out the location. On reaching there, Baba Buddha noticed an instruction on the *front door* concerning not to open it. So Baba Buddha opened a passage into the room by making a hole in the *back wall* and requested Guru Amar Das to meet the devotees. This pleasantly surprised Guru Sahib who ultimately accepted Baba Buddha's request. A Gurdwara, known as *Sannh Sahib*, stands at that place today as a memorial of this event.

**Baba Buddha was The First *Mukh-Granthi* (Head-Priest) of Sri Darbar Sahib, Amritsar**

In 1604, Guru Arjan Dev had completed compiling the *Gurbani* (the holy hymns) of the first five Sikh Gurus (and some other saints) at *Ramsar* in Amritsar. This compilation, known as *Adi Granth*, was carried by Baba Buddha on his head, along with Guru Sahib and the Sikh Sangat, from Gurdwara Ramsar to Darbar Sahib. Guru Arjan Dev Ji then appointed Baba Buddha the First *Mukh-Granthi* (Head-Priest) after the *Adi Granth* was installed there. The hymns of Guru Teg Bahadur (1621- 1675), the 9th Sikh Guru, were included in the *Adi Granth* by the tenth Sikh Guru, Guru Gobind Singh (1666-1708). Guru Sahib prepared the present, final version of this holy scripture, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib*, at Talwandi Sabo, now called Takht Damdama Sahib.

[Bhai Gurdas (1551-1636) helped Guru Arjan Dev ji write the *Adi Granth* and worked along with Baba Buddha during the construction of the *Akal Takht*. He was an accomplished writer, historian, and preacher. Being a distinguished scholar, he was appointed the First *Jathedar* (Chief) of the *Akal Takht*.]

Baba Buddha breathed his last at village Ramdas in the Gurdaspur district of Punjab in 1631. Guru Har Gobind Sahib was present with Baba Buddha during the last moments and performed his last rites. Today there is a memorial called *Gurdwara Samadhan*, at Ramdas where Baba Buddha was cremated, on the banks of river Ravi (opposite Kartarpur Sahib, now situated in Pakistan).

□

FOR BASIC KNOWLEDGE,  
BOLD COMMENT READ

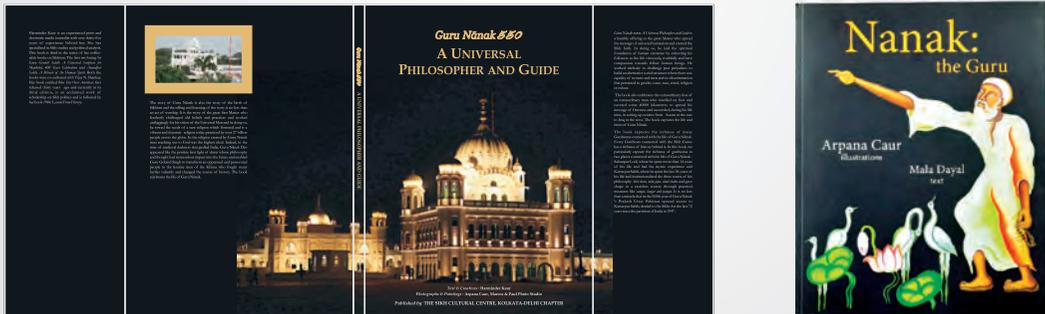
**The Sikh Review**

## The Sikh Cultural Centre – The Sikh Review

We are pleased to inform that to mark the  
**400th Birth Anniversary of – Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji**  
the following 'Special' publication have been undertaken by us.

- Three issues of The Sikh Review monthly (May, June and July 2021) have been dedicated as '**Special Issues**' to mark the birth anniversary of the Ninth Guru. The issues are available – for reading and reference – on our website: [www.sikhreview.org](http://www.sikhreview.org)
- To mark the historical occasion a **Coffee Table Book** has been planned and is likely to be launched in August / September 2021

Earlier to mark the 550th Birth Anniversary of Guru Nanak special initiative was taken to educate children about the teachings of Guru Nanak through a beautiful and informative pictorial publication title: **Nanak - The Guru**. The book was published in different Indian & Foreign languages and distributed among children in various schools in India under sponsorship from philanthropist. Now 2000 copies have been printed in Spanish language and sent to America for distribution. Besides, a Coffee Table Book – **Guru Nanak 550 - A Universal Philosopher and Guide** was also released (now in second print).



The Coffee Table Book dedicated to **400th Birth Anniversary of - Guru Tegh Bahadur Ji** has been priced **Rs. 1,250/-** in India (pre-launched advance booking @ **Rs. 800/-**) and **\$ 36** or **Rs. 2600/-** for Overseas (by Air Mail -including postal charges).

Advance Booking for Coffee Table Book for Individual readers / Corporate Houses / Institution is now opened.

**For any enquiry and sponsor kindly contact the followings -**

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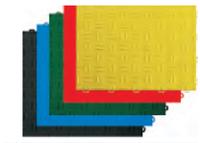
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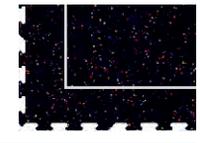
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## 'Guru' and 'Gurmatt' - A Perspective

DYA SINGH\*

As Sikhs when we generally think of the word 'Guru' in English, we think 'teacher', 'master' perhaps, and the more learned will perhaps tell us that the word is made up of two – 'gu' which means darkness and 'ru' meaning light, enlightenment. So, Guru means one who brings enlightenment chasing away the ignorance of darkness.

Recently I came across 6 Sanskrit meanings of the word 'teacher' which put that lofty word 'Guru' in a new light for me because 'our' Guru is quite unique. I also remembered a discussion with my Sikhi mentor, the late S. Joginder Singh Ji, a founding member of the Sikh Naujawan Sabha Malaysia (SNSM), of the prefix 'gur' in a few pivotal Sikhcentric words leading towards our 'Guru'. I thought of sharing all that.

### The 6 Sanskrit meanings for 'teacher' are:

1. Adhyapak – the teacher who imparts information to the student.
2. Upadhyaya – the teacher who imparts knowledge combined with information
3. Acharya – the teacher who imparts skills
4. Pandit – a teacher who is able of giving a deeper insight into a subject
5. Dhrista – a teacher who has a visionary view on a subject and teaches you to think in that manner.
6. GURU – a teacher who is able to, '**awaken wisdom in you**', leading you from darkness into light!

Our ten gurus in human form culminating in the Guru Granth Sahib 'is' the ultimate Guru for us, superseded only by Akal Purakh, the supreme wondrous 'Guru' – Wah-Guru.

'Our' Guru, that '*awakens the wisdom within us*', is the pathway to 'Sachkhand' – the Realm of Truth.

We are so fortunate that we might have intermediaries who could show us the path to the ultimate 'Guru', but they remain intermediaries – as dhristas, as pandits, as acharyas, as upadhyayas and even as adhyapaks, or as we call them – bhais, sants or brahmgnianis. But accepting any kind of them as equivalent to our collective 'Sat-Guru', our true 'Guru' sets us back from the ultimate pursuit of Truth.

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Our 'Guru' does have various aspects which I believe lead us forward. Listed below are six such aspects which begin with the prefix 'Gur':

1. Gurmukhi
2. GurSikh-itihās
3. Gur-itihās
4. Gurdwara
5. Gurmatt
6. Gurbani

The study of Gurbani is incomplete unless we first study **Gurmukhi** script – the language of the Guru. One who is only English educated but develops an intense thirst to know more, will inevitably be led towards learning Gurmukhi.

**Gursikh-Itihās:** The study of the lives of Sikh luminaries are examples of exemplary living, the Sikhi way. These luminaries could be of the 'sant' tradition (*or the 'piri' tradition of Sikhi*), or the 'Khalsa' tradition (the *Miri-Piri* tradition). They are role models. Just keeping in touch with 'Sikh' history and teaching it to our younger generations is a great grounding and will stand them in good stead into their future. It adds to the continuity of the 'Sikhi' life ideology.

**Gur-itihās:** The study of the history of our Gurus is paramount to the significance and continuity of Sikhi itself. But, as time goes by, we need to extract the grain from the chaff. There is plenty of hearsay as we are slowly realizing. Some 'fables' of our Guru Sahibs do help in the promotion of Sikhi amongst the masses – they carry the reverence aspect, the miracles and curative powers, to increase the faith element of Sikhi. After all, the 'placebo' effect has strong psychological power on many. But, the 'truth' is oftentimes more powerful than the fiction. I have discovered that for example, on the life of 9th Nanak, Guru Tegh Bahadur. His life story makes him one of the greatest human beings who ever lived, in the pursuit of Truth.

**Gurdwara** stands for the right company – the *sadh-sangat*. It is very important to seek the company of those who are similarly inclined – towards the pursuit of the Truth, the Sikhi way. You will find many who are not interested to 'look' further. They merely pay lip service towards 'Sikh rituals and protocol' and are fully content with that. These days 'sangat' need not just be physical. Even gurdwaras are turning to cyber-sangats! There are 'chat-lines' of like-minded Sikhs. One searching sincerely will inevitably gravitate towards the right 'chat-lines' thanks to modern technology.

**Gurmatt** is personal evolution towards the Truth with the aid of the philosophy of Sikhi, which we derive from Gurbani. I believe it is personal and aided by Sikh luminaries exemplars and Sikh history, as long as what they impart is borne out by 'Gurbani'. Hence the 'awakening of wisdom within' is the gurmatt aspect of 'Guru'.

*The twin pillars of Guru Granth and Guru Panth have weakened overtime. Guru Granth, thankfully, is eternal, a pillar which shall exist for earthly eternity, but Guru Panth, the collective psyche based on the human element, has disintegrated, or decentralized, especially as the Panth has globalised. Akal Takhat as the leading Sikh 'institution' of Guru Panth has become a mouthpiece of the corrupt 'Sikh' politicians of Punjab. Sikh spiritual leadership is fragmented locally and globally. As Sikh populations outside Punjab and outside India increase, each global 'community' needs to find its own direction. The emphasis on the 'individual' for one's own spiritual progress in the Sikhi way, and the 'sava-lakh' phenomena, takes on a new meaning.*

**Guru-bani**, the Gur-shabad, shall always remain the one constant, to guide future Sikhi. The 'Guru' lives on. The 'Guru' is already present in cyberspace! The true learner of the future, can easily find it.

ਚਰਨ ਸ਼ਰਨਿ ਗੁਰ ਏਕ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਜਾਇ ਚਲ ਸਤਿਗੁਰ ਕੋਟਿ ਪੈਂਡਾ ਆਗੇ ਹੋਇ ਲਤਿ ਹੈ ॥

*Charan sharan Gur aik painda jaye chal, Satgur kot painda agay hue lait hain.*

Take one step towards Him, and He will take countless steps toward you. (Bhai Gurdas)

A line from the 'dohra' recited after the daily Sikh prayer is:

ਜੋ ਪ੍ਰਭ ਕੋ ਮਿਲਬੋ ਚਹੈ ਖੋਜ ਸ਼ਬਦ ਮੈਂ ਲੇਹ ।

*Jo Prabh ko milbo chehai, khoj shabad mai le.*

If you wish to meet Him, search for Him in Gurbani. (Panth Prakash)

And finally what does 'the Guru' say?

ਬਾਣੀ ਗੁਰੂ ਗੁਰੂ ਹੈ ਬਾਣੀ ਵਿਚਿ ਬਾਣੀ ਅੰਮ੍ਰਿਤੁ ਸਾਰੇ ॥ ਗੁਰੂ ਬਾਣੀ ਕਹੈ ਸੇਵਕੁ ਜਨ ਮਾਨੈ ਪਰਤਖਿ ਗੁਰੂ ਨਿਸਤਾਰੇ ॥

*Bani Guru, Guru hai Bani, vich bani amrit saray. Gurbani kehai sevak jan manai, pertakh Guru nistaray. (M. 4, SGGS, p. 982)*

With insight from the above narrative, now my understanding of this couplet is: The God-inspired verses within the Guru Granth Sahib is the 'Guru'. The Guru resides within the lines of bani. Read the lines, read between the lines. Read the lines within the context of the 'shabad' and within the 'spirit' of *Sikhi*. The 'Guru' is sending you His message through the divinity that already lies within you. The Guru speaks to you, understand, and as a humble servant of the Guru in total humility surrender and – obey. The 'Guru' shall guide you, illuminate you, and emancipate you.

So, wake up every day and speak to your 'Guru' – Gurbani and the divinity within you. □

## Common Themes in the Verses of Guru Nanak and Rabindranath Tagore

PROF. CHHANDA CHATERJEE\*

Though separated by thousands of miles in Indian subcontinent, both Punjab and Bengal were in the throes of an intellectual crisis of a similar nature, first in the fifteenth century and then again in the nineteenth century. In the fifteenth century, the challenge came from Islam. And again, in the nineteenth century, there was a challenge from Christianity. Hinduism in its prevalent form in the fifteenth century with its belief in the multiplicity of God, discriminations on the grounds of caste (the ritual division of human beings according to their occupations), could not withstand the appeal of Islam with its simple articulation of monotheism and egalitarian attitude towards all its believers. Richard Eaton's works have sufficiently documented the rapid strides made by Islam both in Punjab and in Bengal through the sympathetic association of Sufi saints with the everyday needs of the common people like the healing of diseases, colonisation of lands with new agricultural technology in adverse situations and the feeding of the poor and the needy in langars (community kitchens), where all were to share meals regardless of the Hindu rules against commensality.<sup>1</sup> Guru Nanak in Punjab could appreciate the spirit of antagonism the encounter of Hinduism and Islam was giving rise to. He, therefore, thought of preaching a new doctrine of a formless unique God to his followers or '*shish*' from which the word Sikhism obtained currency. The casteless purity of this religion soon began to draw a number of converts from among the new migrants to Punjab, especially the Jats, who had been encountering difficulties regarding their placements in the Hindu social system.<sup>2</sup>

Generations later in Bengal in the nineteenth century, Raja Rammohun Roy encountered the same problem of disillusionment with the idolatry and caste discrimination in Hinduism and the large exodus of the *creme de la creme* of Hindu society to Christianity.<sup>3</sup> In the course of his sojourns, Rammohun Roy had come across the ideas of Guru Nanak in Amritsar. He tried to pick up the basics of Punjabi to learn more about Sikhism. He had been trying to go deep into Vedic Hinduism to explore the concept of *adwaita* (a single Godhead) and bring it to the notice of the Hindu literati. The Sikh Gurus' emphasis on the dissemination of religious ideals in the simple vernacular was also found very appealing to him.<sup>4</sup> Following in the footsteps of Sikhism, he tried to set up an assembly of like-minded

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people or the *Atmiya Sabha*. It gradually flowered into the *Brahmo Samaj* emphasizing the oneness and formlessness of God and preaching about it in the vernacular. Debendranath Tagore, the father of Rabindranath Tagore, was a pre-eminent figure in contemporary Calcutta and a close associate of Rammohun. He was a great admirer of the concept of a single, formless God. He used to visit the Dalhousie hills in Bakrota for several months a year to contemplate God in the solitude of the Pir Panjal Mountains. His young son Rabi used to accompany him. On their way to the Dalhousie hills, they stopped at Amritsar and tried to pick up more of Guru Nanak's ideas of tolerance, monotheism and social egalitarianism. Rabindranath Tagore carried back his memories of these impressionable years later to Bengal. He picked up small anecdotes about the Sikh Gurus' noble ideas and tried to preach them to the young children of the school that he had founded in Santiniketan. Distant Punjab was thus brought close to the simple, young children of Bengal.

The teachings of Guru Nanak appealed to Tagore for the universal content of their message. They struck a responsive chord in his heart for their repudiation of idolatry and denunciation of caste, which were the banes of the prevalent belief system of the sub-continent. Tagore's great reverence for Guru Nanak resonated in the piece he wrote for introducing the book *Sikh Guru O Sikh Jati* authored by Sarat Kumar Ray, a teacher of great promise in his Brahmachary ashram (the name he used for his school in Santiniketan), who died young. It had earlier been published in the Bengali Journal *Prabashi* in the Bengali year 1316, Chaitra (1909 A.D.) and later translated by the historian Sir Jadunath Sarkar for the *Modern Review* in April, 1911 as *The Rise and Fall of the Sikh Power*.

*The kind of freedom, which Guru Nanak had conceived of, was something greater than mere political freedom; Nanak's idea of religion was not circumscribed by the worship of images, prevalent in one country and limited by the imagination and practices of a particular race; his mind had been liberated from the shackles of these antiquated practices, and he dedicated his entire life trying to spread this message of freedom to all.*<sup>5</sup>

Tagore's deference to Guru Nanak's ideals gradually permeated his verses. He entrusted his close associate Dr. Kshiti Mohun Sen, (who had served a stint in Chamba Raj Estate as its Education Secretary and had been recalled by Tagore to Santiniketan to take charge of his school) to collect the *shabads* of the Sikh Gurus and the *bhagats*, who had been accommodated in the SGGGS.<sup>6</sup> These were the days before Max Arthur Macauliffe had published his translations of the SGGGS. The *birs* (manuscripts) of the Sikh Gurus were the prized possessions of the *Gyanis* and *Granthis* and were not accessible to all and sundry. Kshiti Mohun carried on vigorous enquiries in northern India to get hold of these verses. Once he was able to collect a substantial number of them, he started pondering on them and tried to go deep into their meanings. However, once he set about his task, he was struck by the close affinity between the themes of many of these

shabads and some of Tagore's verses published in his Gitanjali and elsewhere. Tagore was also made aware of the underlying unity of the themes of Gurbani and his verses.<sup>7</sup>

Tagore's father, Debendranath, had been thrilled to find the Upanishadic search for the *Brahma* (the supreme reality) in the joy of the universe in the Sikh theories of creation. He was so impressed by the description of the beauty of the night sky in Guru Nanak's *Aarti* in sohila composition (bedtime prayer) that he made his second son Jyotirindranath Tagore translate it into Bengali :

*Gagan mai thalu rabi Chandu dipak bane  
Tarika mandal janak Moti.  
Dhupu Malayanale Pavan Chavare kare  
Sagal banarayi Phulet joti  
Kaisi arti hoyi Bhavh khandana teri arti  
Anahata Shbad bajanta Bheri.*<sup>8</sup>

Although, contrary to popular belief, young Rabindranath was not the translator of this *shabad*, praise for the beauty of nature was abundantly noticeable in many of his writings, pointing to the same source for inspiration. We can take, for example, one or two of Tagore's verses praising the divine force expressing itself in the beauty of nature:

*Beautiful truly, is your bracelet,  
studded with stars-  
In gold and jewels, it is enticing,  
I know, in myriad colours.  
Your scimitar is more gorgeous,  
drawn in a quiver of lightning,  
Garuda's wing crimson-tinged  
against the setting sun in the sky.  
Like life's last gasp on the verge of death, a dazzling deep anguish-  
Scorches in a flash are all I possess in an intense, terrifying awakening.  
Beautiful, truly, is your bracelet,  
studded with stars,  
Your scimitar, O Lord of Thunder, is the ultimate, forged in a terrible Beauty.*<sup>9</sup>

Similar ideas were found in some other Tagore songs as well, like in his '*bhubon jora ashankhani*,' which has been translated as:

*Your universe-encompassing prayer mat  
Spread it out in the core of my heart.*

*The night's stars, the day's sun, all the shades of darkness and light,  
All your messages that fill the sky,  
Let them find their abode in my heart.  
May the lute of the universe  
Fill the depths of my soul with all its tunes.  
All the intensity of grief and joy, the flower's touch, the storm's touch-  
Let your compassionate, auspicious, generous hands  
Bring into the core of my heart.<sup>10</sup>*

Underlying this common praise for the marvels of nature was a shared faith in a theory of creation. As Guru Nanak had spelt out:

*Haibhihosi, jayinajasi,  
rachna jinni rachayi<sup>11</sup>*

And

*Adi, anilu, anadianahatijugujugu / eke vesu<sup>12</sup>*

Guru Nanak had spoken of the creator as having been in existence even before the creation of this earth and would continue to exist even after his creation decayed. He was primal, pure, without a beginning and an end and remained unchanged through the ages. The creator was not something to be described in words, and a profusion of descriptions would merely obscure rather than elucidate '*bahuta kahioi bahuta hoi*'.<sup>13</sup> Human vocabulary did not have the power to capture the ways that He worked *anantu na karanoi*, denina ant.<sup>14</sup>

Tagore too had nearly echoed Guru Nanak in thinking of the Creator as 'endless at the end of time'-

*O beloved, you are endless  
at the end of time-  
Your joy pervades the entire universe.  
In this corner of the day's end,  
in the last gold of the evening cloud.  
My heart is humming towards a destination unknown.  
On the aroma filled breeze of tired flowers at the eventide  
A formless embrace engulfs  
my entire being.  
At this dust-coloured sunset on the frontiers of this green earth  
I hear across forests the lingering note of your infinite song.<sup>15</sup>*

And again –

*O Formless, let your message  
Bring freedom to my body, to my mind.  
Your eternal festival is the  
World's illumination-  
I am just its earthen lamp; light its flame.  
Inextinguishable, luminous your wish.  
Just as your spring breeze writes  
lyrics of songs  
In colours, flowers, leaves and woods in all directions  
Blow the breath of life into the inner recesses of my heart,  
Let its emptiness filled to the brim be blessed with tunes-  
Its misfortunes purified by  
your auspicious hand.<sup>16</sup>*

The limitless greatness of the *Akal Purakh* also called for the suppression of ego in men, and Guru Nanak advised *Naam Simran* to counter act narrow human pride – *gurmukhi namu salahiye haume nibhri vahi*<sup>17</sup> or *Gur ka kahiya mani basoi haume trishna mari*.<sup>18</sup> Tagore too sang the same tune supplicating the formless and the endless to bow his head and wash away all his pride in tears of repentance-

*Bow my head below the dust of your feet  
Drown all my pride in the tears of my eyes.  
In craving self-glory,  
I only humiliate myself.  
By circling around my Self,  
I die every moment.  
Drown all my pride in the tears of my eyes.  
May I not aggrandize myself in my own work?  
May your wishes find fulfillment  
in the midst of my life,  
I yearn for your ultimate peace,  
your supreme splendour in my heart,  
Protect me by taking your place  
in the lotus petal of my heart  
Drown all my pride in the tears of my eyes.<sup>19</sup>*

Repudiation of pride and self-glory led to its logical end – the repudiation of caste pride. Guru Nanak sought the company of people who were lowly according to the traditional caste ranking of the country but pure at heart. The story of Bhai Lalo, whose bread was found to contain the milk of love and the rich merchant, whose sumptuous food was discovered to give out the blood of persons whom he had exploited and cheated in the process of amassing his huge wealth, illustrated Guru Nanak's views towards persons placed low in the social ladder. Guru Nanak's *bani* also emphasized it with great force.

*Nichaandar nichjati / Nichihuatinichu*  
*Nanaku tin koi sangi / Sathibhariyasiu / Kia ris.*  
*Jiboinichsamaliani / tithoinadriteribakhshish.*<sup>20</sup>

Tagore had almost echoed Guru Nanak in his Gitanjali –

*When I try to bow to thee, my obeisance cannot reach down to the depth*  
*Where thy feet rest among the poorest, and lowliest and lost.*  
*Pride can never approach to where thou walkest in the clothes of the*  
*Humble among the poorest, and lowliest, and lost.*  
*My heart can never find its way to where thou keepest company with the*  
*Companionless among the poorest, the lowliest and lost.*<sup>21</sup>

Tagore was separated from Guru Nanak by four centuries in time and more than a thousand miles in Indian subcontinent. And yet, the similarity in their ideas is striking as Tagore followed the teachings of Guru Nanak. Tagore's childhood familiarity with Guru Nanak's ideas and his frequent visits to the Harmandir Sahib in the company of his father must have ingrained Guru Nanak's teachings in his sub-conscious so effectively that those ideas and emotions continued to germinate in his mind through his adulthood. Tagore kept on referring to Guru Nanak's ideas of syncretism and interfaith understanding as a panacea for the inter-communal conflicts and mis-understandings that began to assume such menacing shape with the progress of the constitutional reforms initiated by the colonial rulers from the early twentieth century. While western modernity served to exacerbate the latent conflicts among the communities, the 'indigenous modernity' of Guru Nanak could have served as a palliative for the problems of the sub-continent in generations to come. □

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**The shabad may be translated as:**

*Thy firmament is thy salver,  
 The sun and the moon Thy lamps;  
 The galaxy of stars is as pearls scattered.  
 The woods of sandal are thy incense.  
 The breezes blow thy royal fan;  
 The flowers of the forests,  
 Lie as offerings at thy feet  
 What wonderful worship with lamps is this  
 O thou destroyer of fear!  
 Unstruck music is the sound of thy temple drums.*

9. Translation of the poem '*sundar bote taba angadkhani*' by Sugata Bose in *Tagore the World Voyager* (Random House, India, Noida, 2012) p.4
10. Translation of the poem '*bhubon jora asankhani*' in *ibid.* p. 16
11. 'He who created the creation is and shall also be./ He shall not depart when the creation shall depart' in Manmohan Singh, *Sri Guru Granth Sahib: English and Punjabi Translations*, p. 20

12. 'He is primal, pure, sans beginning / indestructible and of the same one vesture all the ages through' in *ibid.* p.22
13. 'The more we describe the more obscure he becomes' in *ibid.* p.16
14. 'Limitless are (His) workings and limitless (His) goings' in *ibid.* p. 15
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*Heartiest Greetings*  
on the  
**552nd Prakash Purab**  
of  
**GURU NANAK DEV JI**

## A pilgrimage to Gurdwara Panja Sahib - Hasan Abdal

DR DALVINDER SINGH GREWAL \*

After visiting Nankana Sahib, we reached Hasan Abdal railway station at about 2 A.M on 15 November 2016. Hasan Abdal is best known for Panja sahib, 'The Hand mark of Guru Nanak on a boulder.' According to a version, Guru Nanak reached Hassan Abdal through Attock. From Khairabad the Guru crossed Attok River in Vaisakh 1578 Bikrami and reached Hasan Abdal, now famous for Panja Sahib.[2] (Giani Gian Singh, p.286). This is an Ancient city situated at a distance of 45 kilometres from Rawalpindi to the west side of the mountain. It is hilly area. A few places have natural fountains. Sainly persons usually take abode there. Hasan Abdal was established around a *dharamsala* constructed by a '*gujar*' (person rearing milk animals) named Hassan. The name of the place 'Hassan Abdal' is said to have origin in the name Hassan itself [3]. 'Hassan's grave still exists near the hill'. [4] Guru Nanak is said to have met Hassan while he was looking after his pet animals. He presented milk to the Guru, which was taken both by the master and Mardana. [5].

As per a legend Guru Nanak and Mardana had been traveling in the heat of summer. Reaching Hasan Abdal he sat in the cool shadow of a peepal tree and started singing hymns in praise of the divine on the music of rebec played by Mardana. Congregations of people from all around the area gathered around the Guru. Keen to listen to the discourses of the Guru, the people turned up from far and near. They were entranced by the sublime hymns. Close by a fakir named Wali Qandhari used to live on the hill. Wali Qandhari' belonged to Rafzi Sect of Shias. His original name was Yar Ali'. [6] His ego was hurt seeing the large gathering around the Guru but could not help. After the singing came to an end, Mardana expressed that he felt very thirsty. When he inquired where to obtain water to drink, he learned that scarcity of water plagued the area. The only water available had been diverted by Wali Qandhari (Kandahar), dwelling at the top of the hill who had a reservoir fed by a natural spring. Guru Nanak advised Mardana to walk up the hill, introduce himself, and request a drink from the Wali's spring. Mardana went to the spring of water near Wali Qandhari's residence.

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Under the blazing noonday sun, going up the hill was no easy task. Mardana had to climb mostly on his hand, and knees as the stones were slippery. Panting and fluffing, he went up to Wali Qandari and requested for water<sup>5</sup>.

Wali Qandari looked up and said "Who are you and what brings you here?"

"I and my master are on our way to Kartarpur. I felt thirsty. As there was no water anywhere near, I came to see if you could help me".

"What is your name?"

"Mardana"

"Who is your Master? What is his name?"

"Guru Nanak: A Hindu by caste but a man of God: A prophet: A Nobel soul."

"A prophet, and a Hindu, you said? Go and get water from him. I have nothing for you an infidel."

Mardana returned deeply disappointed and narrated all to Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak said, "You must not have displayed enough humility. Remember! We *fakirs* have these weapons; weakness, humility and sweet words. Go back and humbly request for water". Mardana gathered strength and went up the hill perspiring. "You are back again?"

"Salaam-a-Lekam: My master sends you greetings and requests for some water for me", Mardana bowed and said softly. "Go away and ask your master to find you the water. I cannot understand how a Muslim can accept a Hindu as his Peer. You are an apostate and can expect no mercy from me". Dejected and depressed, Mardana returned to Guru Nanak and told what had happened again.

Mardana returned to the Guru in a very sullen mood and told all what happened at the hill to Guru Nanak. Guru Nanak moved a small boulder nearby: Lo! The water gushed out. Actually this was an outlet of the spring at the hill. Gushing out water of the spring down below, drained the spring at the hill. This angered Wali Qandhari who was watching this. In anger he pushed a huge boulder downwards. As the boulder rolled down on to the Guru, the Guru stopped it with his hand. The mark of his palm was etched on the boulder instantly. Seeing Guru Nanak unharmed and the boulder stopped by the Guru on his palm, Wali Qandhari realized his fault and ran down the hill and held discussions with the Guru, which are recorded hereunder.

Wali, "What is your name"?

Guru Nanak "My name is Nanak Nirankari"

Wali, "Whose follower are you"?

Guru Nanak, "I am God's man".

Wali "Is your God alive or dead"?

Guru Nanak, "My God is everyone's God and is ever living".

Wali "How can one reach him"?

Guru Nanak: "He is everywhere. You just have to remember and He will listen to you".

Guru Nanak told him about God's True Existence.

(ਯਕ ਅਰਜ ਗੁਫਤਮ ਪੇਸਿ ਤੇ ਦਰ ਗੋਸ ਕੁਨ ਕਰਤਾਰ ॥ ਹਕਾ ਕਬੀਰ ਕਰੀਮ ਤੂ ਬੇਐਬ ਪਰਵਦਗਾਰ ॥੧॥ -  
*Yak Arz Guftam pes to dar Gas kun Kartar Haka Kabir karim tun beaib Pervardgar'*)

[Tilang Mahila 1 SGGS: 721]

**'I utter, one supplication before thee. Hear it 'O' my Creator you are the True, Great, Merciful and Faultless Cherisher. The world is perishable; know it for certain in your mind. Azrail, death's courier, has caught me by the hair of head. Yet I know it not in the least in my heart. When I fail and the time of last prayer comes, there shall be no one to rescue me. Night and day, I wander in avarice and think of and do evil. I do not, ever do good deeds, I am unfortunate as also miserly negligent, shameless and without Your fear, O Lord. Says Nanak, I am your slave and the dust of the feet of Your servants.'**

**Guru Nanak told him to hold his ego and anger and treat all men as equal since all are the creation of One and the same God. He blessed him that, "Your lamp will keep burning."**

Wali Qandhari was enchanted by Guru's discourse and fell at Guru Nanak's feet and asked for forgiveness. Guru Nanak told him that love is the one and the only thing by which one could win over God and His people.

A magnificent Gurdwara, known as Panja Sahib has been built at the place. The stone, with the imprint of Guru Nanak's hand (*Panja*) forms part of the pool adjacent to the Gurdwara. The town of Hassan Abdal is now called Panja Sahib.

### **Gurdwara Panja Sahib**

Guru Nanak stayed at Hassan Abdal for some days and then proceeded towards Kartarpur on the main Peshawar-Lahore road constructed by Sher Shah Suri.

Hassan Abdal is 48 km from Rawalpindi. The spring Guru Nanak opened continues to provide pure water which flows from a natural fountain beneath the boulder where his hand print is embedded. Despite attempts to remove it, the guru's hand print adorns the

boulder to this day and can still be seen at the *sarovar* of Gurdwara Sahib Panja Sahib in Pakistan. [7]

The control of the administration of the Gurdwara remained with the hereditary Mahants. After Mahant Mittha Singh passed away a march was led by Bhai Kartar Singh Jhabbar to get control of Gurdwara. The Jatha reached Panja Sahib on 18 November, 1920 and the S.G.P.C. gained possession.. A Singh resides in the campus of the Gurdwara from the board and maintains the pious *Maryada*. [8]

Our travelling has been during nights only and we were not able to observe the area or general condition of the people en-route. After getting down the train we boarded into Government organized buses paying the nominal charges of Rs 30/- per passenger and reached the room allotted in the Panja Sahib complex. This rate of bus travel was the same from and to all the railway stations during our journey. A 12x12 room was allotted for 10 people. It was difficult to sleep in such cold in one blanket which I could arrange. Since the day was going to dawn soon, I preferred to have bath, go to Gurdwara Sahib; have a dip in water tank around the Gurdwara and *darshan* of the hand mark (*panja*) of Guru Nanak.

### **Mark of Guru Nanak Hand**

As I proceeded towards the Gurdwara, I found the total calm, serenity all over in the early hours of the morning. The Gurdwara appeared majestic in the flood of coloured lights. The water of the tank was extremely clean. Large fish of many colours swam in the water with great magnanimity. Water was flowing out of the *chashma* (fountain) from near the boulder thrown on Guru Nanak by Wali Kandhari. What a heavenly feeling to be there at this hour of time! I felt really blessed to enjoy such a magnanimous moment and sat in silent in front of the sanctum sanctorum to meditate. I recalled the great event how in the scorching heat, Mardana feeling thirsty was asked by the Guru to climb up the hill and get a sip of water. I could feel the limping Mardana climb three times to hear a big 'NO' each time and also requesting Guru Nanak to save his life. I also felt the water gushing out once the Guru removed a stone and flowing out majestically in the form of stream which it still does till date. There was no surprise watching thirsty Mardana rushing towards the water and gulping it down as if it was the first time he had seen the water. Next came to my mind the scene of roaring boulder coming down from the hill which scares Mardana away but Guru Nanak sitting calmly taking out his palm to stop. I had not heard anyone else doing this except the great Guru Nanak. It was no doubt amazing! Feeling the presence of Guru Nanak nearby itself was so solacing and ecstatic to be beyond words to describe.

It was quite a time when I had been linked to the great scene when I heard the reverberating *shabads* sung by the Ragis from Gurdwara. These added to the heavenly atmosphere. By this time it was about 5 AM when *path* of 5 Banis started and I had the privilege of enjoying the *path* as well in full mental peace.

### Sanctum sanctorum Panja Sahib Gurdwara

Gurdwara complex was very huge with inbuilt accommodation for over 3000 people and a school for the children of the Sikhs residing there in. It was told that about 300 families of Sikhs were in Hasan Abdal. A very elegant residential block has been constructed. There is a school with other facilities in the Gurdwara complex. The Gurdwara is being maintained well by Evacuee Trust Property Board, Government of Pakistan and many development works like 100 additional rooms in the residential complex, double storey langar hall, landscaping of the park, installation of solar energy panels for uninterrupted power supply, overhead water tank with a capacity of 5,000 Gallons and marble flooring of the entire complex.

The largest fair of *Vaisakhi* is organized here when thousands of Sikh pilgrims come to the place from all over the world. Congregations of devotees take place four times a year, and *Gurbani* (from Holy Guru Granth Sahib) is being recited everyday at the Gurdwara Sahib. □

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## Sikh Soldiers' Valour And Laurels In The Uk

*AMRIK SINGH BANSE\**

The Sikhs' contribution to the British Armed Forces during the World Wars I and II has received a major boost and recognition in the United Kingdom with the building of statues of Sikh soldiers in the recent years. They will act as shining beacons to mirror and retell the lost history of the Sikhs' valour and sacrifices in those wars, which had been largely ignored and archived. They will also show how the Sikh ancestors earned a place for the future generations by sacrificing their lives while fighting against fascism and repression.

Most Sikh families living in Britain have strong wartime connections but were saddened that their elders' sacrifices in the wars for the cause of British, democracy and humanity had not been shared in the country. They are pleased that those sacrifices and contributions, will at last be known from visits to the memorial sites and that their permanent feature will keep the Sikhs' war-time sacrifices and heroics alive for ever. The Sikhs view these developments as a fitting tribute to their soldiers and hope they will increase awareness and appreciation of the soldiers' role in the World Wars as well as inspire their youth to join the British forces without having to compromise their articles of faith and identity.

The memorials patron Peter Singh Viridi put it succinctly: "The sacrifices of Sikhs who have served Great Britain will surely never be forgotten, now that the community initiative has led to the creation of permanent memorials at various places, including the centre of remembrance, the National Memorial, Arboretum, Staffordshire. The monuments will undoubtedly inspire future generations to follow in the footsteps of their forebears and contribute great things to our society."

A substantial number of Sikhs served the British Indian Army throughout the British Raj and served in every theatre of war on four continents with a unique record of courage and were described as "**Lions of the Great War**". The BBC documentary in 2010 revealed that in World War One incredibly more Indians volunteered to fight for Britain than all the Scots, Welsh and Irish combined and up to third of them were Sikhs, whose heroics saved Britain from German tyranny.

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The Battle of Saragarhi remains one of the greatest battles of immense courage and bravery in Sikh military history, which shook the world at the time. Described as “Black Lions”, 21 Sikh soldiers held off an Afghan attack of thousands for several hours. All 21 fought to the death instead of surrendering. The British Parliament halted their session to give a standing ovation to the martyred 21 Sikhs. The UNESCO described it as one of eight most inspiring stories of collective bravery in human history.

General Sir Frank Messervy described the Sikhs’ fighting role as: “In the last two world wars 83,005 turban wearing Sikh soldiers were killed and 109,045 were wounded fighting for the British Empire. During shell fire, they had no other head protection but the turban, the symbol of their faith.”

Sir Winston Churchill was equally laudable about the Sikhs’ contribution: **“British people are highly indebted and obliged to Sikhs for a long time. I know that within this country we needed their help twice (in two world wars) and they did help us very well. As a result of their timely help, we are today able to live with honour, dignity, and independence. In the wars, they fought and died for us, wearing the turbans.”**

Praising the Sikhs’ bravery, F. Yeats-Brown wrote in *Martial India* in 1945: “A remarkable people, the Sikhs, with their ten Prophets, five distinguishing marks and their baptised rite of water stirred with steel; a people who have made history and will make it again.”

Despite the lavish glory and praise from highly reputed dignitaries, the Sikhs’ contribution in World Wars had been sadly overlooked in the UK for far too long. However the community’s own initiative and financial support through Gurdwaras made a breakthrough and achieved the long awaited deserved recognition for that contribution in 2014 when the first statue of a Sikh soldier was put up in Gravesend in Kent with lot of grace and glory.



The first statue commemorated the life of a fighter pilot Squadron Leader Mahinder Singh Pujji DFC and was unveiled by Air Vice Marshall Edward Stringer on 28.11.2014. It is a full standing 8ft bronze statue on a plinth and is a permanent reminder of Pujji’s heroic exploits in Britain, Europe, North Africa, the Middle East and Burma. It was crafted by Douglas Jennings, who described the pilot as “an amazing hero and a willing volunteer to fight for the British and that bowls me over.” The statue cost £70,000, which was largely raised by the sangat at the town’s Sri Guru Nanak Darbar Gurdwara.

Pujji came to Britain in 1940 and joined the Royal Airforce in the same year and soon distinguished himself. He refused to wear the RAF protective head gear because of his faith and opted to fly with his turban instead. Pujji told the BBC in 2010 that during his fighting days his turban symbolised him in the UK. His turban not only gave him recognition but “when I stood in a queue at a railway station I was told sir I did not have to join it and when I reached the counter to buy the ticket I was told I did not need one.” He was awarded the Distinguished Flying Cross for his services and was the longest surviving fighter pilot and died on 18.9.2010 in Gravesend, aged 92.



That first statue started a trend. The next one was installed on 1.11.2015 at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire at the cost of £22,000, mostly donated by the Sikhs. The initiative to create the monument was led by the army reservist and founder of the Sikh Memorial Fund, Captain Jagjeet Singh Sohal, who said, “It is a tremendous achievement for Sikhs to have another national monument of our forebears, who left villages the first time to venture abroad and fight for Great Britain in harsh conditions. We now have symbols of remembrance. They will inspire youth and others from all backgrounds.” The statue of the soldier has a large turban, a long flowing beard and badges, very much the image of a Sikh soldier during that period. “It has the look and feel of a Sikh soldier with uniform and the medals that he would have been eligible to for his service at the time,” Sohal said.

The next one was the 10-foot high bronze statue near the Guru Nanak Gurdwara Sahib in Smethwick, West Midlands. Unveiled on 4.11.2018, the Sandwell Council hailed it as the “Lions of the Great War monument and a stirring tribute to the community.” It depicts a turbaned Sikh soldier with a rifle in left hand and chest thrust proudly. It stands on a six-foot granite plinth with inscriptions of the regiments who fought for the UK from 1914-1918.



The commander of Donnington, Telford based 11th Signal and West Midlands Brigade, Brigadier Richard Carter said, the statue represented the ultimate sacrifice that Sikhs made protecting the unprotected and fighting those who did harm. “It also represents close bonds between the Sikh community

and the Armed Forces, forged through a shared history of well over 100 years and everlasting shared values of service and courage,” he added.

The £20,000 cost of the sculpture was met by Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Smethwick, whose then President Jatinder Singh said it had made them proud to be Sikh and proud to be British. The Sandwell Council provided space and its sculptor, Luke Perry, the Black Country artist of Industrial Heritage Stronghold, was incredibly proud to associate himself with the monument and said at its heart it was a statement of gratitude for the actions of a people who gave their lives for the British independence when they had not yet achieved their own. “When I realised more than 1.5 million Indian soldiers had been sent to World War I, I just could not understand why their contribution had been ignored for so long in this country,” he added. An official of the Gurdwara told me the sculpture had also become an exhibition and an educational symbol for the Sikh turban.

In Leeds a bust and a statute of a Sikh soldier are indoors in different settings, unlike the others which are outdoor elsewhere in parks. The bust is of Captain Ishar Singh, who fought in both the first and second World Wars and was the first Sikh to receive the Victoria Cross for the most conspicuous bravery and devotion to duty on 10.4.1921. Set on a tall base, it was installed at Khalsa Science Academy Primary School at Alwoodley on 11.3.2017.



The other is a half-size cast bronze colour statue of a Sikh soldier, standing with a sword in each hand. Placed on a high base, it is one meter high. Crafted by sculptor Jane Robbins, it was unveiled on 10.11.2018 when it was exhibited in the Voices of Asian Exhibition at the Leeds City Museum. It cost £5000. The statue was the creation of Balbir Singh Saund and colleagues Gurmukh Singh Deogan, Manjit Singh Lall and Mohan Singh Garewal, who laid wreaths to honour the Sikh soldiers during the Remembrance Day for several years. The idea took a definite turn when they laid the wreath in 2017, which marked the 100 years of the First World War. As there was no monument of a Sikh soldier in sight, they thought of having a permanent statue installed in a museum.

The idea, Saund told me, struck chord with the local Sikh community and the required funds were raised within a year. “We are pleased the idea has worked. As lot of people,

children and student visit the museum for learning, our monument, with its unique appearance, attracts their attention and raises their awareness about our soldiers' contribution and our identity, which we believe has begun to earn us greater respect and recognition as a community," Saund said.

Another bronze statue of a Sikh soldier was unveiled on 30.11.2019 in pride of a place in West Yorkshire in the Rose Gardens, Greenhead Park in Huddersfield, which has a vibrant Sikh community. The memorial was supported by the British Army, the Royal British Legion, the Heritage Trust, the Kirklees Council and army veterans. The sturdy and durable 6ft bronze statue is based on a 4ft plinth and cost £65,000. It was unveiled by Lord Lieutenant Ed Anderson of West Yorkshire. The architect behind the creation for the statue was Kalvinder Singh Bhullar, who formed a Sikh Soldiers Organisation, comprising of local Sikhs, including Manjit Singh Kang, who shared his initial idea and vision.

The SOS team worked for ten years to make the statue a reality. On completion, Bhullar described the sculpture as stunning and its artwork emotionally moving. The memorial's setting, he told me, gripped the minds and hearts of well-wishers at the launch ceremony. Bhullar's mission to build the statue started in 2009. When attending the Remembrance Day March to lay a wreath to pay homage to Sikh soldiers, he was asked by some marchers, "What was I doing there?" The question puzzled him. After a serious thought and sharing it with Kang, he realised it was the lack of knowledge about the Sikh soldiers' contribution in the UK that prompted the marchers to question his presence at the ceremony.

That stirred Bhullar's ambition to erect a statue and raise awareness about the Sikh soldiers' role in the wars. He received an overwhelming support from the local Sikh community. He had inventive ideas about how he wanted to achieve the mission. He got the statue made in Mumbai and created a story of its own. Like the Sikh soldiers, who came all the way from India to fight in alien lands, their statue also came all the way from the same land. The plinth was made locally by a quarry worker with Yorkshire stone and gave the statue a local touch.

"Amalgamating the statue built with material from India and the base made with local substance gave the statue a unique image and a message to those, who would visit the memorial, to strengthen community relations in the same way and learn to value and

appreciate others' contribution to the society," Bhullar told me with a sense of pride and satisfaction.

There is the long established Chattri Memorial in Brighton, where over 4000 injured Indian soldiers were hospitalised in the Royal Pavilion Dome and Corn Exchange during 1914-15. Having come from villages and then fought in hostile lands, the soldiers were surprised by the opulent of the new surroundings they were hospitalised in. More than that they were given good care to cooperate.

The memorial is sited 500 feet above the city on the South Downs near Patcham. When 53 of those Sikh and Hindu soldiers succumbed to death they were cremated nearby. In 1921 the memorial was built on the exact spot where their funeral pyre took place. Designed by E.C. Henrique of Bombay, it lies in secluded and sombre surroundings. It stands on three large blocks of granite slabs which lie on the original concrete crematory base, topped with a grey stone plinth and a hollow dome on eight pillars built from Sicilian marble. The whole edifice rises to 29 feet. It was unveiled by the Prince of Wales on 21.9.1921. A memorial panel with names of 53 soldiers, who were cremated here, was added later.

For several years the Undivided India Ex-Services Association, led by Slough-based Lt Col Assa Singh Johal, took a party to the memorial to pay homage to the dead heroes annually on every second Sunday of June. The ceremony including prayers, ardas and laying of wreaths. Among the dead soldiers was Johal's 27-year-old father Subedar Manta Singh, whose grandson Jaimal Singh Johal told me it was always a moving moment for him but remembering his grandfather gave him a sense of relief after paying his respects to him and other soldiers. I attended the remembrance service on three occasions. On every occasion when I looked back as I walked away from the memorial, it looked forlorn in secluded and sombre surroundings without people.

The membership of the association gradually dwindled and the visits also curtailed. They were revived in 2000 when a Brighton secondary school teacher Davinder Singh Dhillon formed the Chattri Memorial Group. For a few years he was the lone driving force behind the group and led visits to the monument with a few well-wishers. "For the last several years some 400 people have been attending the service," Dhillon told me in March 2021. He received support from the local council, British Legion, the British armed forces and the Indian High Commission. "The popularity of the memorial and the unique semi-religious and semi-military service has gone beyond Brighton. I organise and attend the

service with passion as our soldiers deserve respect for their sterling role,” said Dhillon, who was given the Points of Light award by the Prime Minister.

A bronze statue of Havildar Ishar Singh, who led 21 Sikh soldiers in a fight against several thousands of Afghan tribesmen during the Battle of Saragarhi in 1897 was



inaugurated on 12.9.2021. It honours the battle’s 21 brave hearts, a symbol of unprecedented valour and determination. The statue, first of its kind in the world about the battle is on Well Lane near the Guru Nanak Gurdwara in Wednesfield, Wolver-hampton. The land was leased to the Sikhs for 99 years by the City Wolverhampton Council after sympathetically landscaping it.

The idea was initiated and spearheaded by local Councillor Bhupinder Singh Gakhal, who felt the need for such a memorial while attending the Remembrance Day March. “I used to carry a wreath depicting our Khanda and Saragarhi written on it in bold letters. Many questioned me what Saragarhi meant and what connection it had with the Remembrance Day. I was surprised by their ignorance about such an iconic battle. That prompted me to put up a statue of Havildar Ishar Singh,” he told me in March 2021.

Luke Perry crafted the 10ft high statue, placed on a 6ft plinth. The base has the names of the 21 Sikhs and a brief account of the battle’s history and some of its key moments. A galvanised back-drop steel screen depicts the scene of the battle amidst the mountains and streams in the surroundings. It is a proud insignia for the Sikhs.

Perry described the statue, built at the cost of £100,000, as an “international symbol” of tremendous importance for the entire humanity. Working on it, he said was a very sensitive process for him, given the soldier’s historic past, courage and glory. He ensured everything was correct about the statue- “clothing, turban knots, facial expressions, body language and correctly stretched sword in Bhai Ishar Singh’s hand.” The launch of the statue began with Akhandpath at the Gurdwara and the unveiling ceremony was performed after the path’s Bhog. The Akal Takht in Amritsar, Giani Harpreet Singh attended the ceremony.

Plans to build another statue have been finalised. It is of Hardit Singh Malik, world’s first Royal Flying Corps Sikh fighter pilot and will be built in Southampton. As the first

turbaned pilot, Malik became famous as the Flying Sikh. He came to the UK as 14-year-old to Baliol College at the Oxford University in 1908 and became member of the Royal Flying Corps during World War 1.

Malik was a keen golfer and cricketer and played cricket for Sussex. After completing his mission with the British he joined the Indian Civil Service in 1947 and was appointed the Indian Ambassador to France. However it was his role as a brave and a skilful fighter pilot from 1917 to 1919 that earned him laurels worldwide. The design of the memorial statue will capture the spirit and endeavour of the courageous pilot. It is being crafted by Luke Perry and is programmed to be unveiled in April 2023.

Another major national monument – Sikh War Memorial- is also in the pipe line. It has been initiated by the first turban-wearing Sikh MP and shadow minister for railways, Tanmanjeet Singh Dhesi, who stressed that the immense contribution of Sikh soldiers in defeating fascism could not be whitewashed out of history. Their sacrifices, he said needed to be recognised and honoured with a befitting memorial in Central London. With that in view Dhesi formed the National Memorial Trust to plan and see the memorial through. The UK Government agreed to support it and allocate a fitting spot in central part of the capital.

When Dhesi launched the project in Parliament on 30.1.2018 he said while war memorials for soldiers existed in London, there was none for turbaned Sikh soldiers, who sacrificed the most for the cause of Britain. He received the Government and cross party support for it. The UK Communities Secretary Sajid Javed said the part played by the Sikh soldiers really stood out and “we are indebted to all those services and a Sikh war memorial in our nation’s capital will honour their sacrifice and ensure that this part of our shared history is never forgotten.” The progress, Dhesi told me in March 2021, was steady, but given the location was Westminster, consultation work with the authorities and others was taking long as it was hugely detailed and painstaking.

Besides those monuments, several other initiatives, in different ways and places, have raised the prestige of the heroic role of the Sikh soldiers. In September 2017 a documentary film about the battle of Saragarhi: The True Story was shown on the 120th anniversary of the battle at the National Memorial, Staffordshire. It was created by Captain Jay Singh Johal, the army reservist. In 2020 another ground-breaking historical film – The Sikh Soldier- why tell the story? was released. The key architects in making the film were Dr Opinderjit Kaur Takhar, Captain Jay Singh Sohal, Peter Bance, Gurmel Singh Kandola, Dr Stephen Badsey and Gurinder Singh Mann.

A war memorial and remembrance garden was opened in Bristol on 4.4.2019 as a tribute to 83,000 Sikh soldiers, who lost their lives in the two World Wars. The opening ceremony was performed in the presence of Panj Piaras in their full traditional robes. A special memorial room has been dedicated at the elite Royal Military Academy Sandhurst in Surrey in remembrance of the 2.5 million Indian soldiers, who fought for the British. On display in the room are more than 100 objects, which include medals and rare portraits of the Indian soldiers. The memorial is well deserved by the UK Sikhs as 22% of Sikhs here had a family member who served in World War I and 34% had a family member who served in World War II.

The Sikhs' accomplishments as steely soldiers received another boost in August 2020 when a Sikh soldier was featured on the homepage of the British Army website. It told a story of Chamandeep and portrayed the Sikhs' versatility and bravery in the army. Another welcome gesture from the British forces was the allowance it gave to the Sikh soldiers to form their own defence Kirtan Jatha, which was supported by the Sikh Network. The Sikh soldiers were inspired to form the Jatha by the images they had seen of Sikh soldiers performing Kirtan during World War One in the trenches of France.

The UK Sikhs are pleased by the recognition received to their role in the forces through varied initiatives by the community and those by the authorities and the British forces, which demonstrates to them that they have been considered as an integral part of the British Army over a long period of time. They also view the achievements as an encouraging sign and believe the British Army is keen to recruit Sikhs from the local talent. The positive gestures have broken some barriers and revived the Sikh military tradition on British soil resulting in the Sikh youth feeling inspired to join the forces and keep their elders' legacy alive. Even sabat surat Sikh guards have been recruited to protect the queen.

No doubt the memorials are a welcome tribute to the Sikhs' bravery and will ensure their glorious contribution in the wars is never ignored and forgotten. Significantly they are a stark marker and a sharp rebuke to the anti-immigrant bigotry of the 1960s when racial apartheid and segregation were practised in the region, much to the pain of the immigrants, who took jobs which the indigenous people were unwilling to do. They will remain a living example of the impermanence of hatred and biases and their emergence shows the Sikhs' fightback to win their rightful place in the society and the region. □



## Sikh Coalition to support US Marine Officer to file lawsuit if not allowed turban and beard

CONTRIBUTED\*



First Lieutenant Sukhbir Singh Toor, an active duty officer in the US Marine Corps (USMC) who has been seeking to serve with his Sikh articles of faith, is now preparing to file a lawsuit if his beard and turban are not permanently allowed.

He is being supported by Sikh Coalition, a community organisation in the US, along with their pro bono counsel at law firm Winston & Strawn LLP. "If a full accommodation is granted to First Lt Toor, it would be the first, to our knowledge, for an active duty Sikh Marine. At present, First Lt Toor has received an incomplete and flawed accommodation offered by the Department of the Navy (DoN), which recognises his right to maintain his articles of faith but still imposes undue restrictions on his free exercise of religion," Sikh Coalition said in a statement.

Sukhbir Singh Toor has served with distinction in the USMC since October 2017. "For more than three years, I have proven my commitment to excelling in the US Marine Corps and defending my country," he said. "Now, I am simply asking for a religious accommodation that will permanently allow my turban and beard so that I can once again be true to my faith while continuing my career of service."

Toor, who currently serves as a Fire Support Officer for 3rd Battalion, 11th Marines, applied for a religious accommodation with assistance from the Sikh Coalition and its partners in March 2021. The DoN's response to his request, delivered in June, prohibited him from wearing his turban and maintaining his beard in vast swaths of his current military career. After he appealed that decision in June, the DoN responded with an updated accommodation in August that recognised his right to maintain his Sikh articles of faith, but still imposed unacceptable restrictions on his religious exercise - specifically, he would be forced to remove his turban and beard whenever assigned to a ceremonial

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*\*Courtesy: The Times of India (Forwarded by S. Santokh Singh Bains, Chicago, USA)*

unit, and to shave his beard when deployed and receiving hostile fire or imminent danger. "Accordingly, we are now considering our final options before litigation," the Sikh Coalition spokesperson said.

As a younger man, Toor thought he had no choice but to compromise his faith in order to serve his country as a Marine due to the branch's track record of denying such religious accommodation. He, thus, made the difficult decision to shave his beard and cut his hair, but committed to return to his articles of faith at the earliest opportunity. On the eve of his promotion to Captain later this fall, he decided to apply for an accommodation in the hope that his record of service would favourably influence his request.

"First Lt Toor has proven his commitment to the ideals of the Marine Corps and his ability to defend his country," said Giselle Klapper, Sikh Coalition's senior staff attorney. "Unfortunately, the Marine Corps only wants him to practice his faith in ways and at times that are convenient to them; they would rather derail his promising career than acknowledge his right to practice Sikhi. We urge General Berger to review his record of service and grant him a full and complete accommodation that will allow him to continue to excel in his career with his articles of faith."

The Corps' focus on aesthetic preferences about 'uniformity' over either equality of opportunity under the law or even mission readiness is a serious disappointment," added Amandeep Singh Sidhu, pro bono co-counsel for the Sikh Coalition at Winston & Strawn LLP. "The Army and the Air Force have both been made stronger by Sikh service members who serve honourably with their articles of faith; it is time for the Marine Corps to live up to the standard set by these other branches."

The Sikh Coalition, along with the pro bono counsel at Winston & Strawn LLP and McDermott Will & Emery, and litigation partners the Becket Fund for Religious Liberty have helped more than 30 Sikh Americans in the US Army and US Air Force secure their accommodations. "In addition to First Lt Toor, we are currently assisting other active duty and pre-accession clients apply for religious accommodations. We also recognise the important work of the American Civil Liberties Union, Baker Hostetler, and the Sikh American Veterans Alliance on this campaign," the Sikh Coalition release stated. Sikhs were able to serve with their religious articles of faith in the United States military until a prohibitive blanket policy was put in place in 1981. Since 2009,

when the Sikh Coalition launched a campaign to reverse this discriminatory policy, nearly 100 Sikh Americans have successfully served in the US Armed Forces with their articles of faith.

"No organisation likes to be told that change is necessary, but many of the arguments that the USMC is using today to deny a full religious accommodation are the same faulty arguments that were used to try and deny my religious rights to serve in the US Army." said Major Simratpal Singh, an instructor at the US Military Academy, West Point. In 2016, a federal court issued a historic ruling in favour of Singh that further paved the way for the US Army to permanently change their policy. "I'm now just one of the many cases that demonstrate that our Sikh articles of faith pose no barrier to service," Major Simratpal Singh said. He added that it's time for the USMC to recognise that fact. □

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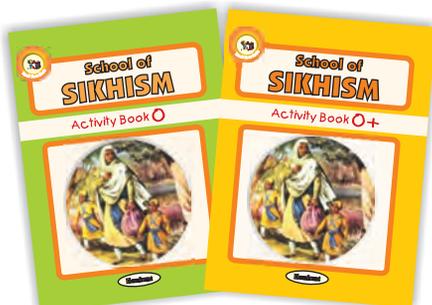
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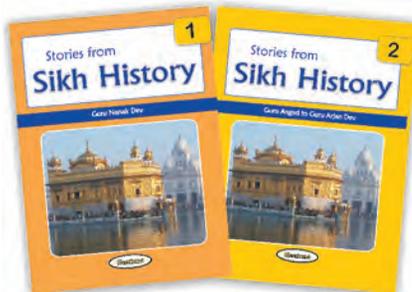
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## Raunak Singh: the Sikh who leads relief work all over India

*NISHTHA GOEL \**

Growing up in a religious household in Cuttack Odisha. Singh was never too far from a gurudwara.

Raunak Singh, founder of a non-profit aid and relief organization -- Sikh Aid, has taken it upon himself to create a world that believes in equality and charity. Through Sikh Aid, he has been reaching out to various corners of the earth helping those in need and in turn rekindling people's trust in humanity.

In today's intolerant world where judgements are made based on one's race, religion and beliefs, the crucial need of the hour is the promotion of love and revivment of our faith in mankind. Though this change in attitude cannot happen overnight, even simple acts of kindness can go a long way in attaining a world that believes in equality and charity.

The idea of taking the concept of langar in Sikh community kitchen to people or regions that needed it the most gave birth to Sikh Aid organization in 2017 in Cuttack, Odisha. Singh recalls the moment vividly as it was the during first wave of covid 19 in india when daily wage workers were travelling by foot to their homes due to lockdown.

Singh provided aid to them by providing them langar and drinking water.

Sikh Aid is based on the principles of the founder of Sikhism, Guru Nanak Dev ji which is "*Naam jaapo , Kirat karo , Vand chakho*".

In India, Sikh Aid has played a prominent role in providing relief to various areas hit by natural calamities like the Vishakhapatnam cyclone, floods in Jammu and Kashmir, and Gujarat earthquake, among others. "Over the last three to four years, we have developed a fantastic team in India," says Raunak Singh CEO of Sikh Aid.

Though Sikh Aid is a small organization, with the backing of a large group of volunteers and generous donors, it has organized aid missions all over the India.

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*\*Courtesy: The India Saga*



Raunak Singh provides a basic idea on how the missions work: Each mission comprises of a volunteer group or aid workers who undergo risk assessments to ensure they are safe when they are travelling. The organization gets access to local contacts like churches or mosques to get a clearer idea on language, cultures and sensitivities of the region. “Once in the country, the team spends days or months

working with the local groups to make sure that what they do is effective. We share our experiences on aid work to enhance it.”

Funding comes mainly from All community; Sikh Aid does not receive any government funding. “About 50 percent is funded by the Sikh community from around the world. If it is a major disaster, then the gurudwaras step forward as well,” says Singh, adding that the organization has had a lot of non-Sikh supporters in india.

In the next five years, Sikh Aid aims to develop a larger team of staff and train more individuals and aid workers to do more operations. “Especially longer terms operations in development and education in places like Odisha . What I would like to do in India is health clinics for women and children so that women have the most basic health care. And in Africa, sanitization and water.” Says singh humbly.

In conclusion the selfless Sikh wants “people to follow in the footpath of Sikh Aid so that we build something around the world and give something to the next generation. Build bridges not walls, reach out without having any issues on faith, race or religion and be the humanitarian we are meant to be.”



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In view of the global readership, **The Sikh Review** is publishing Matrimonial Column in its every edition to extend co-operation to Gursikh families - living across the world – In search for a suitable Gursikh Match for their grown up children.

Interested parents can send their brief matter to us.

– *Publisher*

## A Tribute to Sardar Ujagar Singh Bawa



The Sikh Review and its global family is deeply saddened at the passing away of our long time Member subscriber, well-wisher and contributor Sardar Ujagar Singh Bawa, age 93, on October 7th 2021, son of the late Darshan Kaur Bawa and Dhayan Singh Bawa.

He passed peacefully at home, with family by his side. His was a life of service to the community and to Waheguru, marked by several hundred children that came through Sikh Youth Forum camps, and the thousands of students he nurtured over 35 years as a college professor. We are grateful for the legacy he leaves behind in his family, friends, and multiple generations of students.

He is survived by his children, Indira, Devinder, and Harinder, his grandchildren, Pradeep, Madhuri, Gursharan, Ranjit, Jasleen, Beyant, Sajjan, Jeevan and Kiran, his daughter-in-law Preet, son-in-law Bhushan, granddaughter-in-law Camila, and grandson-in-law Anthony.

Like his life partner (Late) Ranjit Kaur, Dr. Bawa was a foundational member of the Sikh diaspora, having helped establish GNFA, the Washington Sikh Center, and other Gurdwaras around the US. He was a driving force behind the Sikh Youth Forum, a non-profit that held over 40 Sikh youth camps around the US starting in the mid 1970s. He earned three Master's degrees, including one from the Wharton School at UPenn, and a PhD from Cornell University. He received numerous teaching awards for his work as a professor, as well as academic accolades from his universities and other organizations. His early work had a strong hand in establishing economic policy for India's developing economy as well as helping lay the foundation for the break-up of the US phone monopoly. He eschewed ritualism, chauvinism, and rhetoric, choosing instead to quietly display and model the ideals of his faith

The entire team of the Sikh Review joins the bereaved family in their prayer to Akal Purakh for the peace of the departed soul, and the strength to the family to accept the hukam of the Almighty Waheguru.

*Ed – The Sikh Review*



## A Subtle Attack on Sikhi in Punjab

Dear Sir,

I have been watching a Serial "Udaryan" on COLOUR TV since last few months in Vancouver. It is based on the story of a young girl from a Sandhu Jat family of Moga married into a VIRK Family of Punjab. The girl is crazy to settle in Canada. Leaving aside the other details of the serial, my objection is based on the SUBTLE ATTACK ON SIKHI in Punjab.

All the actors, in the serial, are Sikh Jat (with names ending with SINGH) but shown CLEAN SHAVEN. The most serious objection is they indulge in HINDU RITES for family functions. For example, during Ganesh Chaturthi, they indulged in GANESH PUJA. I attach the Video Clip where both families are doing DURGA PUJA. Just have a look of the Video and you will find MATA MURTI Installed in the VIRK House.

I wonder NO ONE has reported the matter to Akal Takhat Jathedar to intervene?

**Hardev Singh Virk**  
Vancouver , Canada

Dr. Hardev Singh Virk observation is well placed due to systematic distortion of customs being practiced in Punjab. I would strongly recommend you take up a factual issue with Colour TV, Director and Producer of Udayan Serial at your end with full details of distortion as observed for immediate correction and an apology .

In fact a similar course of action must be adopted by other viewers who may be following this serial with regular follow up.

**Editor - The Sikh Review**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Dr Karminder Singh Dhillon's Interview

Dear Sir,

Khodos to the entire team of 'The Sikh Review' for publishing yet another excellent issue (October 2021) of the journal.

The interview of Dr. Karminder Singh Dhillon is truly thought provoking and another rational logical view point.

I look forward to many more materials based on 'Sikh Philosophy' from a rational point of view.

**Satnam Singh**  
Vasant kunj, New Delhi

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## A garden based on Sikh scriptures set up by EcoSikh

A first-of-its-kind garden based on Sikh scriptures has been set up at Patto Hira Singh village in Moga district with a view to motivating people towards environmental conservation and preservation of traditional flora and fauna.

Nearly 6,000 trees, shrubs, crops, plants of around 58 species mentioned in the Sikh holy book, Guru Granth Sahib, have been planted in the garden named '**Guru Granth Sahib Bagh**'.

Ravneet Singh, head of EcoSikh's South-Asia unit, said the 'Guru Granth Sahib Garden' is has 58 species of trees and vegetation mentioned in the Guru Granth Sahib. The plants, shrubs, and trees have been meticulously planted with a related reference from Gurbani along with their meaning, he added.

"Patto Hira Singh village is believed to have been visited by four Sikh masters — Guru Nanak, Guru Hargobind, Guru Har Rai and Guru Gobind Singh. This unique garden is expected to draw scientists, students, researchers and general masses because of its educational aspects. It will show how the Sikh gurus and other spiritual teachers used nature and its diversity to teach important life lessons," he added.

**Courtesy: Hindustan Times**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

## Rajeshpal Singh joins Singapore tech bandwagon

Rajeshpal Singh has joined Singapore's tech trade association SGTech as its as director of government affairs.

He joins the SGTech after a short stint as a senior assistant director at the Ministry of Trade and Industry.

Prior to that, he spent close to four years at Stealth Sonics, Singapore's largest in-ear monitor manufacturing company, repositioning it as a direct-to-consumer e-commerce business to adapt to the COVID-19 pandemic, according to his LinkedIn profile update. This included a stint where he actively pursued the North America market.

He cut his teeth in government affairs during his stint at Enterprise Singapore from 2010 to 2017. He left as its head of department for public policy (SME development and trade associations) and international relations.

Rajeshpal is also active on the community front. Among others, he was vice chairman at Central Sikh Gurdwara Board (CSGB) Singapore between 2015 and 2017.

He has a Master of Business in Communications from Singapore Management University (SMU) and a Bachelor of Business Administration from National University of Singapore (NUS).

SGTech strives to create an ecosystem that anticipates trends and develops sustainable initiatives to strengthen the community and help the industry grow. It has close to 1,000 members range from innovative start-ups, vibrant small and medium-sized enterprises to top multinational corporations that leverage technology as a core driver of their business.

Courtesy: Asia Samachar,  
Singapore

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

### Sardar Dalip Singh Sethi passed away

A devout Sikh, from California, who played a great role in the re-settlement of Afghani Sikhs, in Delhi, has passed away. He was suffering from cancer for the past few years.

I got to know him only two years back when he rang me up with a proposal to help the Afghanistan Sikhs living in Delhi. Initially, I thought that like many other International Sikh Organisations and individuals he too is playing lip sympathy. However, I admit my mistake as he proved to be a real 'unknown philanthropist' who motivated many people including Sardar Paramjit Singh Bedi of New York and started sending money every month to individual families. He also paid of their furniture and kitchen equipment. He made this arrangement for two years without any personal publicity.



I also introduced him to Sardar Khajinder Singh, another great sympathizer and philanthropist to Afghan Sikhs cause, and after his death to Sardar Harbhajan Singh, President of Afghan Sikh organisation.

In spite of his poor health, he did a great service towards this humanitarian cause. The entire cost of the Chartered flights for shifting Afghani Sikhs from Kabul to Delhi was paid by Vikramjit Singh Sahney.

To pay their collective tribute to Sardar Dalip Singh Sethi, the Afghan Sikhs in Delhi organised Akhand Path and a prayer meeting on 11th October 2021.

May Satguru give him eternal rest.

**Tarlochan Singh,**

Ex-M.P

Former Chairman

National Commission Minorities.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★



**Title** : Rabab to Nagara - Guru Nanak: Life and Legacy  
**Book by** : Dr. Mohinder Singh  
**Published by** : Himalayan Books  
**Printed & Bound by:** Aegean Offset printers, Greater Noida, UP, India  
**Price** : Rs. 5000/- USD 95/-

#### A Review by Prof. Harpreet Kaur\*

The pictorial hard-bound coffee table book namely, *Rabab to Nagara -Guru Nanak: Life and Legacy* is a compendium of pictures and artifacts by well-known personalities and outlines the strings of the Sikh Gurus and other related anecdotes, which are knitted together to create a woven contiguity by Dr. Mohinder Singh. Through an underlying fundamental unity, a thread of exalted human ideals preached by our Gurus is evident in the contents of the book.

The Foreword of the book has been penned down by a legendary personality of our times, Former Prime Minister of India, Dr. Manmohan Singh whose contribution to the nation will be remembered forever. In his erudite foreword, Dr. Manmohan Singh applauds the works and events conducted by Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi especially during the 550th Prakash Utsav of Sri Guru Nanak Dev Ji. The Sadan in a unique endeavour, among other events had arranged a lively exhibition on the similar theme i.e., *From Rabab to Nagara: Life and Legacy of Guru Nanak* that was inaugurated by His Holiness The Dalai Lama. This exhibition was showcased at many places and appreciated

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\*Principal, Mata Sundri College for Women, University of Delhi  
 [E-mail: harpreetjaswal5@gmail.com]

widely. The Sadan supplemented this scholastic effort by producing a publication on the same theme to reach out to a larger readership. The book also contains message from Jathedar Sri Akal Takhat Sahib, Sri Amritsar Sahib, apex religious body of the Sikhs that is sacrosanct for almost all the devotees.

The very cover of the hard-bound coffee table book in glossy maroon colour with picture of Guru Nanak flanked by Bhai Mardana and Bhai Bala. The cover of the book is a true reflection of what is in store for the avid readers who would almost instinctively be impelled to read the book once they set their eyes on it. One is truly glued to the book and would read the book in one sitting while cherishing the valued paintings and pictures that are adorned in it.

The style of depicting life episodes of the Gurus in pictures was incorporated into literature with as early as the *Janam Sakhi* tradition. The visual and naturalistic representation in *Janam Sakhis* brings solace to our hearts and nourishes our souls. More recently, this phenomenon is becoming more popular especially with the computer technology that has simplified the reproduction of images. Such literature with visuals artistically expressed not only, supplements the text but also, blossoms our hearts and nourishes our souls bringing forth our inner joy. The pictures are a mirror of the milieu of the times of the Gurus and recreate the anecdote related to it in an mystifying manner. Dr. Mohinder Singh aptly points out that the portraits and artefacts are representative of the milieu in which they are produced and the art work that depicts Guru Nanak in varied hues, 'from Nanak Shah Fakir to Nanak as a symbol of distinct Sikh identity' should be comprehended in the context in which they were produced for a better understanding. If this is followed in the right earnest, many of the controversies the community is beset with, would automatically be resolved to create amicability and amenability.

The trend of pictures from rich historical past represented in books make the text contained in it livelier and more representative. The rare photographs contained in the book are by a rich galaxy of painters including William Baker, Lance, Dane, Lala Deen Dayal, Deidi von Schaewen, Raghu Rai, Ashok Dilwali, Sondeep Shankar and Malkiat Singh. The art work is of William Simpson, W. Carpenter Jr., Sobha Singh, Kirpal Singh, Arpana Caur, The Singh Twins- Amrit and Rabindra, Sidharth, Bhagat Singh, Kanwar Dhillon, Swaranjit Savi and Sharandeep Singh.

The author's style of explaining the spirit behind a particular picture and artifact is lucid and crisp that accentuates the rich contents of the book and the befitting captions explain the photographs to its depth and paints the entire episode in one's mind and thoughts vividly. The artistic expressions of the visuals in vibrant colours brings radiance into the written text and conveys the meaning and context very distinctively. The author delves into history in a unique manner pictorially and its narratives come out beautifully and comprehensively in the imageries with a lot of inexplicable things explained illuminating one and all.

The spiritual sojourns of Guru Nanak wherein devotees in large numbers became the followers of Guru Nanak is depicted in a unique pictorial style. The pictorial sojourns of Guru Nanak have been taken through courtesy of S. Vikramjit Singh Sahney and these are showcased in Baba Baghel Singh Museum, Gurdwara Bangla Sahib. These depict the Guru's journey in different topographies including, journey by land through deserts, mountains, dense jungles etc. and travel by boat in the deep seas and one can sketch these journeys vividly sensing how difficult and tedious it would have been but Guru Nanak did expansive Udasis to enlighten the humanity and purge them from dissensions and evils that gripped the contemporary society. Dr. Mohinder Singh has included pictures of Gurdhams established at holy places like, Gurdwara Nanak Shahi, Bangladesh and Sri Nankana Sahib, Sri Panja Sahib, Sri Kartarpur Sahib, Gurdwara Sacha Sauda etc. in Pakistan, emotionally impelling one to visit and pay obeisance there. The page containing the picture of Sacha Sauda Sahib Gurdwara also contains the picture of young Guru distributing rations to the hungry Sadhus along with Bani elucidating the importance of true bargain which says, ਸਚੁ ਵਾਪਾਰੁ ਕਰਹੁ ਵਾਪਾਰੀ ॥ i.e., '*Oh Trader! Deal in the True Trade*' and in a way, explains the historical anecdote pictorially very comprehensively along with the message it conveys to the larger humanity.

Another page contains the ancestral haveli of Rai Bullar Bhatti, an elevated soul who realized the divine streak in Guru Nanak very early, and this haveli that can still be seen in the Pakistan in its original form, is a treat to the eyes. Rababi Bhai Mardana passed on the art of singing Kirtan to his son Sajjada who played Rabab at Kartarpur, the final abode of Guru Nanak and this family is still blessed with this talent with the descendants of Bhai Mardana still performing at Gurdwara Dera Sahib in Pakistan. Dr. Mohinder Singh brings out this continuity till the present times strikingly.

Guru Nanak's dialogue with the Sidhas at Gorakhmata and with the Pirs of Multan reiterates that inter-faith dialogue is the need of the hour to create a harmonized society. The trend of inter-faith interactions is showcased in the pages containing the meetings of the Sikh community stalwarts with spiritual and political leaders of other religions in the recent times including, Revered Justin Welby, Archbishop of Canterbury, Pope Benedict XVI, Pope Francis and His Holiness The Dalai Lama, Hon'ble President of India, Shri Ram Nath Kovind, Prime Minister, Shri Narendra Modi etc. on different occasions at different places from times to time.

The painting by Swaranjit Savi included in the volume transmits one into a divine realm in which Guru Nanak is seen sitting in the tranquil and serene background meditating that imbues one to dwell upon the name of God that is the essence of all happiness in life, ਨਾਮੁ ਜਪੀ ਨਾਮੋ ਸੁਖ ਸਾਰੁ ॥੧॥ and is the crux of the teaching of Guru Nanak. Guru Angad perfected the Gurmukhi scripts and emphasized on imparting spiritual knowledge to the young children to elevate their mental faculties by reading, which is a path towards enlightenment and emphasizes the importance of attaining knowledge in one's life. Guru Arjun, '*Bani Ka Boitha*' compiled Adi Granth containing Bani of Gurus, Saints and Bhagats. The book also contains many other important landmarks including the annotating of Guru Granth Sahib as the Guru Eternal by Guru Gobind Singh. The page containing pictorial representation of all the contributors of the Granth Sahib is exclusive in itself. The environmental concerns and the relationship and harmony of human beings with the nature is of primal importance and how it is emphasised in the Sikh faith, is picturized exquisitely.

The vibrant legacy of the Sikh history and a contiguity of the divine mission from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh is highlighted in the book in soul stirring manner. Guru Gobind Singh converted the legacy of the Sangat into the institution of Khalsa, fearless Saints and Warriors combined into one with the aim to ameliorate the exploited multitudes. The back cover depicting Nagara and the clarion call given by Guru Gobind Singh to create an egalitarian social order in the form of Khalsa reiterates the importance of the religious values and righteous warfare. Guru Gobind Singh was truly a harbinger of new social consciousness and the Khalsa created by him was imbued with the will to triumph against all odds and can be placed at the higher echelons with their valour, code of discipline (*Rahit*), good conduct and faith.

The pictures of the Golden Temple in black and white colours portray the sight of yesteryears of the surroundings around the holy shrine describing the timeless celestial

beauty of the sacred site. The pages covering the celebrations of 550<sup>th</sup> Prakash Utsav in countries of the world including Canada, The USA, Kenya, London etc. and Nankana Sahib, Pakistan gives visual treat to the devotees all over the world and Sangat all over the world, binds together with devotion towards Guru Nanak establishing the fact that faith knows no boundaries.

The pearls of celestial Bani are highlighted all over the book providing it a more meaningful flavour. The four blank sides on each page is adorned with beautiful designs of flowers, plants etc. in golden shade giving it an additional lustre. This gleaming design of the art work on the borders of all the pages changes frequently giving an enhanced look to the pictures embellished and text inscribed on it. With artifacts from varied rich sources, this coffee table book in itself, is a rich repository of the Sikh literature and the readers will definitely be enriched by narratives penned in it and by seeing the visuals in the book.

Such writings and publications are an asset for the community with an underlying stimulating aspect ingrained with the timeless values as advocated by our Gurus and with each of its pictures highlighting anecdotes from the life of Gurus and Sikh history. The writers, academicians and intellectuals from all over the world have appreciated how the book contains the details of the Sikh legacy from Guru Nanak to Guru Gobind Singh and later developments in the *Panth* in a sequenced manner and the author, Dr. Mohinder Singh, Director, Bhai Vir Singh Sahitya Sadan, New Delhi deserves lavish praise for his literary flair, skilful calligraphy and theoretical exposition of all major integral concepts of the faith contained and explained intently in this pictorial book. □

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**Title** : Professor Harbans Singh: A legend in Sikh studies,  
**Edited By** : Dr Paramvir Singh  
**Published by** : Patiala:Gracious Books, 2020)  
**Pages: 228, Price: Rs 350/-**

#### A Review by Dr D K Verma\*

The book is divided into three sections: a) Punjabi section; b) English Section; and Book Reviews Section. Dr. Paramvir Singh has deep interest in Sikh Studies and the book is the result of his commitment to Sikh scholarship.

Dr. Paramvir Singh is having deep interest in Sikh Studies and Sikh Scholars and hence result in the book is a commendable work on Professor Harbans Singh, who succeeded in carving out niche for himself during his life in the world of learning and placed himself in the line of eminent Sikh scholars like Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha and Bhai Vir Singh. He was an erudite scholar of Sikh religion and Sikh history. He produced scholarly works devoted to lives and mission of Sikh Gurus, Maharaja Ranjit Singh and Bhai Vir Singh. A great work he accomplished has been the Sikh Encyclopaedia which he completed with the spirit of dedication possessed by the sages. He spent almost four decades to accomplish the most cherished dream of his life in four volumes.

The Punjabi section of the book deals with the brief life of Professor Harbans Singh and tributes by the eminent scholars directly or indirectly associated with him. They all had great reverence for Professor Sahib.

The English section comprises 21 essays which are by scholars of India and abroad. Most of them worked with Professor Sahib in one way or the other throughout his career which he started from Amritsar, Faridkot, Mukatsar and Patiala, where worked in various capacities. All the jobs assigned to him were offered for which he never aspired and some of the high posts, not of his interest declined by him with honor.

The book reviews section is a commentary on the scholarly writings of Prof. Harbans Singh by various scholars taken up with discerning eye from various leading Journals and News Papers in English and Punjabi by the editor.

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\* 15, Gurdwara Moti Bagh colony, Patiala, Punjab

The present work is an attempt to highlight the scholastic personality of Professor Harbans Singh. As the title of book suggest through the glimpses of Sardar sahib is a complement to the editor treatise. At the end of the book some rare photographs of Professor Harbans Singh add visual value to the book.

Dr. Paramvir Singh's laudable attempt to produce the book have involved long and diligent labour searching the libraries in the nook and corner for journals, News Papers, books and book reviews. He deserves all appreciation for his efforts.

The book is an honest evaluation of the life of Professor Sahib which enriched our knowledge. The collection of article is commendable as is the effort of its editor Dr. Paramvir Singh.



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